Hi, my name is ___________________. I’d like to talk to you for a few minutes about an important health problem that you might have heard about. Is it OK if I talk to you for a few minutes?

              YES          NO

I will be reading you some information about worms. It’s important that you pay close attention to this information because afterward I will be giving you a short quiz to see what you have learned.

In Kenya, there are many types of worms that can make people sick. Worms are tiny creatures which live in the water or the soil. Most of these worms are so small that you cannot see them but they are still very dangerous if they enter your body. Once they enter your body they will live there for a long time if you do not get treatment. These worms can enter people’s bodies in several ways. The most common ways are either through the water, or through the soil.

In particular, if you live in an area where people do not have flush toilets or pit latrines, it is easy to get worms from the soil. If somebody who has worms takes a long call in the bush, then the soil can become infected with worms. There is a worm called hookworm that lives in infected soil and can enter your body through the soles of your feet if you are not wearing shoes. One worm called a tapeworm enters your body when you eat meat that has been poorly cooked. There are other worms called roundworm and whipworm that can enter your body when the eggs pass from an infected person’s stool to your mouth.

This passing from stool to mouth happens due to lack of cleanliness, take this example:

A man with worms takes a long call in the bush. A pig walks through the bush and brings worm-infected feces into the compound. A child playing in the compound puts his hands into the worm-infected feces, then the mama holds the child whose hands are covered in the soil infected with the worms. Forgetting to wash her hands, the mama prepares food for the family. When the family eats the food that the mama prepares with her dirty hands, they will be exposed to the worms too! It is very easy for young children to get worms since they often play without shoes and put their hands into their mouths.

Worms are very common in Kenya: some studies suggest that 90% of children have worms of one type or another.
If you get infected with worms, you can get very sick. There are many symptoms of worms. Some of the most important ones are:

- Tiredness/Lack of energy
- Pain in the abdomen
- Diarrhea
- Swelling of the belly
- Patches on the skin/head
- Blood and eggs in stool
- Change in appetite

These symptoms can have bad effects for people, especially children. For children with many worms who are stealing the food and energy from inside their bodies, this can lead to other problems such as:

- Anemia/Malnutrition/Slow growth
- Problems paying attention in school

If children get worms then their bodies may become so weak that they miss many days of school and this can cause them to have trouble learning for the rest of their lives.

Worms are very dangerous but they can be prevented easily. If you live in an area where people are taking long calls in the bush, the simplest way to avoid hookworm infection from the soil is to wear shoes. Children should wear shoes whenever they are outside: playing at the home compound, walking to school, and also when making calls.

If your feet don’t come into contact with the soil, you will be protected from getting hookworm. Other things that you can do to prevent roundworm, whipworm, and tapeworm include:

- Use a pit latrine or flush toilet
- Wash your hands regularly, especially before eating or cooking and after holding dirty children
- Wash fruits and vegetables before eating
- Thoroughly cook your meat.
- Do not allow children to play around animals
If you think you have worms already, you can get treated easily. There are 2 types of drugs that you can buy: Praziquantel and Albendazole. These drugs are both relatively inexpensive; you can buy them for 20 KSH per tablet from a chemist in town. To protect yourself against future worm infection, you should take the steps we discussed above.

Lastly, you should know that some types of worms come into your body through the water instead of the soil. The worst of these diseases is called schistosomiasis, and it can have bad effects for people, especially children.

1. Infected person urinates or defecates in water.
2. Urine or feces has worm eggs in it.
3. Worm eggs hatch and go into snails.
4. Young worms leave snail and go into another person.
5. In this way, someone who washes or swims in water where an infected person has urinated or defecated also becomes infected.

To avoid infection from these types of worms, you should make sure to drink water from a clean source, and should avoid swimming or bathing in water that might be infected from other people. Shoes will not help you with these types of worms.

Do you have any other questions that I can answer now?