School-based deworming is better than deworming children one at a time. School-based deworming kills the worms and eggs in many children at the same time, so that fewer eggs pollute the environment.

**What can be done to prevent worms?**

- Wash our hands with soap and clean water;
- Wash our hands after going to the toilet, after playing outside and before eating food;
- Avoid swallowing river-, stream-or lake water when swimming in it;
- Drink and use clean water;
- Wash all fruit and vegetables in clean water before we eat it;
- Wear shoes or slippers;
- Defecate in a latrine or for young children, in a pot; and
- Take deworming tablets every six month.

References: South African Medical Research Council. 2007. Learn about worms! Tygerberg
Learn about worms and stop worms spreading

What kind of worms do you get?

Different types of worms can live inside us. Three of the most common types of worms that infect children are hookworm, roundworm and whipworm.

How do worms get inside you?

- Worms grow inside the intestines/gut of infected children. The worms lay thousands of eggs which come out when an infected child goes to the toilet.
- Worm eggs are too small to see without a microscope and if we are not careful they can easily get onto our hands, food and drinking water.
- When we swallow the eggs, they grow into worms inside our bodies and make us get sick.

You can get hookworms when the young worms burrow through the skin of bare feet. The only way you can get whipworms and roundworms is if you swallow the eggs.

How do worms make us sick? (Signs and Symptoms)

Worms eat the food that we need to grow strong and healthy. A few worms are not so serious, but many worms can cause serious health problems. Worms can affect children’s growth, health and energy in many ways.

Children with many worms:
- Are smaller and shorter;
- Get sick often (with ‘flu, diarrhoea or TB) as their bodies are too weak to fight the germs;
- Are often absent from school;
- Are tired and have less energy to play;
- Have stomach cramps;
- Are coughing;
- Struggle to concentrate at school and are falling behind their lessons.

Common contamination routes

So how do the worm eggs get from the faeces into our mouths?

1. The boy has worms; he goes to the toilet in the bush.
2. The germs and eggs are carried by the wind and rain into the water.
3. ...or into the fields where we grow our food and graze our animals.
4. The germs and eggs get on our hands.
5. ... and our food...
6. ...and in our mouths.

How do worms get inside you?

Worms grow inside the intestines/gut of infected children. The worms lay thousands of eggs which come out when an infected child goes to the toilet.

Worm eggs are too small to see without a microscope and if we are not careful they can easily get onto our hands, food and drinking water.

When we swallow the eggs, they grow into worms inside our bodies and make us get sick.

Different types of worms can live inside us. Three of the most common types of worms that infect children are hookworm, roundworm and whipworm.

Hookworm  Roundworm  Whipworm