

PARENT ALERT

Contagious disease exposure in room _____ on _____.

PINWORM

WHAT IS IT?

Small, white, threadlike worms (0.25-0.5" long) that live in the large intestine.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS?

- Most people have no signs or symptoms.
- Itching and irritation around the anal or vaginal area.

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

- Fecal-oral route: Contact with feces of children who are infected. This generally involves an infected child contaminating his own fingers and then touching an object that another child touches. The child who touched the contaminated surface then puts her fingers into her own mouth or another person's mouth.
- By sharing toys, bedding, clothing, toilet seats, or baths. The eggs are light and float in the air.
- Pinworm eggs remain infective for 2 to 3 weeks in indoor environments.
- Infestation with pinworms commonly clusters within families.

WHEN CAN YOU CATCH IT?

- Incubation period: 1 to 2 months or longer from the time of ingesting the pinworm egg until an adult worm migrates to the anal area
- Contagious period: As long as the female worms are discharging eggs to the skin around the anus

WHAT ARE POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS? Usually none. Possibly secondary infection from scratched skin.

WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR THE AFFECTED CHILD?

- Use good hand-hygiene
- Keep the child's fingernails short.
- Observe children for rectal scratching.
- Carefully dispose of diapers and handwashing materials after use.
- Bathe the child in the morning to remove a large proportion of eggs that are laid at night.
- Avoid shaking bedding or underwear to prevent spreading ova through the air.
- See doctor for medication and use as directed (entire family should be examined).
- Treatment may be necessary for the whole family and the group of children who share a common environment.

WHAT WILL THE STAFF DO?

- Report the infection to the staff member designated by the childcare program or school for decision-making and action related to care of ill children. That person, in turn, alerts possibly exposed family and staff members to watch for symptoms.
- Suspect pinworms if a child has intense itching around the anal or vaginal area.
- Refer the person with the infection to a health professional for treatment recommendations.
- Avoid shaking bedding or underwear to prevent spreading ova through the air.
- Wash children's hands directly after using the toilet and before hands are involved with putting something into their mouths.
- Wash toys frequently.
- Clean and sanitize surfaces used for eating, toileting, hand hygiene, food preparation, and diapering.

EXCLUDE FROM GROUP SETTING?

No.

WHEN CAN THE CHILD RETURN TO CLASS?

- The child **does not need to be excluded**, unless they have a fever, or does not feel well enough to participate. If you have any questions, please contact your childcare center and healthcare provider.

*Adapted from Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools: A Quick Reference Guide.
4th ed. 2022*