

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT: PINWORMS

What are pinworms?

Pinworms are small, white, thread-like worms that live in the lower intestine. The female worms come out at night through the anus to lay their eggs on the skin around the opening.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include itching and redness around the anal or vaginal area. The itching may cause a child to squirm and scratch. You might see the small, white, thread-like worms in the toilet or in the child's underwear. Many people with pinworms have no symptoms. If you suspect a child has pinworms, suggest to parents that they use a flashlight to check for pinworms around the anus when the child is sleeping.

Who gets them and how?

Pinworms are common among preschool and school-aged children and spread easily within families. Pinworms can spread when affected children scratch their anal area and then touch objects (like toys, bedding, toilets, and playground equipment). Children can get pinworms when they touch or mouth objects with pinworms or eggs.

Pinworms can spread if either worms or eggs are present, and eggs can live for two to three weeks on surfaces. Pinworms can also spread by oral contact with the feces of an affected child.

Where should I report it?

Notify parents and staff so that they can watch for symptoms. Parents of a child with pinworms should consult their health care provider for treatment.

Should children with pinworms be excluded?

No. Pinworms are common and are not dangerous.

HOW CAN I LIMIT THE SPREAD OF PINWORMS?

- ▶ Practice good hand hygiene (children and staff).
- ▶ Wash toys, surfaces, bedding, and equipment frequently.
- ▶ Store clothing soiled with feces in plastic bags and send home for laundering.
- ▶ Clean and disinfect bathroom surfaces.
- ▶ Keep children's fingernails short.

ACTION PLAN FOR PINWORMS

WHEN TO TAKE ACTION	TREATMENT	NOTIFICATION	PREVENTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ If you see pinworms or suspect pinworms because of anal itching and scratching. ▶ If a child in your program has been diagnosed with pinworms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children with symptoms should be evaluated and treated by a health care provider. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Notify parents and staff so they can watch for symptoms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Practice good hand hygiene. ▶ Wash toys and surfaces regularly. ▶ Store fecal soiled clothing in plastic bags to be sent home for laundering. ▶ Clean and disinfect bathrooms. ▶ Keep children's fingernails short.

RESOURCES

• California Childcare Health Program, UCSF School of Nursing, *What Child Care Providers Should Know About Pinworms*
cchp.ucsf.edu/pinworms-ILL

• Aronson, SS and Shope, TR (editors) (2013). *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools. A Quick Reference Guide*, 3rd Edition. American Academy of Pediatrics. Elk Grove Village, IL.

