

THREADWORMS

Threadworms are a common problem which is easily treated. **However, the whole family must be treated at the same time to prevent cross-infection.** Medication is available without prescription from any pharmacy but if any family members are pregnant or breastfeeding please speak to your doctor first.

Around 40% of children under the age of ten will get threadworms at some stage, so it is a very common condition. However, it's not always easy to recognise the symptoms, or know what to do if you find them.

The most common symptoms are:

- An itchy bottom
- White 'threads' around the bottom and in the stools (poo)
- Bed wetting
- Disturbed sleep

Threadworms come from eggs which are so small, you can't actually see them. The eggs stick under the fingernails and can be swallowed. This is the beginning of **the threadworm life cycle.**

Threadworms can be found in:

- House dust
- Clothing
- Carpets
- Towels
- Bedding

Threadworms are harmless, but the intense itching they cause can be very uncomfortable and can cause bed-wetting. Treatment is simple and readily available from your pharmacist without prescription. There is no reason to keep them off school, though you should let the school know so we can inform parents.

Threadworms can spread very easily between family members; therefore the whole family should be treated to prevent cross-infection between family members.

You can help prevent the spread of threadworms by:

- Washing hands and scrubbing fingernails with a nailbrush
 - before eating and
 - after going to the lavatory
- Keeping underclothes, pyjamas and bed linen as clean as possible
- Bathing or showering regularly
- Using different towels and flannels for each member of the family
- Clean bedrooms and bathrooms as often as possible
- Regularly vacuuming carpets and rugs
- Keeping fingernails short and clean
- Discouraging children from scratching their bottoms, biting their nails or picking their noses.

All these suggestions should be followed for six weeks after any infection, to minimise the risk of re-infection. If you have any further concerns, please talk to your health visitor, the School Nurse (tel: 023 8043 3167) or your doctor's surgery.

