

## Reducing the Risks

### Reducing the risks for your family

You can reduce the risk of parasitic infection to your family by eliminating parasites from pets, restricting access to contaminated areas, such as sandboxes, pet "walk areas," and other high-traffic areas; and practicing good personal hygiene.

Disposing of pet feces on a regular basis can help remove potentially infective worm eggs before they become distributed in the environment and are picked up or ingested by pets or humans.

### Year-round prevention

Parasites can infect your pet any time of year. External parasites, such as fleas and ticks, may be less prevalent outside during certain times of the year; however they often survive in the house during the winter months creating an uninterrupted life cycle. Other internal parasites such as worms may infect your pet all year long. This is why it's important to continue Heartworm and Flea prevention year round which includes internal parasite prevention.

### Treatment

In the event that your pet has a parasite, you will be given a medication with instructions on how to give it and when to retest a stool sample. In general a fecal should be submitted 3 weeks after the last medication. Keep the yard free of feces to lessen the chance of re-infection. If your pet uses a gravel or cement dog run, we may suggest using a very dilute bleach solution (1cup bleach in 1 gallon water) to sanitize the area. *Do not use this solution on your grass.*

## Healthy Lifestyle, Healthy Pets, Healthy People

Responsible pet parasite control can reduce the risks associated with the transmission of parasitic diseases from pet to pets, and pets to people. By following a few simple guidelines, pet owners can better protect their pets and their family.

- See your veterinarian if your pet has diarrhea, weight loss, increased scooting, a dull coat or if you see worms under its tail, in its bedding, or on its stool.
- Administer year round parasite control with efficacy against heartworm, intestinal parasites; fleas and ticks.
- Feed pets cooked or prepared food (not raw diets) and provide fresh water.
- Cover sandboxes when not in use and protect garden areas from fecal contamination.
- Pick up feces immediately whenever walking a dog in a public area and clean its yard daily.
- Practice good personal hygiene when handling animal waste, particularly important for children and those at risk.
- Prompt treatment of internal parasites lessens your pet's discomfort, decreases the chances of intestinal damage, and decreases the chance that your pet will infect humans or other animals.



# Parasites

## Intestinal Parasites in Cats and Dogs



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*Dedicated to providing  
compassionate & comprehensive  
care for your pet*

# Pets, Parasites and People

Dogs and cats are not just pets. They are treated like members of your family. Like members of your family, it's important to keep them healthy and free of parasites. It is fairly common for a dog or cat to become infected with an internal parasite at some point in its lifetime. If left untreated, some can become life threatening. Some parasites are *zoonotic*, meaning they can infect and transmit disease to you and your family.

We can help prevent, diagnose and safely treat parasites that affect your dog or cat, and also the safety of you and your family.

## Roundworms:

□ Roundworms are the most common intestinal parasite in dogs and cats. The infection is passed to other animals when the worm eggs develop into larvae and are present in the animal's feces. Your pet can pick up the infection by eating infected soil, including potting soil, licking contaminated fur or paws, or by drinking contaminated water.



Roundworms are zoonotic and can be passed to humans. Therefore yearly laboratory testing is recommended along with preventive treatment through heartworm medication. Worms can be passed in the stool and appear to look like long, white strands of spaghetti. Most often infections are diagnosed through laboratory testing.

## Hookworms:

□ Hookworms are the second most common intestinal parasite found in dogs, but less common in cats. Your pet can become infected when larvae penetrate the animal's skin or lining of the mouth. The larvae then



travel to the intestinal tract. They tend to attach to the lining on the intestine and suck blood, eventually causing anemia.

Hookworms are also zoonotic and can be passed to humans. Unlike roundworms, they can not be seen in the stool. Therefore yearly laboratory testing is recommended along with preventive treatment through heartworm medication.

## Whipworms:

□ These worms get their name from their whip-like shape. Animals with whipworms pass the infection along to other animals when the eggs develop into larvae and are passed in their feces. Your pet can pick up the infection by eating infected soil or licking their contaminated fur or paws.



Like hookworms, whipworms bury their heads in the lining of an animal's intestine and suck blood. In severe infections, diarrhea, weight loss, and anemia can develop. Yearly laboratory testing is recommended to screen for this parasite.

## Tapeworms:

□ Tapeworms get their name because they are thin and flat, like strips of tape. Their bodies are actually made up of joined segments. Dogs and cats become infected when they eat infected fleas or by eating infected wildlife. Tapeworms live in the intestines and steal nutrients from the food your dog or cat eats. The infection is usually diagnosed when the segments are seen near the pet's tail or in its stool; the segments look like a grain of rice.



## For more information visit:

[American Veterinary Medical Association](http://www.avma.org)

[www.avma.org](http://www.avma.org)

[Companion Animal Parasite Council](http://www.capcvet.org)

[www.capcvet.org](http://www.capcvet.org)

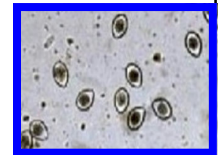
[CDC](http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets)

[www.cdc.gov/healthypets](http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets)

## The Other Internal Parasites: Protozoans

### Coccidia

□ Coccidia are single-celled parasites and are not visible to the naked eye. Your pet can become infected by eating infected soil or licking contaminated paws or fur. The parasites damage the lining of the intestine and your pet cannot absorb nutrients from its food. Coccidia does not always cause illness but, severe infections can lead to diarrhea.



Coccidia can be contagious among animals, so households with multiple pets should be especially careful to practice good hygiene and sanitation. Laboratory testing is recommended to screen for this parasite in cases of diarrhea.

### Giardia

□ Giardia is also a single-celled parasite that, if swallowed, can damage the lining of the intestine and reduce the absorption of nutrients from the food your pet eats. Giardia does not always cause illness, severe infections can lead to diarrhea.



This parasite can be zoonotic and contagious to other pets. Therefore yearly laboratory testing is recommended. Also households with multiple pets should be especially careful to practice good hygiene and sanitation.