



Threadworm (Pinworm)

What is it and how can one get rid of it?

Threadworms are common and anybody can get infected. However, they are more common among children than adults. Threadworms are approx. 1 cm long, pale and filamentous worms resembling pieces of thread. They can be seen on the surface of stool or near the anus. Threadworm is only a parasite for humans, it does not infect from stool of domestic animal or snow. You can get the infection, if you get the threadworms eggs in your mouth through your hands. The symptoms are itching and redness in the anus. The child often sleeps restlessly and scratches the area round anus.

Circulatory system of the threadworm

1. From the environment through the hands to the mouth and intestines

Worm eggs have ended up for instance in towels, bed linen, toys or even in the fur of a pet. Worm eggs can stay alive for many days, even for a week.

2. From egg to worm in the intestines

In the intestines the egg develops into a worm in approximately one month. The lifetime of a worm is approx. 1–3 months.

3. The worm wanders to the anus

While a person is sleeping, the female worm wanders to the skin around anus to lay and attach its microscopically small eggs and then goes back to intestines. Because of the itching, the anus area is scratched during sleep, and worm eggs end up on clothes, and especially on hands, under nails and thus easily in the mouth. In this way the eggs (= a future worm) circulation continues. The infection cycle can continue for a long time in the same person, if the eggs end up again from the anus area to the mouth through the nails or fingertips.



Treatment procedures

Medical treatment

- Pyrvin medication for threadworm can be bought without prescription from a pharmacy. Follow the instructions that come with the package.
- In addition to the infected person also all family members must be treated at the same time.
- The worms die during the treatment in the intestines, but not the eggs, and they can still develop into worms. Therefore, it is necessary to renew the medical treatment after 1–2 weeks. In this case the worm medication is however just given to the infected person.
- In prolonged cases the doctor can consider a medicine that is bought with a prescription.

In addition to medical treatment, necessary measures to avoid reinfection

- Because the worm eggs are just around the anus, one must take special care in washing the bottom and hands.
- Emphasize the importance of washing the hands for the children. The hands should be washed thoroughly at least after going to the toilet, before meals and snacks, i.e snacking on "chips".
- Keep the nails short and the area under the nails clean.
- Change the underwear, nightgown, towels, pillowcases and bed linen during the tablet medication. Put them directly in the washing machine for wash and avoid shaking them unnecessarily.
- It is good to change underwear twice a day for a week.
- The bedroom in particular shall be cleaned thoroughly. Vacuum or air the mattresses, blankets and pillows. Vacuum and clean the floors and other surfaces. Clean the contact points such as the door handles and light switches.
- Also remember the cleanliness of the toilets and especially the toilet handles and the toilet ring, light switch and door handle.
- Clean the diaper changing table after care. Put dirty diapers directly in the garbage.
- Clean the toys.
- Children can go back to daycare or school after the first treatment.