

## Pinworms

Pinworm is the most common worm infesting children. As awful as it sounds, it is essentially harmless. In boys and girls it may cause anal itching and in girls, vaginal itching and discharge

- Pinworms are spread from person to person
- A child scratches at an infested area and then transfers it to the sandbox or toilet seat where another child picks up pinworm eggs and transfers them to his mouth.
- The eggs are swallowed, hatch, and the pinworms make their way to the anus where eggs are deposited.
- Pinworms usually present with itching of the anal area. Girls may also have vaginal itching.
- Pinworms can sometimes be seen around the anal area. They are threadlike, whitish gray in color and about ¼ to ½ inch long.
- The diagnosis can be confirmed with a “pinworm paddle test.” A plastic paddle with an adhesive is applied to the skin around the anus and then viewed under a microscope to look for eggs. The test is more likely to show evidence of infection if the specimen is collected at night or early morning prior to bathing. This test, if necessary, would be done by your child’s provider.

### Treatment:

- If your daughter is experiencing vaginal itching or discharge only, we recommend an office visit as other problems besides pinworm can cause these symptoms.
- If your child is experiencing anal itching and you are able to see the pinworms and is otherwise well, then we recommend treating.
- For children over 2 years of age and greater than 25 lbs, we recommend over the counter medication: Pyrantel pamoate
  - Common brand names are: Pin-X and Reeses Pinworm Medicine
  - The dosing is based on weight
  - Follow the directions on the label
  - The manufacturers recommend a single dose of the medication, however we recommend repeating the dose in 2 weeks
  - All family members should be treated – pregnant and breastfeeding women should call our office before using this product.
- The next day after treatment, wash underwear, pajamas, and sheets. Vacuum or wet mop the child’s room.

### Prevention:

- Good hand washing after bathroom use
- Wash toys
- Wash hands after playing with your dog or cat, since these pets can carry eggs in their fur (animals do not become infected with pinworm).

References: [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org), UpToDate – 11/16