

## Pinworm infection: A guide for parents

Dear Parent,

There have been a couple of incidences of pinworm infections at Oberoi International School. While the children's parents have consulted a doctor and taken other precautions, we would like to share some guidelines and precautionary steps for you to consider for your child as well.

Please go through it and call us, or write to us, in case there are any further questions or if you require further information. You can call 6130-3535 and ask to speak to me or any of the other physicians, or reach Shivani Dawlatjada at [shivani.dawlatjada@healthspring.in](mailto:shivani.dawlatjada@healthspring.in).

### What are pinworms?

A pinworm (also known as a threadworm) is a small, thin, white roundworm that sometimes lives in the colon and rectum of humans. Pinworms are about the length of a staple. While an infected person sleeps, female pinworms leave the intestine through the anus and deposit their eggs on the surrounding skin. Pinworm infection occurs worldwide and affects persons of all ages and socioeconomic levels; it is the most common worm infection in the United States. Pinworm infection occurs most often in school-age children.

### How do you know if your child is infected?

Most people infected with pinworms have no symptoms, but some people experience anal itching and restless sleep. If you have any doubts, please visit your family physician or stop by the Healthspring Goregaon centre to speak with a Healthspring physician.

### How do children typically contract pinworm infections?

Pinworm infection is spread by the fecal-oral route, that is by the transfer of infective pinworm eggs from the anus to someone's mouth, either directly by hand or indirectly through contaminated clothing, bedding, food, or other articles. Pinworm eggs become infective within a few hours after being deposited on the skin around the anus and can survive for 2 to 3 weeks on clothing, bedding, or other objects.

### What should you do if your child contracts a pinworm infection?

- Treatment involves two doses of either Mebendazole or Albendazole, with the second dose being given 2 weeks after the first dose.
- All household contacts and caretakers of the infected person should be treated at the same time.

[www.healthspring.in](http://www.healthspring.in) | (022) 6130-3535

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- Re-infection can occur easily so strict observance of good hand hygiene is essential (e.g. proper handwashing, maintaining clean short fingernails, avoiding nail biting, avoiding scratching the perianal area).

### **Should family and other close contacts of someone with pinworm also be treated for pinworm?**

Yes. The infected person and all household contacts and caretakers of the infected person should be treated at the same time to ensure that the child does not get re-infected.

### **When is your child ready to go back to school?**

Once your child has received the first dose of medication, he or she is ready to go back to school. Continue to monitor the child for any signs of reinfection.

### **How can you protect your child from contracting pinworm infections?**

- Strict observance of good hand hygiene is the most effective means of preventing pinworm infection. This includes washing hands with soap and warm water after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before handling food. Teach children the importance of washing hands after using the toilet and before eating.
- Keep your child's fingernails clean and short so that there is less space for eggs to collect. Discourage fingernail-biting, and ask the child to avoid scratching the skin in the perianal area.
- Because pinworms lay their eggs at night, washing the anal area in the morning can help reduce the number of pinworm eggs on your body.
- Change underwear and bed linen daily and wash bed sheets, nightclothes, underwear, washcloths and towels in hot water to help kill pinworm eggs.
- Clean toilet seats daily as this too helps remove eggs.

We hope this answers your questions, and feel assured that Oberoi International School and Healthspring are vigilant, and will help keep your child healthy. Please do feel free to reach out to us if you have any more questions.

Dr. Khullar  
Paediatrician, Healthspring