

PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET



COUNTY MICHIGAN
HEALTH DIVISION

Department of Health & Human Services

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Pinworm

What is Pinworm disease?

It is a condition caused by parasites that invade and live in the intestine.

Who gets Pinworms?

This disease is very common and can affect anyone. It is found most often in children because they are less careful about personal hygiene than adults.

How does the disease spread?

The worm eggs are spread by hand from the anus to the mouth of the same or another person. Eggs can be found on any object used by an infected person. Breathing in airborne eggs is also possible in areas with many infected people or where people have heavy infections.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms can range from mild to severe:

- Rectal itch.
- Nervousness and irritability during the day.
- Difficulty sleeping at night.

If you suspect Pinworm disease, check the rectal area and look for the white threadlike, adult worms. This is best done at night.

How long after exposure to the parasites do symptoms begin?

Two to six weeks.

How long is a person contagious?

As long as eggs are being laid.

What is the treatment?

If your doctor confirms pinworm disease, she/he will prescribe medicine for the patient and for the whole family. Also, you should follow these control measures:

- Take medicine as directed.
- Keep nails short: scrub hands and nails often, especially before eating and after going to the toilet.
- Keep fingers out of mouth.
- Avoid scratching rectal area.
- Take shower or stand-up bath every morning.
- Wear snug fitting undergarments at all times; change these undergarments every morning.
- Each morning, wash nightclothes and bed linens in hot water. **Do not shake out bed linens.**
- Scrub bathroom floors and toilet seats every day. Floors, rugs and upholstered furniture should be vacuumed daily for several days after starting the medicine.

OVER



HAND WASHING INSTRUCTIONS:

- use soap and running water
- rub your hands vigorously for 20 seconds
- wash all surfaces, including:
 - backs of hands
 - wrists
 - between fingers
 - under fingernails
- rinse well
- dry hands with a paper towel
- turn off the water using a paper towel instead of bare hands

For more information on Pinworm, call (248) 858-1406 or toll free 1 (800) 848-5533.

For additional copies, visit our website at www.oakgov.com/health or contact: