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REVIEWED

By Chris Tighe at 12:54 pm, May 17, 2016

Pinworms

Also called: **Enterobiasis, Oxyuriasis, Seatworm infection, Threadworm infection**



Summary

Pinworms are small [parasites](#) that can live in the colon and rectum. You get them when you swallow their eggs. The eggs hatch inside your intestines. While you sleep, the female pinworms leave the intestines through the anus and lay eggs on nearby skin.

Pinworms spread easily. When people who are infected touch their anus, the eggs attach to their fingertips. They can spread the eggs to others directly through their hands, or through contaminated clothing, bedding, food, or other articles. The eggs can live on household surfaces for up to 2 weeks.

The infection is more common in children. Many people have no symptoms at all. Some people feel itching around the anus or vagina. The itching may become intense, interfere with sleep, and make you irritable.

Your health care provider can diagnose pinworm infection by finding the eggs. A common way to collect the eggs is with a sticky piece of clear tape. Mild infections may not need treatment. If you do need medicine, everyone in the household should take it.

To prevent becoming infected or reinfected with pinworms,

- Bathe after waking up
- Wash your pajamas and bed sheets often
- Wash your hands regularly, especially after using the bathroom or changing diapers
- Change your underwear every day
- Avoid nail biting
- Avoid scratching the anal area

NIH: [National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases](#)

Resources

- [Enterobiasis \(Pinworm Infection\) FAQs](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- [Enterobiasis \(Pinworm Infection\): Diagnosis](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- [Enterobiasis \(Pinworm Infection\): Prevention and Control](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- [Enterobiasis \(Pinworm Infection\): Treatment](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- [Pinworm \(for Parents\)](#) (Nemours Foundation)
Available in Spanish
- [Pinworm Infection](#) (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- [Pinworm Infection](#) (National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases)
- [Pinworms](#) (Nemours Foundation)
Available in Spanish

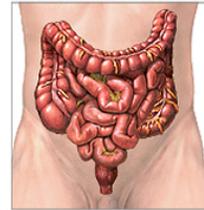
Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- [Article: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENTEROBIUS VERMICULARIS INFECTION AND PELVIC INFLAMMATORY DISEASES IN...](#)
- [Article: The prevalence of intestinal parasites in children in preschools and...](#)
- [Article: Negligible Egg Positive Rate of Enterobius vermicularis and No Detection...](#)
- [Pinworms -- see more articles](#)

Patient Handouts

- [Pinworm test](#)
Available in Spanish
- [Pinworms](#)
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National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Pinworms* is the [National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases](#)

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