

STRONGYLOIDIASIS

What is strongyloidiasis?

- Strongyloidiasis is an infection with a tiny roundworm called *Strongyloides stercoralis*, which occurs in many tropical countries.
- People become infected when the worms burrow through the skin and travel to the intestines.

Who is at risk?

- Anyone who comes in contact with infected soil or faeces is at risk of being infected with this worm. Over 30 million people in 70 countries have strongyloidiasis.
- The worms can live outside the body for up to 3 weeks, and infection is more common when hygiene and sanitation is poor.
- Where there is good sanitation and good hand washing practices, there is little risk of transmitting *Strongyloides* to other people.

What are the symptoms?

Most people with Strongyloidiasis have no symptoms. Sometimes an infected person may have some or all of the following symptoms:

- Diarrhoea and abdominal pain.
- Itchy rash on the buttocks or waist.
- Chest symptoms, eg cough.
- Sometimes, if a person becomes sick for other reasons, the worms can spread to other parts of the body and cause serious health problems.
- People who are infected with *Strongyloides* worms may have symptoms over years or even decades, if they are not treated.

How is Strongyloides detected?

- A blood test will show if you have ever been infected with *Strongyloides* worms.
- If the blood test is positive, the doctor may ask you to collect one or more samples of your faeces to check if the worms are still active.

How is the infection treated?

- Your doctor may prescribe a single course of tablets.
- The tablets are safe for children and adults who are well.
- People who are very sick with Strongyloidiasis may be referred to a specialist doctor.

Further information is available from