

# Threadworms



## What are Threadworms?

Threadworms are a common and relatively harmless complaint, the infecting agent being an intestinal worm.

## What are the symptoms?

Patients are often asymptomatic but there may be itching around the anal area, disturbed sleep, irritability and sometimes secondary infection of the scratched skin. Female worms may be found in the faeces and anal region and can migrate to the vagina.

A higher incidence is found in school age children, followed by pre-school children. Cases are lower in adults, except for mothers of infected children, and infection often occurs in more than one family member.

The reservoir of the worm is man. The worms of animals are not transmissible to man.

## How do threadworms spread?

- threadworms are passed on from person to person by the eggs that they lay
- when the female deposits her eggs around the back passage, itching may occur. This commonly happens at night
- children scratch the area because of the itching and can get tiny eggs under their fingernails
- eggs are passed from the fingertips to the mouth and swallowed and so the worms can come back
- if hand hygiene is poor, the eggs may be spread to other people's food by handling

## How may spread be controlled?

- Treat the whole family on the same day, and repeat as per manufacturer's instructions. Treatment can be obtained from your local pharmacy without a prescription. If pregnant - consult GP
- Careful washing of hands (particularly under the nails) after each visit to the toilet, and before each meal
- Clean toilet seat, handle/chain, and door handle at least once daily
- Vacuum bedrooms daily
- Keep nails short
- Wear pyjamas or pants in bed
- Do not share flannels, towels, etc
- Change bedding daily.
- Shower (preferable) or bath each morning- to wash off eggs laid the previous night.

• NO EXCLUSION NECESSARY

**For further information  
please contact your  
local infection control  
nurse**