

#threadworms  
#publichealth5-19service



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# Threadworms FACTSHEET

This factsheet will provide you with information and very helpful links to websites with hints and tips about treatment and management of threadworms.

## TOP TIPS ABOUT THREADWORMS

The aim of treating threadworms is to get rid of the parasites and prevent re-infection.

**To successfully treat threadworms, the entire household must be treated, even if not everyone has symptoms.**

**Tip 1:** Medications **are** available free from your local pharmacy without prescription. You should always follow the manufacturer's instructions because these types of medications may not be suitable for everyone.

**Tip2:** Strict hygiene measures can be used to clear up a threadworm infection and reduce the likelihood of re-infection. As the life span of the threadworms is approximately six weeks, it is important that these hygiene methods are followed for this period. Make sure that everyone in the household is following this advice.

**Tip 3:** Wash all sleepwear, bed linen, towels, and cuddly toys when first diagnosed - this can be done at normal temperatures but make sure that the washing is well rinsed.

**Tip 4:** Thoroughly vacuum and dust the whole house, paying particular attention to the bedrooms. Continue to vacuum regularly and thoroughly.

**Tip 5:** Carefully clean the bathroom and kitchen by 'damp-dusting' surfaces, and washing the cloth frequently in hot water. Continue to clean bathroom and kitchen surfaces regularly and thoroughly.

**Tip 6:** Avoid shaking any material that may have eggs on it, such as clothing, or bed sheets, as this may transfer the eggs to other surfaces.

**Tip 7:** Keep your finger nails short. Discourage nail biting and finger sucking - in particular, make sure that children do not suck their thumb.

**Tip 8:** Wash your hands frequently, and scrub under your finger nails, particularly before eating, after visiting the toilet, and before and after changing a nappy. Wear close-fitting underwear at night and change your underwear every morning.

**Tip 9:** Bath, or shower, regularly, particularly first thing in the morning, and make sure that you clean around your anus and vagina to remove any eggs.

**Tip 10:** Ensure that everyone in your household has their own face flannel and towel. Avoid using communal (shared) towels.

Even after the infestation has cleared up, you should continue with good general hygiene measures, such as washing **your** hands after going to the toilet. Children can easily pick up another threadworm infection from friends or at school, and good hygiene may help prevent another outbreak.

## Medication

Medication can also be used to treat threadworms. It should be taken by everyone in the household. The high risk of transmission (around 75% between family members) means that everyone is likely to be infected, even if they do not have any symptoms.

The most common medication that is used to treat threadworm infections is mebendazole.

## Mebendazole

Mebendazole prevents the threadworms from being able to absorb glucose, which means that they will die within a few days. Mebendazole is the preferred treatment option for children who are over two years of age. It can be bought over-the-counter (OTC), or available at the pharmacy for free via the minor ailments scheme, and is available as a chewable tablet or in liquid form.

As re-infection is very common, a second dose of mebendazole may be prescribed to be taken after two weeks. You should follow the dosage information that is provided on the label, or in the patient information leaflet that comes with the medicine.

Mebendazole is between 90-100% effective at killing the threadworms, but they cannot kill the eggs. Strict hygiene measures should still be followed for two weeks after treatment (see above).

You should see your GP if the infection persists after using medication. They may recommend that you begin a second course of medication.

## Pregnancy and breastfeeding

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, the hygiene method is the preferred method for treating a threadworm infection. Medication for threadworm is not usually recommended.

# VISIT THESE USEFUL WEBSITES

## Public Health 5 to 19 Service

<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/ph5to19/generalhealth/healthconditions/general.asp>

Lots of information, advice and links to websites to support you with common child health conditions.

## Better care together health videos.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sdUk2CPnUY&index=5&t=0s&list=PLhU9kcG04dzYDkWHIFORnj5d9KaSeV1Fg>

## NHS Choices Information.

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/threadworms/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/threadworms/)

