

# Pinworms

## **Clinical Description:**

Pinworm infection is caused by *Enterobius vermicularis*, a thin white roundworm that lives in the colon and rectum of humans. Pinworm infection is the most common worm infection in the United States. Symptoms of a pinworm infection include perianal itching and disturbed sleep; some individuals may be asymptomatic. Diagnosis is made by applying transparent adhesive tape to the perianal area and examining the tape microscopically for eggs.

## **Incubation Period:**

The incubation period from ingestion of an egg until an adult gravid female migrates to the perianal region is 1 - 2 months or longer.

## **Mode of Transmission:**

Pinworms are transmitted directly by the fecal-oral route and indirectly through clothing, bedding, food, or other articles (including toilet seats) contaminated with pinworm eggs.

## **Period of Communicability:**

As long as gravid females discharge eggs on perianal skin. Eggs remain infective in an indoor environment for about two weeks.

## **Exclusion/Attendance:**

There are no specific recommendations on the exclusion of children with pinworm infection from school.

## **Prevention/Care:**

- Encourage frequent hand washing, particularly after using the restroom and before and after food preparation; discourage nail biting and scratching of the anal area (please refer to the ISDH Hand washing quick fact) <http://www.in.gov/isdh/25483.htm>
- Change bed linens and underwear of infected person daily for several days after treatment, avoiding aerial dispersal of eggs. Wash and dry discarded linen on the hot cycle to kill eggs. Clean and vacuum sleeping and living areas daily for several days after treatment.

## **Outbreaks:**

According to the ISDH Communicable Disease Reporting Rule (410 IAC 1-2.3) the definition of an outbreak means cases of disease occurring in a community, region, or particular population at a rate in excess of that which is normally expected. The local health department should be notified of suspected and/or documented cases of pinworms if the number of cases is in excess of what is normally experienced in your school or occur with a common connection (same class, sports team, etc.). For additional information and recommendations regarding the preparation for, and the management of an outbreak situation in a school setting, see Appendix A, "Managing an Infectious Disease Outbreak In a School Setting."

**Other Resources:**

Indiana State Department of Health Quick Facts Page (found on disease/condition page):

<http://bit.ly/12JLfD>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/disease/pinworms.html>