



Intestinal parasites, also called “Soil transmitted helminthes” are the most common infection worldwide. The prevalence rates of intestinal parasite infections in some resource poor communities can be over 90%. An estimated 2 billion people are infected with worms, and 300 million suffer severe impairments because of high worm burdens. Intestinal parasites are caused by environmental contamination by human and animal waste.

The three most common agents worldwide, with the descriptions of patterns of behavior:

- *Ascaris the large roundworm with a voracious appetite for calories and vitamins.*
- *Hookworm the parasite that attaches itself to the intestinal lining and dines on the blood of its victim.*
- *Whipworm, the one which attaches to the rectum, causing prolapse and bleeding*

Intestinal parasites are a major contributor to morbidity and mortality in developing countries, predisposing the host to:

- *Anemia.*
- *Malnutrition.*
- *Impairment of physical growth - both stunting and wasting.*
- *Poor intellectual development.*

Deworming promotes child survival. Therefore, national level deworming campaigns have become standard in many developing countries. One tablet of deworming medicine, usually Albendazole, at a cost of \$.02, is given every 6 months according to standardized protocols. It is easy, effective in controlling the worm burden, and usually very well accepted on the community level.

