



# Arrowhead Head Start Health Alert!



Someone in your child’s classroom has the health issue below. This note is to tell you signs to watch for in your child. Call your doctor if your child has any of these signs. If you have questions call the Head Start Health Manager, at 748-7336.

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**Pinworms:** Pinworms are small, white, threadlike worms (0.25-0.5” long) that live in the large intestine.

Symptoms include anal or vaginal itching or irritation. Most people have no signs or symptoms.

Incubation period: 1 to 2 months or longer from the time of ingesting the pinworm eggs until an adult worm migrates to the anal area.

Contagious period: As long as the female worms are discharging eggs to the skin around the anus.

How are they spread?

- Fecal-oral route: Contact with feces of children who are infected. The generally involves an infected child contaminating his/her own fingers, and then touching an object that another child touches. The child who touched the contaminated surface then puts his/her fingers into her own mouth or another person’s mouth.
- By sharing toys, bedding, clothing, toilet seats or baths. The eggs are light and float in the air.
- Pinworm eggs remain infective for 2 to 3 weeks in indoor environments.
- Infestation with pinworms commonly clusters within families.

How to control them: Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly. Keep child’s fingernails short. Treatment with oral medication once or repeated in 2 weeks may be necessary for the whole family and the group of children who share a common environment.

Bathe the child in the morning to remove a large proportion of eggs that are laid at night. Avoid shaking bedding or underwear to prevent spreading ova through the air.

**If your child has Pinworms, he/she can come to school unless anus or vagina appears infected as a weeping or crusty sore.**

**Note: Although exclusion for these conditions is not necessary, families should seek advice from the child’s doctor for how to care for pinworms. Call your Head Start teacher or the Health Manager right away if a doctor says your child has Pinworms.**