

Worm Infestation

Minor Ailment

What is worm infestation?

Worm infestations happen when worms infect the intestines and other parts of the body. Examples of the different worms are pinworms, roundworms, whipworms, hookworms, tapeworms and flukes.

A patient with a mild infestation might not show any symptoms. However, some may experience itching around the anal area. The itch normally happens at night when the female worm lays eggs at areas surrounding the anus.

What are the possible causes of this condition?

A worm infestation spreads most commonly through passing of the worm eggs from the anus to the mouth. Worm eggs are often found under the fingernails of the infected person who has scratched the area around the anus. When the infected person uses their contaminated fingers to handle food or eat, the worm eggs are transferred indirectly from the anus to the mouth.

Worm eggs that fall off the areas surrounding the anus into the environment can also be breathed in. Worm eggs may also be spread by house dust, from pets or through contact with contaminated objects such as bedding, cups, utensils or doorknobs.

What are the symptoms of worm infestation?

The symptoms of this condition can include the following:

- Itching around the anal area, especially at night
- Poor appetite causing weight loss
- Stomach discomfort, diarrhoea, nausea
- Poor sleep
- Being unable to concentrate
- Spotting worms in your stool during bowel movement

What can I do to treat worm infestation?

Worm infestation can be treated in the following ways and you can approach your pharmacist to get the following medication.

- Albendazole

When do I need to see a doctor?

Although worm infestation can be treated without a doctor's consultation, there are times where the condition might be more serious. You should see a doctor if you experience any of the following:

- Have blood or pus in your stool
- Are vomiting daily or frequently
- Fever
- Extremely tired and dehydrated
- Losing weight with no obvious reason
- Feel sick, have diarrhea or stomach pain for more than 2 weeks.
- Have a red and itching rash on your skin shaped like a worm

What else can I do to manage this condition?

Other than using medications to treat the condition, worm infestations can also be managed by the following methods:

- Wash the clothes and bedding with hot water for the whole family. Do not shake these items before you wash them as shaking the clothes or bedding can spread eggs into the air.
- Clean the floor by vacuuming or mopping for a few days after being treated for the worm infestation.
- Treat family members who are in close contact with the infected person.

The following are some suggestions to prevent worm infestations from happening again:

- Keep your fingernails short to prevent the transfer of eggs to the fingernails and avoid biting your nails. Cut and scrub the nails of infected persons with a brush and soap.
- Practice good hygiene such as washing your hands with soap before cooking, eating, after playing, changing diapers, using the toilet and touching an animal or animal waste.
- Make sure your food is cooked properly. You should only drink safe and clean water.
- Have daily morning showers to remove any eggs that were laid at the area around the anus.
- Avoid walking barefoot.

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