Threadworms

GASTROINTESTINAL TRACT INFECTIONS
Threadworms (Enterobius vermicularis)
(CKS Threadworm)

Threadworms is a condition that should be treated over the counter and is on the NHSE list of conditions for which OTC items should NOT routinely be prescribed in primary care.

Threadworm or pinworm is a parasitic worm which infests the human gut and transmission occurs by the faeco-oral route when threadworm eggs are ingested.

Symptoms usually include intense perianal itching which is typically worse at night.

Treatment:
Patients should be advised to implement hygiene measures and if treatment is required/appropriate, to purchase (or obtain via Pharmacy First) a suitable product over the counter (adults and children over 2 years).

- Patient information leaflet: Threadworms
- Treat all household contacts at the same time.
- Treat with a single dose of mebendazole (unless contraindicated) — the dose may need to be repeated after 14 days if infection persists.
- Threadworms are self-limiting if the patient can avoid re-infection for 6 weeks.
- Advise rigorous hygiene measures for 2 weeks if treated with mebendazole or 6 weeks if using hygiene measures alone:
  - Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after using the toilet, changing nappies and before handling food.
  - Cut fingernails regularly, avoid biting nails and scratching around the anus.
  - Shower each morning, including the perianal area, to remove eggs from the skin.
  - Change bed linen and nightwear daily for several days after treatment.
  - Do not shake out items as this may distribute eggs around the room.
  - Washing/drying in a hot cycle will kill threadworm eggs.
  - Thoroughly dust and vacuum (including vacuuming mattresses) and clean the bathroom by ‘damp-dusting’ surfaces, washing the cloth frequently in hot water.

Mebendazole is contraindicated in pregnancy and children <6 months, advise to observe hygiene measures for 6 weeks, aiming to break the re-infection cycle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Dosage</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mebendazole</td>
<td>Adult and child ≥6 months: 100mg STAT</td>
<td>Single dose (may need to be repeated after 14 days)</td>
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1 See BNF for appropriate use and dosing in specific populations, e.g., hepatic impairment or renal impairment, and in pregnancy and breastfeeding.

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Part of the Antimicrobial Prescribing Guidelines for Primary Care.