

What about staying away from work, school or preschool?

Affected people do not need to stay away from work, school or preschool if they have threadworms.

Do you require further information?

For further information contact:

- Your local doctor or practice nurse
- Your local Public Health Nurse
- Communicable Diseases at Community and Public Health

Other resources available on childhood infections:

- Rotavirus
- Impetigo
- Hand, foot and mouth disease
- Ringworm
- Slapped cheek disease
- Conjunctivitis
- Whooping cough

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Communicable Diseases
Community and Public Health

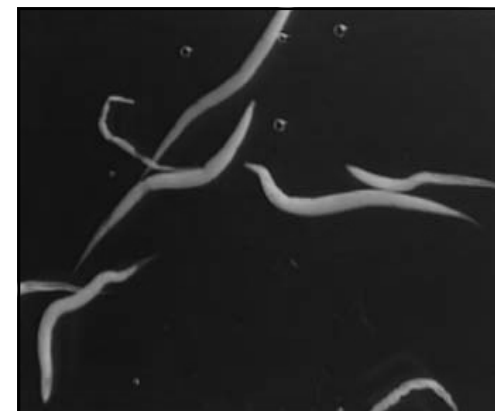
(a division of the Canterbury District Health Board)

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Threadworms



Canterbury

District Health Board

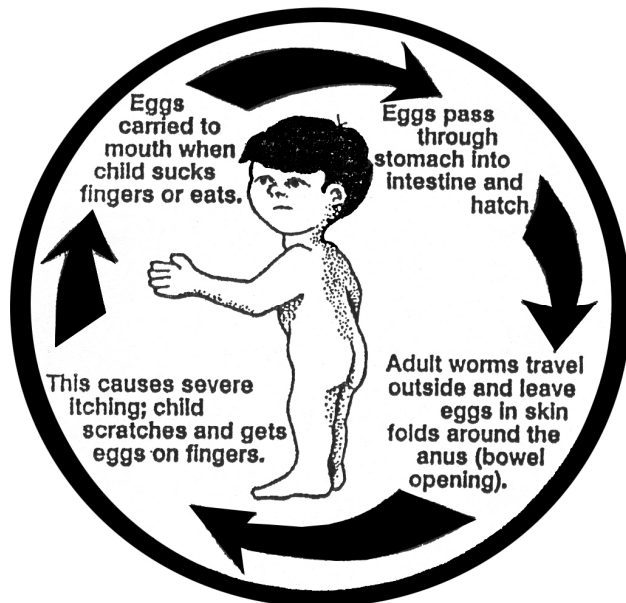
Te Poari Hauora ō Waitaha

What are Threadworms?

Threadworms or pinworms (usually just called 'worms') are tiny body parasites which live in the bowel. The female worms lay their eggs in the skin folds around the anus (bowel opening) when the person is asleep and causes itching.

When the person scratches, eggs stick to the fingers which can then be put into the mouth. Once they have passed through the stomach and into the intestine the eggs hatch and the life cycle begins again, and takes 2-6 weeks to complete.

The threadworm lifecycle:



What are the symptoms?

If your child tells you that they have an 'itchy bottom' or if you notice that they scratch their bottom a lot, it could be that they have threadworms.

You can find out for sure by checking for worms at night when the child is in bed. They look like tiny little pieces of white cotton around the anus.

Threadworms won't make your child feel sick or cause a serious health problem, but they do itch. However, they are very easy to catch and pass on to others. Usually it is children who get them, but adults can catch them too. When one person in a family has worms, everyone usually becomes infected.

How is it treated?

If you find worms on your child's bottom, see your doctor or buy worm tablets at your chemist.

It is best to treat the whole family at the same time. The treatment is usually effective but it may have to be given more than once.

In the meantime, a little bit of lanolin on the skin folds around the anus will help ease itching. Wash hands thoroughly after applying.

How is spread prevented?

Worms are passed on by hands that have just scratched an itchy bottom, or underwear, towels and bedding used by the person with worms.

To prevent spread:

- Make sure you and your children wash hands thoroughly before eating and after using the toilet
- Keep your children's fingernails short and well scrubbed
- Stop children scratching their bottoms by putting them in pyjamas or giving them cotton gloves to wear in bed
- Wash bedclothes, pyjamas and underwear frequently
- Clean toilet seat and toilet daily if used by someone with worms
- Clean and vacuum the house daily for several days after treatment

