

## **Pinworms**

**What are pinworms?** They are tiny worms that commonly infect children's intestines. The worm crawls out of the child's anus at night and lays microscopic eggs around the opening. Symptoms include:

- No symptoms at all -OR
- Scratching around anal area or vulva (in girls), especially at night A white, thread-like worm about 1/2" long  
seen at night, around the child's anus, or  
found in the stools

**How are pinworms spread? They spread by:**

- Children scratching their bottoms
- Touching stool during diapering and toileting
- Not washing hands before handling food
- Not cleaning/disinfecting toys, diapering, toileting, and hand-washing areas Playing in wading pools and water-play tables
- Sharing contaminated clothes, towels, and bedding

**When are pinworms contagious?**

- As long as the worms are present. Not contagious after treatment
- After exposure, it can take three weeks to three months to develop symptoms.

**How do I know if my child has pinworms?** If you see the symptoms, see your doctor. Pinworms can be diagnosed by observing worms or using clear tape to pick up the eggs around the anus in the morning and sending it to the lab.

**What should I do if my child has pinworms?**

**Treatment:** The doctor will prescribe oral antiparasitic medication.

**Should my child stay home?** Your child can return to school after treatment is started. Notify your Head Start program.

**To limit the spread:**

- Check other children at home and at school. Get treatment if needed.
- Launder clothes, towels, and bedding. Clean/disinfect cribs and mats.
- Wash hands after diapering and toileting and before handling food.
- Clean and disinfect diapering areas, mouthed toys, and dining tables after each use; clean and disinfect toileting areas and hand-washing sinks daily.
- Use sprinklers instead of wading pools. Use individual water-play basins instead of water-play tables.