

WORM of the WEEK

Trichuriasis

Trichuris trichiura, aka Whipworm

Trichuriasis

Trichuriasis is an infection of the large intestine caused by the human whipworm (*Trichuris trichiura*), a member of the family of soil-transmitted helminths. **Eggs are ingested from contaminated food or soil.** Adult whipworms can live in the body for up to a year, and female worms can shed between 3,000 and 20,000 eggs per day. Whipworms thrive in warm, humid tropical climates and **infect 604 million people worldwide.**

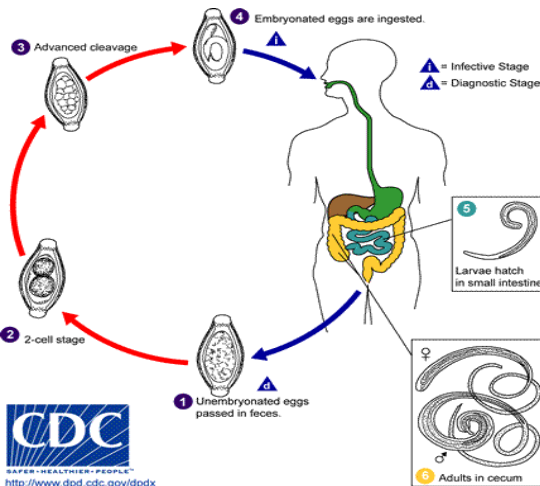
Symptoms of *Trichuris* Infection

Trichuriasis is often asymptomatic (<100 worms). If present, symptoms include **malnutrition, anemia, vitamin A deficiency, stunted growth, cognitive defects** and **intestinal obstruction**, particularly in children. Heavy infection may cause abdominal pain, bloody diarrhea, and **rectal prolapse.**

Populations/Countries Affected

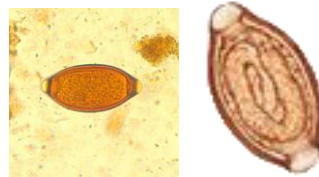


Also present in southern US (not shown on map)



Diagnosis

Microscopic identification of whipworm eggs in feces is evidence of infection.



Treatment

Mebendazole is the drug of choice, being 90% effective in the first dose. **Albendazole** can be used as an alternative.

Treatment can cost as little as **2 cents per dose.**

Prevention and Control

In 2001, the World Health Organization (WHO) adopted a resolution aimed at the “**deworming**” of 75 percent of all at-risk school-age children by 2010, the largest public health program ever attempted to date. As with the other soil-transmitted helminths, treatment of the active trichuriasis infection is coupled with **education efforts** aimed at proper waste disposal and sanitation management, effective hand washing techniques, and the washing, peeling and/or cooking of vegetables before eating.

Sources: <http://gnntdc.sabin.org/about-ntds/factsheets>
<http://www.dpd.cdc.gov/DPDx/HTML/Trichuriasis.htm>

Just 50 cents campaign:

<http://www.globalnetwork.org/just50cents>

