



UNIVERSITY OF EMBU

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

DEWORMING

Definition

Deworming is the giving of an anthelmintic drug (dewormer) to a human to **rid them of helminth parasites** such as roundworms, flukes and tapeworm.

Purpose

Deworming **improves a person's immunity** and thereby protecting him/her from effects caused by worm infestation.

How often should deworming be done?

It is recommended that deworming should be done after every 6 months starting from one year of age.

Pregnant mothers also get deworming in the second trimester during antenatal care.

How can you get infected?

You can get infected by:

- Touching objects or surfaces with worm eggs on them – if someone with worms does not wash their hands
- Touching soil or swallowing water or food with worm eggs in it – mainly a risk in parts of the world without modern toilets or sewage systems

- Walking barefoot on soil containing worms – only a risk in parts of the world without modern toilets or sewage systems
- Eating raw or undercooked beef, pork or freshwater fish (like salmon or trout) containing baby worms – more common in parts of the world with poor food hygiene standards

Common symptoms of intestinal worms are:

- Abdominal pain or tenderness
- Diarrhea, nausea, vomiting
- General body weakness
- Hotness of the body
- Bloating
- Itching at the anus
- Unexplained weight loss

Complications of intestinal worm's infestation

- Anaemia – low blood levels in the body
- Intestinal blockage - adult worms obstructing the lumen of the intestines

Diagnosis

Stool is examined to check the type and kind of intestinal worms for accurate treatment

Best medicine for deworming

Mebendazole, albendazole and tiabendazole work by preventing the worms from absorbing the sugars they need for survival

Praziquantel and ivermectin work by paralyzing the worms in the gut (intestine)

Any worms in your gut will eventually pass out in your poo. You may not notice this after treatment

Prevention of worm infestation

- Wash your hands before eating or preparing food and after touching soil or using the toilet
- Only drink bottled or boiled water in high-risk areas (places without modern toilets or sewage systems)
- Deworm pet dogs and cats regularly
- Dispose of dog and cat poo in a bin as soon as possible
- Thoroughly wash garden-grown fruits and vegetables before ingestion