What to do about threadworm.
Any child can get threadworm.

Just as head lice and childhood go together, getting threadworm is also a common part of growing up. In fact, by the time they reach the age of ten, as many as 40% of children will have been infected.¹ But unlike head lice, threadworm is not a condition people really talk about. So when parents encounter it for the first time, the reaction is one of panic,² which is understandable because it's a nasty surprise to discover worms are living in your child. But you only have to treat it once to see that threadworm is simply one more thing on the list of minor maladies that every parent can deal with.

The recommendations of the Royal College of Nursing, (School Nurses Forum), provide a good summary on treating threadworm:

- Inform your child's school to help stop the spread of infestation to other children. It is not necessary to keep your child at home.
- Go to the pharmacist for a single dose treatment for the whole family.
- Follow hygiene measures to help prevent threadworms coming back.
They’re worms that look like threads...

As the name suggests, threadworms appear like tiny snippets of white cotton, about 1cm long. If your child is infected, the place to look for threadworms is around the anus or in the stools. But what signs or symptoms should prompt you to look?

- The most common sign is itchiness and scratching around the bottom. This is usually more intense at night.
- Other signs to look for are disturbed sleep, irritability or change in appetite.
- In some cases, worms can enter the vagina or urinary passage, causing problems like bedwetting, vaginal irritation and cystitis.
- Finding out that your child’s friends have threadworm.

However, in many infected people, there are no outward symptoms at all; the only evidence is the appearance of the worms themselves.

The habits of our children and the lifecycle of the threadworm seem made for each other. Children play in close contact with each other and are also likely to suck their fingers. The threadworm lifecycle begins when eggs get onto someone’s hands and are swallowed. The eggs pass to the bowel where they hatch into worms. When fully mature (around 2 weeks later) the female worm begins to lay vast numbers of eggs around the anus. This often causes irritation and itchiness. Bottom-scratching then transfers eggs to fingers and underneath nails and the cycle starts all over again.
...and they're easily spread.

Threadworm eggs cannot be seen with the naked eye and can survive outside the body for up to three weeks. Apart from under fingernails, they may be found in house dust, clothing, carpets, towels and bed linen. Threadworms are easily treated; one dose of Ovex should do the trick. Once you have treated the whole family, you should consider taking a few extra precautions to deal with the eggs. In this way you can break the threadworm lifecycle and avoid re-infection.

You can’t stop children being children, but you can keep their nails short and insist on hand washing after toilet visits and before meals. Wearing pyjamas or underwear in bed is a good idea, as is a daily bath (preferably in the morning). The rest is basic spring-cleaning: put clothes, bed linen and towels in the wash; vacuum and dust thoroughly; and clean the toilet seat, toilet handle, door handle and taps as often as you can.

The lifecycle of an adult threadworm lasts for up to two months, so you need to keep up any extra measures for at least six weeks. It is also advisable to notify your child’s school to help stop the spread of infection, but it is not necessary to keep your child at home.

If re-infection is suspected and symptoms continue for 2 weeks, your family may need a second dose of Ovex.
If you can deal with head lice in the family, you can also deal with threadworm. If anything, the treatment for threadworm is easier.

Just pop down to your pharmacist and ask for Ovex. One dose is normally all you need; which is one reason why Ovex is Britain's best-selling threadworm treatment.²

The key to effective treatment is to treat the whole family,* even if they don’t have symptoms. Threadworm eggs are invisible to the naked eye; chances are if one member of your family has threadworm, the rest of the family may have come into contact with the eggs. To help prevent re-infection, it is important to understand the threadworm lifecycle. Once you know how threadworms are spread, you'll know what practical steps you can take to put a stop to them. This leaflet will help you, plus you can find more information at www.ovex.co.uk.

*Ovex should not be taken by infants under two years of age or by women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.
Helping you treat the whole family.

Ovex, the number one threadworm treatment, is available directly from your pharmacist without a prescription. It comes in family-sized packs either as a chewable orange-flavoured tablet or in a banana-flavoured suspension.

The active ingredient of Ovex is mebendazole, which works by interfering with the worms' ability to absorb sugar. The worms die and are expelled from the body within a few days.

Ovex should not be taken by infants under two years of age or by women who are pregnant or breastfeeding. In these cases you should ask your doctor for advice.

Contains mebendazole. Always read the leaflet.

Ovex® What to do about threadworm.

For more information visit www.ovex.co.uk


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