



Pinworms

Definition

A pinworm is a harmless very thin, threadlike worm that lives in the colon (large bowel) and causes itching to the anus and in girls, may possibly also cause vaginal itching or discharge. They are white in color and about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (6 to 12 mm) long. They are usually not easy to see but may be seen at night or in early morning around the anus or on the child's bottom. Rarely, the pinworm is seen on the surface of a stool. The infection is caused by swallowing pinworm eggs. A child can get pinworms no matter how carefully you clean your home.

Overview:

- Pinworms are the most common worm infection in the US.
- Though harmless and not carrying any disease, they cause anal itching and treatment is very helpful.

How to check for pinworms:

- Pinworm Check with flashlight: A few hours after your child goes to bed, examine the area around the anus, using a flashlight. Also check first thing in the morning. Do this for 2 days and 2 nights in a row.
- Scotch Tape Test: Take a piece of clear Scotch tape with the sticky side down. Touch it to the skin on both sides of the anus. Do this in the morning right after your child has awakened and before any bath or shower, 2 days in a row. Then examine the tape for pinworms.
- You can also call our office for a pinworm test kit

Care Advice for pinworms seen

- **Pinworm Medicine:**
 - If pinworms are seen by a parent, and the child has anal itching, formal testing is not needed, and you can proceed with treatment. Recommended treatment is over the counter Reese's Pinworm Medicine
 - Give a repeat dose of the pinworm medicine in 2 weeks. The repeat dose is needed because eggs can live for 1 to 2 weeks.
 - After taking the pinworm medicine, itching should stop in 5 in 7 days.

Reece's Pinworm Medication Dosage

20-24 lbs = 2 milliliters
25-37 lbs = $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon = 2.5 milliliters
38-62 lbs = 1 teaspoon = 5 milliliters
63-87 lbs = $1 \frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon = 7.5 milliliters
88-112 lbs = 2 teaspoons = 10 milliliters
113-137 lbs = $2 \frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons = 12.5 milliliters
138lbs and up = see back of box





Care Advice for pinworms seen

- **Treat Close Contacts:**
 - There is a slight risk that pinworms may spread to others.
 - Treat family members only if they have symptoms.
 - Women who are pregnant should consult with their OB/GYN before treatment
 - If another child sleeps with the infected child, they also should be treated.
 - If any of your child's friends have symptoms, be sure to tell their parents. These children should call their provider if they develop symptoms.
- **Preventing Spread to Others:**
 - Wash hands more often. Have your child scrub the hands and fingernails well before each meal.
 - Also, wash hands well after each use of the toilet. Keep the fingernails cut short because eggs can collect here.
 - Each morning give your child a shower. Always rinse the anal area. Do this for 3 days after taking the pinworm medicine.
 - Wash clothes and bedding at a hot temperature. This will kill any eggs left in them. If bedding can't be washed, ironing bedding will help kill any remaining eggs.
 - Vacuum or wet-mop your child's bedroom once a week. Any eggs left on the floor can still infect others for 1 or 2 weeks.
 - Have the infected child wear underwear at night during the 2 weeks of treatment. Remove it carefully just before showering (may contain eggs) and wash at a hot temperature.

Care Advice for itching and no pinworms seen

- **Look for other causes of anal itching:**
 - **Stool** that has been left on the skin. Stool contains chemicals and germs that can cause itchy skin rashes. After wiping off stool with toilet tissue, cleanse the skin with warm water.
 - **Bubble baths** can also cause an itchy bottom. Children with dry skin are at increased risk. Avoid bubble bath or any soapy bath water.
- **Treat with a steroid ointment:**
 - **Apply 1% Hydrocortisone ointment** 2 times per day for a few days. No prescription is needed.

Return to School:

Children with pinworms do not need to miss any child care or school.

Call Back If...

- Anal symptoms last over 1 week after treatment
- There's red and tender skin around the anus. Reason: could be Strep infection.