OVEX™
Effective one dose treatment for threadworms

THREADWORMS
A lesson for all the family

Produced by Johnson & Johnson®

In association with the Clean Crusaders Campaign
What are threadworms?

Threadworms live in the bowel and around the bottom. They are tiny white worms about half an inch long which look like “threads” of white cotton - hence the name “threadworms”.

Are they harmful?

Threadworms do not cause serious damage but they are an irritating problem. Besides the intense itching, which can be distressing and embarrassing for the sufferer, they can also lead to disturbed sleep, tummy aches, irritable crying, loss of appetite or an unusually large appetite. Sometimes, threadworms can be transferred to the vagina and urinary passage. This can result in vaginal irritation and discharge, cystitis and bedwetting.

Who gets threadworms?

Anyone. It does not mean your family or your home are not clean. In fact, children often pick them up at school, and can then easily infect the whole family.

How common are threadworms?

Threadworms are a very common problem, particularly in children. It is estimated that about 40% of children below the age of 10 years may be infected with threadworms at any one time, but many may not show the “itching” symptoms.

How can I tell if someone has threadworms?

The most common sign is scratching of the bottom, particularly at night, which is when the female worms lay their eggs. This may be associated with bedwetting, disturbed sleep and irritability, and so the scratching may not be noticed. Some of the sufferers show no sign of infection, in which case it is a question of spotting the tiny white “thread-like” worms on the motions.

Where do threadworms come from?

Threadworms spread by producing large numbers of tiny eggs. These eggs are so small that they cannot be seen with the naked eye. They are present in house dust, they stick to clothing, carpets, towels and bed linen, and they can also be picked up from contact with someone who already has worms. Because the eggs are so small and so widespread it is very easy for them to be swallowed. When swallowed, the eggs pass into the bowel where they hatch into worms. When mature, the female threadworm lays her eggs at night around the bottom. It is this activity which causes the “itchy bottom”. The resulting irritation causes scratching which allows the transfer of eggs to the fingers and fingernails. Eggs can then be easily transferred to the mouth by finger sucking or nail biting, causing re-infection, and spread to other members of the family by direct contact or via food, towels and bed linen etc. Threadworms only affect humans – they do not affect pets.

How do I treat threadworms?

Threadworms are very easy to treat. The same kind of threadworm treatment most prescribed by doctors is available from pharmacies without a prescription. OVEX is a simple one-tablet treatment that works to kill threadworms. The tablet is orange-flavoured, sugar-free and chewable, so it is suitable for children, although it should not be used for infants under 2 years of age, nor should it be taken by women who are, or think they may be pregnant or women who are breast-feeding. In these cases, ask your doctor for advice.

Who needs to be treated?

Since threadworms can spread so easily, it is strongly recommended that all the family is treated at the same time.

Do I need to keep my child off school?

No - as long as the child is treated and the general hygiene measures outlined overleaf are followed, there is no reason to keep a child off school.
How can I stop the problem coming back?

Threadworms are easily treated, but unless the following precautions are taken the problem may recur:

- Make sure everyone in the family is treated with Ovex at the same time.
- Scrub fingers and nails with a nail brush after each visit to the toilet and before each meal.
- Clean the toilet seat, toilet handle or chain, door handle and taps regularly.
- Vacuum and dust bedrooms thoroughly.

General advice for people with threadworms

- Keep nails short.
- Discourage nail biting or finger sucking.
- Wear pyjamas or underclothes in bed.
- Bath daily, washing thoroughly around the bottom.
- Provide a towel for the exclusive use of each member of the family.
- Change clothes and wash and iron bed linen regularly.

Since the life cycle of an adult worm can be as long as six weeks, it is advisable to continue with these general hygiene measures for six weeks to prevent re-infection.

Because threadworms spread so quickly, it's important to catch the infection early. Even if only one of your family appears to have threadworms, it's possible that other family members have picked up the infection and are distributing the tiny eggs around the home, where they can infect someone else. This is why it's worth treating the whole family at the same time with Ovex. Ovex is available from pharmacies in a single-tablet treatment pack for one and a convenient family pack which contains enough tablets to treat a family of four.