

# Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds

## Soil Transmitted Helminth Infections in Children: Free Testing and Treatment

- The **University of Alabama at Birmingham**, with funding from the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**, will be assessing volunteers ages 6 – 18 years for these infections in Wilcox, Perry and Lowndes counties.
- If participants tests positive, they will be provided a safe and simple treatment.
- Families living in these counties will be paid up to \$150 per child for submitting samples of stool (poop).

### Soil Transmitted Helminth Infections

- **Soil transmitted helminth** (STH) infections were once common throughout the southeastern U.S.
- Recent investigations have raised the concern that these infections may be ongoing.
- STH infections include hookworm, roundworm and whipworm. These worms can live inside a person's digestive tract (intestines) and in contaminated soil.
- Decades ago, disease detection and treatment campaigns reduced community STH infection levels, however, no such projects have been conducted in Alabama in a long time.

### What are symptoms of STH?

- Most people with light infection will have no symptoms.
- However, those with heavy infections are at risk for low blood levels (anemia), diarrhea, blood and protein loss, and may get tired easily or have difficulty learning.
- Sometimes infections can cause rashes, itchy skin, or breathing problems.

### How do infections occur?

- Once a person has an STH infection, such as hookworm, they can remain infected for years if not treated.
- While in a person's body, a hookworm lays eggs, and these eggs pass out in poop.
- If sewage contaminates the environment, these eggs can live in the soil and place new people at risk of infection.
- Children are at highest risk for these types of infections.

### Will I ever see a worm?

- Most of the time, worms in poop will not be visible.
- Sometimes the worm can be pooped out and look like a piece of thread or string.



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## How does a person get diagnosed with STH infection?

- The best way is to examine a poop sample under a microscope. It may take 3 separate samples to find the infection.

## How are STH infections treated?

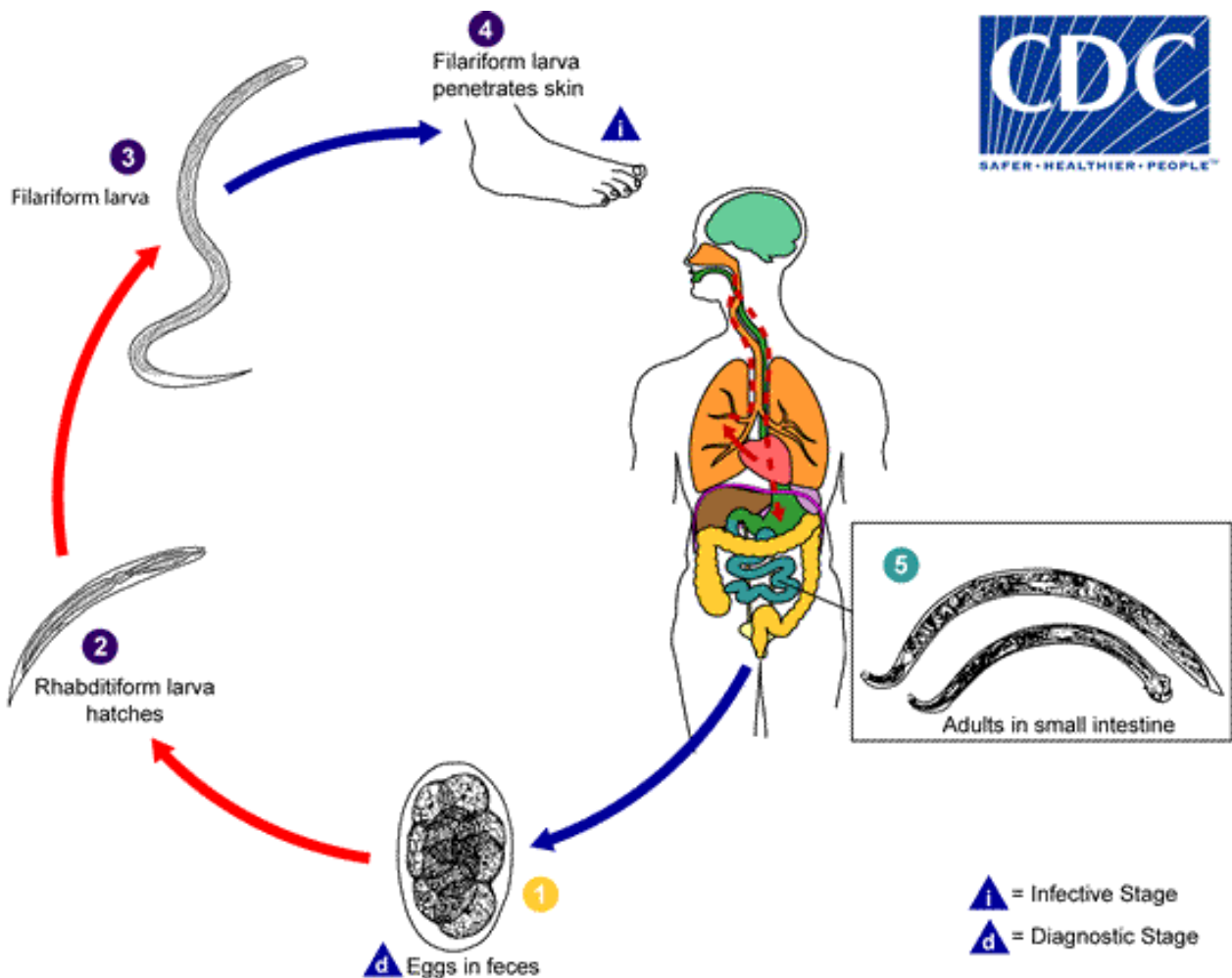
- A single pill of medicine called Albendazole is used to treat this infection.

## Why is treating this infection important?

- If left untreated these infections lead to bad health effects, such as low blood levels or long lasting diarrhea.
- Infections in children can affect body growth, memory and learning.

### Life Cycle of a Hookworm

(One type of intestinal infection)



### For more information on how to participate

Call (205) 354-8660 or toll-free: 1-877-975-7280 (ask about Healthy Bodies Healthy Minds)  
Doctors and nurses from UAB will be available to treat infections and answer any questions you might have.



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