



# Pinworms

Your child may have been exposed to pinworms. Pinworms are small worms (about the length of a staple) that live in the human intestine (gut) and crawl out at night to lay eggs in the anal area.

## If you think your child has pinworms:

- Tell your childcare provider or call the school.
- Your child does not need to stay home from childcare or school.
- For more information, call Hennepin County HSPHD-Epidemiology at 612-543-5230 or your local health department.

## Parent/Guardian information

### Symptoms

Your child may have itching of the anal or vaginal area, especially at night. Your child may be fussy and wake often at night. Your child may also have no symptoms.

If your child is infected, it may take 2 to 8 weeks for symptoms to start.

### Spread

- By touching the anal area of an infected person and then touching one's mouth. This can happen while changing a diaper.
- By handling contaminated pajamas, underwear, or bedding and then touching one's mouth.
- By touching contaminated food, objects, or surfaces and then touching one's mouth.

### Contagious period

As long as eggs are present. Eggs can cause infection even after being off of the body for 2 to 3 weeks.

### Call your health care provider

- If you suspect pinworms. The whole family may need to be examined. Your doctor may prescribe a medication.

### Prevention

- Wash hands after using the toilet and changing diapers. Wash hands before preparing food or eating. Your child may need help with handwashing.
- Avoid scratching or touching bare anal area or biting nails. Keep nails short.

## Pinworms

- Clean and disinfect any objects that come in contact with stool. This includes toilets, potty chairs, sinks, toys, and diaper changing areas.
- Wash every morning (a shower is best) using a fresh washcloth and towel. Wear clean underwear each day.
- Handle sheets, blankets, and underwear of infected people carefully. Avoid shaking the items and wash dirty laundry promptly.

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