Pinworms are tiny white worms, about 1/4 inch long. They look like little pieces of thread. Pinworm eggs pass easily from child to child by touching things the child with pinworm touches (clothes, toys, etc). A child with pinworms often has an itchy bottom and scratches this area. The child then swallows the pinworm eggs picked up on his fingers. The pinworms hatch in the child’s intestines.

Pinworms sometimes can be seen around the child’s bottom, on his pajamas or in his stool. The best time to check for pinworms is several hours after he has gone to sleep or right after he gets up in the morning.

**Testing for pinworms:** There are several ways to check for pinworms.

**FLASHLIGHT TEST**

After your child has been asleep for several hours at night, take a flashlight into his room. Turn your child on his stomach or side.

Shine the flashlight on your child’s rectum. Pinworms lay eggs around the rectum at night. They do not like light, so they will move when you shine a light on them. Wash your hands when you are finished.

If you see pinworms, call your child’s doctor or the clinic **in the morning**. Your child’s doctor may prescribe medicine at this time or have your child come to the clinic for an exam.

**SLIDE TEST (or Scotch® Tape Test)**

Before your child gets out of bed in the morning and bathes, press the sticky side of clear tape firmly against the rectum. You may wrap the tape, sticky side out, around a tongue blade. Then place the tongue blade between the buttock cheeks close to the rectum.

Place the tape sticky side down on the slide the clinic staff gave you. Wash your hands when finished.

Bring the slide to the clinic. The slide will go to the laboratory where it will be checked for worms and eggs under a microscope.

If your child has pinworms, the doctor will call you and prescribe a medication.
If your child has pinworms:

- Encourage good hand washing, especially before meals and after using the bathroom.
- Keep fingers away from the mouth and nose.
- Keep fingernails clean and short.
- Don’t allow your child to scratch his bottom.
- He should sleep alone.
- Wash bed linens, towels, washcloths and clothing in hot water and dry in a dryer.
- Give medicine as directed by your child’s doctor.
- Wash all your child’s toys often.
- All of the people who live in the house may need to be treated.

If you have questions, call your child’s doctor or the Children’s Mercy Hospital Information Line at (816) 234-3188.