

Health Alert

PINWORMS

Two children in our school have been diagnosed with PINWORMS. I am sending out a notice to all parents now, but our directive is:

- NO NO NO Sharing Food (this should not be happening anyway - this means 8th grade as well)
- Hands WASHED (not just hand sanitizer) with soap and water AND DRIED (younger children may need supervision and a practice run reminder- there is also an excellent video on hand washing)
- NO TOYS FROM HOME (children put them in their mouths and then share the toys, blankets, pillows, art supplies, etc.)
- HANDS OUT OF MOUTHS AT ALL TIMES (Pinworms are transmitted from the anus to the mouth (under fingernails), then back to the anus for reproduction)

Encourage parents to review:

- PROPER TOILET TRAINING AND CLEAN UNDERWEAR EVERYDAY
- CLIP FINGERNAILS AND KEEP THEM CLEAN

** A pinworm is an intestinal infection caused by tiny parasitic worms. One of the most common roundworm infections, pinworm infections affect millions of people each year, particularly schoolchildren.

But if your child develops a pinworm infection, don't worry. Pinworms don't cause any harm (just itching), and it won't take long to get rid of them. And people who have pinworms aren't dirty — kids can get pinworms no matter how often they take a bath.

How Pinworm Infections Spread

Pinworm infections (also known as "seatworm infection," "threadworm infection," "enterobiasis," or "oxyuriasis") are contagious.

People become infected by unknowingly ingesting microscopic pinworm eggs that can be found on contaminated hands and surfaces, such as:

- bed linens
- towels
- clothing (especially underwear and pajamas)
- toilets
- bathroom fixtures
- food
- drinking glasses
- eating utensils
- toys
- kitchen counters
- desks or lunch tables at school

- sandboxes

The eggs pass into the digestive system and hatch in the small intestine. From the small intestine, pinworm larvae continue their journey to the large intestine, where they live as parasites — their heads attached to the inside wall of the bowel.

About 1 to 2 months after a person acquires the pinworm eggs, adult female pinworms begin migrating from the large intestine to the area around the rectum. There, they will lay new pinworm eggs, which trigger itching around the rectum.

When someone scratches the itchy area, microscopic pinworm eggs are transferred to their fingers. Contaminated fingers can then carry pinworm eggs to the mouth, where they are reingested, or to various surfaces, where they can live for 2 to 3 weeks.

If you're wondering if your family pet could give your child a pinworm infection, it can't. Pinworms don't come from animals.

A delicious mud pie, a good-luck rock, or a friendly frog are just a few of the presents kids love to bring home to Mom and Dad. But behind these adorable gifts, millions of germs could be lurking.

Kids don't always listen when you tell them to wash their hands before eating, but it's a message worth repeating. Hand washing is by far the best way to prevent germs from spreading and to keep your kids from getting sick.

The First Line of Defense Against Germs

Germs can be transmitted many ways, including:

- touching dirty hands
- changing dirty diapers
- through contaminated water and food
- through droplets released during a cough or a sneeze
- via contaminated surfaces
- through contact with a sick person's body fluids

When kids come into contact with germs, they can unknowingly become infected simply by touching their eyes, nose, or mouth. And once they're infected, it's usually just a matter of time before the whole family comes down with the same illness.

Good hand washing is the first line of defense against the spread of many illnesses, from the common cold to more serious illnesses such as meningitis, bronchiolitis, influenza, hepatitis A, and most types of infectious diarrhea.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

<http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/parasitic/pinworm.html>