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Living the Olympic
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CHADDESLEY CORBETT ENDOWED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Securing the Future, Shaping the Future

12th December 2013

INFORMATION REGARDING THREADWORMS

Dear Parents and Carers

**A case of threadworms has been reported in school.
This information sheet gives you advice and information regarding
threadworms.**

Threadworms, or *Enterobius vermicularis*, are small intestinal worm parasites that infect the intestines of humans. The threadworm, sometimes called a pinworm, is the most common worm parasite infestation of children in the UK.

The mature female worm can be 8-13mm long, and the male worm 2-5mm long. The worms are white, with a blunt head and a fine, hair-like, pointed tail. The male is shorter and is rarely seen as it remains within the intestine. Adult worms live for up to six weeks.

The female worm lays many tiny eggs around the anus, and around the vagina and urethra (tube that carries urine from the bladder to the outside of the body) in girls. This usually happens at night, when the infested person is asleep. Threadworm eggs are not visible to the naked eye. When laying the eggs, the female worm also secretes irritant mucus, which causes the person to scratch the itchy area. Eggs then stick under fingernails and on fingertips, and can be transferred to the mouth where they can cause re-infestation.

The eggs can survive for three weeks and sometimes hatch on the skin and re-enter the bowel. Swallowed eggs hatch in the intestine and, after a couple of weeks, the worms reach adult size and begin to reproduce.

The symptoms of threadworm include itching around the anus and a lack of sleep. However, the symptoms do not always present themselves.

Humans are thought to be the only host for human threadworms. Animals cannot catch or pass on human threadworms. The only way animals may be responsible for spreading human threadworms is by transporting them on their fur as a result of human contact.

Causes and risk factors

Threadworms are usually passed on by poor hygiene. Children easily pick up threadworms from each other through contact with skin or objects contaminated with the eggs of worms. Poor hygiene, particularly not washing hands after using the toilet, is a major factor in the spread of infection.

Threadworms can be diagnosed by seeing the worms in or on faeces.

Please help us to encourage your child to wash their hands after using the toilet to help stop cross infection.

If you have any concerns about threadworms or feel you need more advice, then you should consult your school nurse, health visitor, pharmacist or doctor.

Treatment of threadworms

Anti-parasitic drugs are used to treat threadworms which must be prescribed by your doctor.

All the family must be treated at the same time to prevent infection.