

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

PINWORMS

What are Pinworms?

Pinworms are parasites that look like tiny white threads and live in the large intestine. Infestation is very contagious and more common in children ages 5-10 years old. Usually the worms travel at night to the rectal opening and lay their eggs on the outside skin.

What are the signs and symptoms of a Pinworm infection?

When the worms travel to the anus they may cause intense itching. Restless sleep is a frequent sign of pinworms in children. Suspect pinworms if a child is scratching around the anal or vaginal area.

How are Pinworm infections spread?

The eggs, which are too small to see, contaminate whatever they come in contact with including bedclothes, towels, underwear, hands, and food touched by contaminated hands. Pinworms are very contagious; pinworm eggs floating in the air can be swallowed and cause infection.

What is the incubation period of Pinworms and how long is it contagious?

Pinworm eggs are infective within a few hours of being deposited on the skin around the anus. Eggs can also survive and remain infective for 2-3 weeks on clothes, bedding, surfaces or other objects.

What should I do if I think I have a Pinworm infection?

Seek care from a physician or healthcare provider if symptoms are present. Treatment with oral medication once or repeated in 2 weeks may be necessary for the whole family and the group of children who share a common environment.

How can I prevent myself and others from getting a Pinworm infection?

To help prevent re-infection follow these rules:

- Treat Pinworms with medication.
- Wash hands and fingernails with soap often during the day, especially before eating and after using the toilet.
- Daily morning bathing with showers (or stand up baths) is preferred to tub baths to remove a large proportion of eggs that are laid at night.
- Wear clean underpants both day and night. Change them daily.
- For several days after treatment, clean the bedroom floor by vacuuming or damp mopping.
- After treatment, wash bed linens, towels and night clothes (don't shake them). Boiling water or using a washing machine set on the hot cycle can kill the eggs.
- Keep toilet seats clean.

For more information, please contact the Florida Department of Health in Orange County Epidemiology Program at 407-858-1420. You may also visit the Epidemiology Program website, <http://orchd.com/generalHealth/epidemiology/index.asp>, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/pinworm/>, or the OCHD School Health website at <http://orchd.com/personalHealth/schoolHealth/index.asp> for additional information.

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