



# Health Corner

## Pinworms

**Pinworms** (enterobiasis or *spaljši*) is a contagious intestinal infection caused by tiny parasitic worms that are very common in young school-aged children. Pinworms don't cause any harm -- just itching -- and it won't take long to get rid of them.

**How are Pinworm Infections Spread?** Pinworm infections are spread person-to-person by ingesting pinworm eggs found **on contaminated hands and surfaces** (i.e. bedding, clothing, toys, sandboxes or other items). Children typically become infected when they put their hands or toys in their mouth that are infected with pinworm eggs.

### **Signs and Symptoms:**

- Discomfort or itching around the rectum
- Restless sleeping, as the itching is usually worse at night
- If your child has a pinworm infection, you can see worms in the anal region, especially if you look 2 hours after your child has fallen asleep. You might also see the worms in the toilet. They look like tiny pieces of white thread.

**Treatment:** If your child has a pinworm infection, the doctor will prescribe an **anti-worm medication**, such as *Vermox (mebendazole)*. The doctor may also suggest a cream or other medication to help stop the itching. At home, thorough cleaning of bed linens and pajamas in hot water must also be done. Typically all family members are also treated at the same time.

**Prevention:** Here are a few ways to prevent pinworm infections in your family and at school:

- Frequent handwashing!! Remind kids to wash their hands often, especially after using the toilet, after playing outside, and before eating.
- Make sure your child showers or bathes every day and changes underwear daily.
- Keep fingernails short and clean.
- Tell children not to scratch around their bottom or to bite their nails.
- Change your child's pajamas every night.

Here at school, toys are cleaned weekly; desks and surfaces daily. For outbreaks, our cleaning staff will take extra measures to disinfect all surfaces, furniture, and toys.

### **ISL Policy**

- If your child has any of the above symptoms, please keep them at home until treatment has begun and consult with your medical doctor. Proper treatment will also help limit the spread of this infection here at school.
- If your child is diagnosed with pinworms, please notify the School Nurse. Only once on an anti-worm medication for 24 hours, may your child return back to school.