LESSON PLAN

Worms are parasites that live in our body. They are dangerous because they can multiply rapidly. One worm can lay thousands of tiny eggs. Once in our body, these eggs grow into worms, and then travel through the body until they find a good place to grow and reproduce. They survive by eating the food we consume or by sucking our blood. By depriving our body of important food and blood, worms can cause malnutrition, anaemia and nightblindness. Worms can also be deadly if not treated properly. Lack of personal hygiene and poor environmental sanitation can lead to worm infestation.

There are many types of worms, such as round, hook, thread, guinea etc. Out of these, round worms, hook worms and thread worms are particularly common among children.

1. ROUND WORMS (ASCARUS)

Round worms are 10-15 cms long and pink or white in colour. Roundworm infestation can cause malnutrition, especially in children.

SPREAD

When a worm-infested person defecates in the open, the round worm's tiny eggs get mixed in the surrounding soil. When children play in this area, the eggs on the soil may stick to their feet, hands and nails, and if the child eats with the infested and unwashed hands, the eggs can enter the body through the mouth.

The eggs also stick to the vegetables grown in infested soil, and the germs enter the body if these vegetables are not washed properly before eating.

Washing hands and utensils with mud that is infested with these eggs is another way through which the worms are spread. Lack of personal hygiene can also spread worms, e.g. if hands are not washed properly after defeacation, the eggs sticks under the nails and enter the body while eating.

SYMPTOMS

Round worms can cause bouts of abdominal pain, indigestion, vomit or diarrhoea. It may also make children feel like eating mud. In severe cases, it causes the stomach to swell.

TREATMENT

Deworming tablets should be taken as per the advice of a doctor or health worker, and the course should be completed.
PREVENTION

Use latrine or pit latrine for passing stools. Always wash hands with soap or ash after defaecating and before eating or cooking. Keep nails short and clean. Always keep water covered. Always use a ladle to take water from pot. Wash vegetables well before eating them. Prevent children from eating mud.

REMEMBER!

Keep hands clean, especially before eating and after defaecating. Cover drinking water and food. Wear shoes, especially in areas where others defaecate.

2. HOOKWORM

Hookworms are 1 cm long and red in colour, although they cannot usually be seen in the faeces. Once they enter the body, they travel through the blood stream until they travel intestines, where they attach themselves and suck blood. Hookworm infestation can lead to serious complications. Among children, it may cause anaemia. Any child who is anaemic, very pale or eats mud may have hookworms.

SPREAD

The eggs of the hookworms come out in the stools of infested persons and hatch on moist soil. From here, the baby hookworms can enter a person’s body through bare feet.

SYMPTOMS

When the hookworms enter the body through the feet, they may cause itching. Within a few days after entering the body, the hookworms reach the lungs through the blood-stream, and may cause a dry cough. The person coughs up the young worms and swallows them again. A few days later the person may have diarrhoea or stomach-ache.

Hookworms suck blood and often produce weakness and in severe cases anaemia.

TREATMENT

Complete the course of deworming tablets as per the advice of a doctor or health worker. A complete course of iron tablets is also advisable.

PREVENTION

Always use latrine or dry pit latrine for defaecation. Use footwear outside the house.

3. THREADWORM

These worms are very thin, thread-like, and white in colour. They lay thousands of tiny eggs just outside the anus, or near the vaginal opening among girls.

SPREAD

When a person scratches the infected area, the eggs of the threadworm stick to the nails and spread when the same unwashed hands are used to eat, cook food or serve water that will later be consumed by others. Thus, the cycle of infection continues.

SYMPTOMS

Itching and scratching around the anus, or near vaginal opening among girls, particularly at night, which disturbs sleep, causes irritation and weakness.

TREATMENT

Complete course of deworming medicine as per the advice of a doctor or health worker. Children who have thread worms should wear pants while sleeping to keep them from scratching. Wash the child’s hands and buttocks with soap and water.

PREVENTION

Wash hands well with soap or ash and water after defaecating and before eating or serving food. Keep nails clean and short.
1. JINGLE BELL S

Objective
To help children learn and remember the causes, symptoms and prevention of worm infestation.

Activity
Worms and worms (2)
Worms are wriggling around,
Some are straight, some are hooked,
And some are round and round.
All the worms breed in dirty surroundings,
Entering the body, through foot or mouth,
Increasing the appetite, decreasing the might,
Causing malnutrition and weakening the bright.
Hey! worms and worms (2)
Worms are wriggling around,
Some are straight, some are hooked,
And some are round and round.
Course of tablets should be completed awhile,
Green leafy vegetables and fruits should be supplied,
Nails should be cut and shoes should be worn,
Cooking and eating food when the hands are washed,
Worms and worms (2)
None of them around,
Cleanliness and proper care
Makes one stout and sound.
At the end of the song the facilitator can initiate the discussion and revise the messages about worms.

2. WORM VOICES

Objective
To teach children about worms, its causes, treatment and prevention.

Activity
The educator can use this script for story telling as well as role playing.

Once some children were playing in a garden. Suddenly they heard strange and unfamiliar voices. They quietly looked around to see who was talking. Some unusual figures caught their sight. They saw three strange figures, all three had long tails but their shapes were different.
One was fat and plump, another crooked, and the third was very thin. The children were puzzled, so they hid behind a tree to hear them talk. From their conversation the children found that the funny looking creatures were none other than the nasty worms.

First of all the Roundworm said “My eggs are so small that people cannot see them. I lay my eggs and when they come out in stools they can remain for a long time in the soil. I stick to the nails of people and enter their body if they don’t wash their hands. Also, some children eat mud and some women clean their utensils with mud. This makes it easier to enter their body. As soon as I enter, I eat up everything the person eats, so their body becomes weak from lack of food. Then I lay thousands of eggs and come out through their faeces. This way I continue my cycle. Ha! Ha! What a Life!!!”

Upon hearing this, the Hookworm boasted, “Huh, what a life? You don’t know me! I am very dangerous. I stick to the intestines of the person and suck their blood, but I cannot be seen. People then become anaemic from lack of blood. I leave my eggs on the moist soil through faeces and when another person walks barefoot over it, I enter their body. This is how I spread. So, you see my might? You only live on a person’s food, but I am a superhero because I feast on precious blood!”

The Threadworm, who had so quietly listened to the two, said, “I am thin and thread-like and lay my eggs outside the anus, which leads to itching at night. I also travel from the faeces to the mouth. I too, like persons who are dirty, those who do not wash their hands properly, especially after defaecating. But I can trouble a person the most because I cause itching, irritation and weakness and give sleepless nights. Wow, what fun!”

All the three worms were happy with their victory, and quickly started to dance and sing “We shall overcome...”

The children were struck with disbelief on hearing all these stories. Chotu, the youngest of all started crying because he had been eating mud even though everyone had told him not to. Now, he knew the consequences. The children did not know how to prevent worm infestations, so they all ran to Lata, an elderly friend of the children. They told her all they had heard and seen. They also told her that since Chotu was eating mud, he may have a lot of worms in his body. Lata said, “Oh no, that is not good. You must see a doctor and take deworming tablets. Also ask your parents to give the same medicine to everyone in the family. Aside from the tablets, you have to take other precautions to prevent another worm infestation because repeated infestations can cause serious complications”.

The children were relieved to get help, and asked Lata about preventive measures. Lata told them about personal hygiene, regularly cutting nails, using latrines, washing hands before eating and using footwear.

Chotu listened carefully, then asked, “But Lata, what about that proud hookworm? He said that he was causing paleness and weakness in us by sucking our blood”. Lata explained that hookworms can cause anaemia, but can be removed by first completing the course of deworming tablets and eating iron-rich food such as green leafy vegetables. She also warned that deworming tablets are not enough. Personal and environmental hygiene are just as important for the whole family. The children were now happy and making fun of the worms. They started dancing and singing - “We shall overcome...”.

The story could be followed with discussions and a review of the lesson plan.

3. PUZZLE

Objective
To familiarize children with the treatment and preventive measures against worm infestations.

Activity
Mix words in a jumble of letters and ask the
4. PASS THE PARCEL

Objective
To revise the learned material on worms, emphasising prevention.

Activity
Sit in a circle with children. Get a handkerchief and tie a knot at one end of it. Ask one child to stand up and go around the circle where children are sitting facing in. The children in the circle should not look behind themselves, to see if the handkerchief has been left behind them by the person moving around. Quietly, the child moving around puts the handkerchief behind another person's back. The child to whom the handkerchief is given then gets up. That child is then asked a question on the prevention of worms, like Raju scratches his bottoms and does not wash his hands, what happens when he serves food to Meena with those hands and helps her to eat too. The child has to answer the question and then go round the circle.

Similarly, questions have to be designed for all children.

AFTER ALL THESE ACTIVITIES
THE CHILDREN SHOULD KNOW...

The types of worms
The causes and spread of worm infestations
How to recognise the symptoms
The treatment and preventive measures.

FOLLOW UP

Over a period of two or three months, it should be possible to observe some behavioural changes in the children. For example:

Improvement in children's general level of hygiene
Regularity in the practice of cutting nails, using footwear and washing hands and
Use of latrines instead of open areas.

One child could also be assigned the task of monitoring the other children, ensuring for example that their nails are cut every 15 days.

REMEMBER!

DO NOT DEFAECATE IN OPEN AREAS
ALWAYS USE LARTrINES
IF LARTrINE IS NOT AVAILABLE, DIG A PIT AND USE IT FOR DEFAECATION, THEN COVER IT WITH MUD
WASH HANDS WITH SOAP OR ASH AND WATER BEFORE EATING OR SERVING FOOD AND AFTER DEFAECATION
COMPLETE THE DEWORMING COURSE

EDUCATOR'S NOTE