

PINWORM INFECTION FACT SHEET

What is a pinworm infection?

Pinworm infection is caused by ingesting eggs of a parasitic worm. The parasitic worm lives in the human intestine and crawl out of the rectum at night to lay eggs on the anal area. Although pinworm infection can affect all people, it most commonly occurs among children, institutionalized persons, and household members of persons with pinworm infection.

What are the symptoms of a pinworm infection?

Symptoms include itching of the anal area (especially at night), which can lead to difficulty sleeping, restlessness and irritability. Asymptomatic infection is possible.

How do pinworms spread?

Pinworms are spread by the transfer of infective pinworm eggs from the anus to someone's mouth, either directly by hand or indirectly through contaminated clothing, bedding, food, or other articles.

How do you diagnose a pinworm infection?

Itching during the night in a child's perianal area strongly suggests pinworm infection. Diagnosis is made by identifying the worm or its eggs. Worms can sometimes be seen on the skin near the anus or on underclothing, pajamas, or sheets about 2 to 3 hours after falling asleep. Pinworm eggs can be collected using the "tape test." Follow [this link](http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/pinworm/gen_info/faqs.html) (http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/pinworm/gen_info/faqs.html) for more details.

Is there treatment for pinworm infection?

Usually medication is given in a single dose at the time of diagnosis and then a second dose is given two weeks later.

How can pinworm infection be prevented?

Strict observance of good hand hygiene is the most effective means of preventing pinworm infection. This includes washing hands with soap and warm water after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before handling food. Keep fingernails clean and short, avoid fingernail-biting, and avoid scratching the skin in the perianal area. Teach children the importance of washing hands to prevent infection. Co-bathing is not recommended during infection and treatment.

For more information please contact Contra Costa Public Health at 925-313-6740 and visit our website at <http://cchealth.org/cd/> or http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/pinworm/gen_info/faqs.html