

PINWORM FACT SHEET



Lenawee County
HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What are Pinworms?

Pinworms are small, thin, white parasitic roundworms that can live in the colon and rectum of humans. They cause an infection called Enterobiasis which causes uncomfortable itching around the anus. This condition is uncomfortable but normally not life threatening.

What are the symptoms?

- Itching around the anus which can lead to difficulty sleeping.
- Often symptoms are mild and some infected people have no symptoms.

How it is treated?

- Prescription or over the counter medications are available. See a health care provider for treatment recommendations.
- Good hand hygiene, showering, daily changing of underwear are best for removal and avoiding reinfection.

How can it be prevented?

- Good hand hygiene is the most effective. This includes washing with soap and warm water often, keeping fingernails clean and short and avoid scratching the anal area.
- Daily bathing and changing of underwear helps remove a large portion of eggs and can prevent reinfection.

How can it be spread?

- While sleeping a female pinworm will exit the anus, lay eggs on the surrounding skin causing itching. When the person scratches, eggs are picked up and then when you touch your face or mouth the eggs enter the mouth and the cycle begins again.
- Pinworm eggs become infective a few hours after being laid. They can survive on bedding, clothes or other surfaces for 2-3 weeks.
- Because they are so small, the eggs can sometimes be breathable.
- Infections are rare from swimming pools
- You cannot give or get them from pets.