

Threadworms - Key information for parents

THREADWORM –INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Information for parents when cases of threadworm are reported at school. This document is to give guidance in what to look out for and to reassure you that this infection is not serious but that medical guidance should be sought if you suspect that your child is suffering from them.

Threadworm

Threadworm (also known as pinworm) are common worm infections of the intestines (or gut) that often do not show symptoms. Humans are their only host and anyone can catch them. They are particularly common in children between the ages of five and twelve years. Infection often occurs in more than one family member. Threadworms look like thin, white cotton threads.

Signs and symptoms

In infections where there are symptoms, itching around the anus occurs, especially after a warm bath or at night causing sleep disturbance. A sticky fluid is sometimes felt around the anus which may also cause itchiness. Sometimes the worms can be seen either in the stools or around the anus.

Mode of Transmission

Transmission is by direct transfer of infective eggs by hand from anus to mouth of the same or another person, or indirectly through clothing, bedding, food or other contaminated equipment. Re-infection is common. The eggs are ingested and hatch in the small intestine. The worms then migrate to the large bowel.

Treatment

There are a variety of treatments available; advice should be sought from the GP. Treatment should be repeated after two weeks. It is also advisable to treat the whole family/ household members at the same time in order to adequately eradicate the problem from the household.

Prevention of spread

- Prompt recognition of new cases by GPs
- Remove sources of infection by treating cases with anti-worm medication
- All close contacts should be treated with the same medication
- **Encourage hand washing especially after going to the toilet and before eating**
- Keep fingernails short and discourage nail biting
- Wear clean underwear at night

As well as informing you of the situation, purpose of this letter is to enable you to seek treatment early if your child is affected and to remind parents of general hygiene, in particular to make sure that your child/ children wash their hands regularly, particularly after going to the toilet and especially before eating.

Children with threadworm do not need to be kept away from school as long as the child is treated and is aware of the hygiene measures required. However, could you please inform the school as soon as possible if you have a case of threadworm in the family home.

Thank you for your co-operation.