



PINWORM

What is it and how can you get rid of it?



Pinworms are common. Anyone can be infected. In countries with good hygiene the pinworm infection is one of the most common worm infections. Children are more commonly infested than adults.

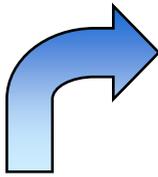
The Pinworms are about 1 cm in length and they look like light-coloured threads. They can be seen on the surface of stool or in the area around the rectum.

Pinworm is a parasite of man; it is not transmitted through e.g. excrements of domestic animals or snow.

You can be infected through the pinworm eggs, which can end up in the mouth through the hands.

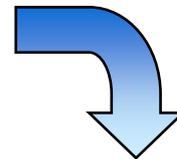
The symptoms can be itching around the rectum area and irritation. The child sleeps restlessly and scratches the rectal area.

LIFE CYCLE OF THE PINWORM



THE ENVIRONMENT

The worm eggs can spread to towels, bed linens and toys and even to pets' fur. The eggs can live for several days, sometimes even for a week.



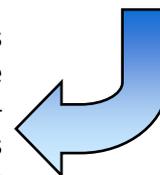
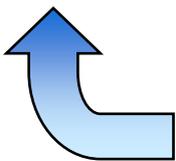
Pinworm eggs can spread to the **mouth** through e.g. hands.

THE RECTUM

The itch makes the child scratch the area around the rectum in the sleep. As a result of the scratching the worm eggs spread to not only clothes but also hands, under the nails and easily to the child's mouth. In this way the egg's (= the future worm) life cycle continues.

THE INTESTINES

It takes approximately one month for the eggs to develop into worms in the intestines. While the child sleeps the female worm leaves the intestines through the rectum and deposits eggs on the skin around the rectum and after that usually returns to the intestines. The worm lives for about 1-3 months.



You can remain infested for a long time if the eggs repeatedly spread from the rectum area to the mouth under nails or on fingertips.



Treatment

1. Medical treatment

- The anti-worm medicine PYRVIN can be bought at the pharmacy without a prescription. Follow the instructions on the package.
- All family members should be treated simultaneously.
- The eggs do not die of the treatment; on the contrary they can still be infectious. Therefore it is important to follow the advice in passage 2 to avoid reinfestation (see the figure on the life cycle of the pinworm).
- After 1 - 2 weeks the medical treatment should be repeated. This time only the infected person should be treated.

2. Other measures

Besides the medical treatment the following measures are necessary to avoid reinfestation

- Because the worm eggs occur in the area around the rectum, attention should be paid especially to genital hygiene and hand washing.
- Emphasize the importance of hand washing.
Hands should be washed thoroughly after using the toilet and before meals and also between meals when having snacks as chips etc.
- Keep fingernails clean and short.
- Change underwear, pyjamas, towels, pillowcases and sheets in connection with the treatment. Put these directly in the wash and avoid unnecessary shaking of them.
- You should change underwear twice daily during a period of one week, because the worm eggs can live for several days, sometimes for a week after the treatment.
- You should clean out the bedroom particularly well. Vacuum-clean or air mattresses, quilts and pillows. Vacuum-clean and wipe floors and other surfaces. Also clean contacting spots as door handles and switches.
- Emphasize the toilet hygiene; especially remember to clean the taps, the toilet handle and the WC seat, the switch and the door handle.
- Clean the nursing table after napkin changes. Put dirty napkins directly in the dustbin.
- Also clean toys.
- The child can go to day care and school as usual after the treatment.

In case of problems, please contact the Communicable Diseases Control Unit

- Public-health Nurse; phone 8392 3120 Mon, Wed and Fri 9-11.