



Can Children Get Pinworms from a Pet Dog or Cat?

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Human pinworms (ie, *Enterobius vermicularis*) are nonzoonotic intestinal parasitic worms of human hosts. Humans are considered to be the only hosts of *E vermicularis*; therefore, human pinworms cannot originate from pets or other animals and vice versa. Like human pinworms, pinworms found in animals such as horses (ie, *Oxyuris equi*) or rabbits (ie, *Passalurus ambiguus*) are host-specific.¹⁻³

In General¹⁻³

- ▶ Human pinworm infection is spread via the fecal-oral route.
- ▶ Symptoms of human pinworm infection include itching around the anus, which can cause difficulty sleeping and restlessness; however, some infected humans may not experience any symptoms.
- ▶ Diagnosis is made by identifying the worm or its eggs.

– Worms can sometimes be seen on the skin near the anus or on undergarments, pajamas, or bed sheets.

Client Communication

- ▶ Pet owners should be advised that, because pinworms are host-specific, dogs, cats, and other pets do not play a role in the spread of human pinworms.
- ▶ Owners with questions or concerns about human pinworms should be referred to their healthcare provider.
- ▶ Owners should be advised that strict observance of good hand hygiene—including proper handwashing, maintaining clean and short fingernails, avoiding nail-biting, and avoiding scratching the perianal area—is the most effective means of preventing human pinworm infection and/or reinfection.
- ▶ Careful handling and frequent changing of underclothing, night clothes,

towels, and bedding can also help reduce infection, reinfection, and environmental contamination. These items should be laundered in hot water, especially after each treatment of the infected individual and after each use of washcloths until the infection is cleared. ■

References

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2. Heymann DL. Enterobiasis. In: Heymann DL, ed. *Control of Communicable Diseases Manual*. 20th ed. Washington, DC: American Public Health Association Press; 2015:187-189.
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