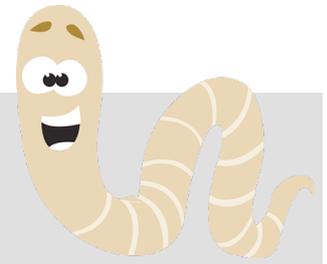


# Threadworms



A case of threadworms has recently been reported in your child's class.

The following information advises on the detection, treatment and prevention of threadworms. If you need further information please contact the school office or go to <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Threadworms/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

Thank you

## What are threadworms?

Threadworms, also known as pinworms, are a common parasite throughout the world but they prefer cold and temperate climates like our own. They infect the large intestine of humans and can affect all ages but are especially common in children under ten years.

## How do you get threadworms?

A child catches worms by swallowing minute eggs which are usually picked up on hands, particularly under the fingernails, and are transferred into the gut when a child sucks their fingers, bites their nails or puts food into their mouths using their hands.

## How can you tell if you have threadworms?

Threadworms are white and look like small pieces of thread. You may notice them around your child's anus or in their faeces. They don't always cause symptoms, but your child might experience itchiness around their anus or genitals.

## What is the treatment for threadworms?

If you or your child has threadworms everyone in your household, including those who don't have any symptoms of an infection, will need to be treated as there's a risk of the infection spreading. Treatment involves taking a single dose of a medication called *mebendazole*. If necessary, another dose can be taken after two weeks. During treatment and for a few weeks afterwards, it is important to follow strict hygiene measures to avoid spreading the threadworm eggs. This will include regularly vacuuming your house and thoroughly washing your bathroom and kitchen.

## Do I need to see my GP?

You only need to see your GP if you think you have threadworms and you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or, if you think your child has threadworms and they're under two years old. In these circumstances you should see your GP as the recommended treatment is usually different.

## How do you prevent threadworms?

It's not always possible to prevent a threadworm infection, but you can significantly reduce your risk by maintaining good hygiene and encouraging children to do the same. Children should routinely wash their hands before mealtimes and after going to the toilet and kitchen and bathroom surfaces should be kept clean at all times. If your child is infected, encouraging them not to scratch the affected area around their anus or vagina will help prevent reinfection and reduce the risk of the infection spreading to others.