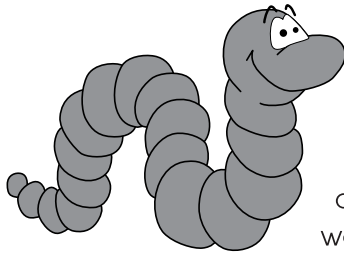


Intestinal Parasites of Dogs



95% of puppies are born with intestinal parasites and about 1/3 of adult dogs in the U.S. have them as well. Intestinal parasites can cause vomiting, weight loss, diarrhea and occasionally even death. Since raccoons, skunks and stray cats carry parasites, as well as many dogs, virtually all dogs are exposed to parasite eggs regularly. **Parasite control is an essential part of every puppy and dog's health care plan.**

Internal parasites are diagnosed by having a fresh stool sample examined under a microscope by someone here at the veterinary hospital. This should be done as part of a health exam when you obtain a new puppy or dog. It should also be done at least once a year as part of your dog's annual health exam and vaccinations.

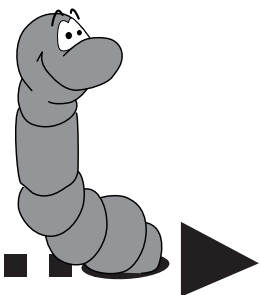
Stool samples should be collected when they are fresh and stored in the refrigerator until they can be brought to the hospital. DO NOT freeze them. A teaspoon or two is all that is necessary.

All puppies should be dewormed at least twice and have at least 2 stool samples checked. Most parasites require deworming twice, two weeks apart. Please weigh your puppy before picking up wormer, to ensure proper dosage. Stool samples should be checked again 4 weeks after the final worming, to ensure that your dog is not being reinfested by his or her environment. For prevention of internal parasites, remove fecal material from your yard regularly and dispose of it.

So that you may better understand the problems internal parasites may cause, and what signs to look for, we have included a short description of the six most common types of intestinal parasites.

ROUNDWORMS . . . are the most common type of intestinal worm. They are 2-4 inches long and resemble strands of spaghetti. They live in the small intestine, and may cause vomiting, diarrhea or weight loss. Larval worms also damage the liver and lungs while migrating through these organs on their way to the small intestine. Roundworms are transmitted via stools of other infected dogs or cats, or through the uterus of the mother dog to her unborn pups. Entire worms can sometimes be seen in the stools or vomitus of infested animals. Just one adult female roundworm sheds hundreds of infective eggs into the feces every day. The yard of a pet with roundworms is usually contaminated with millions of eggs.

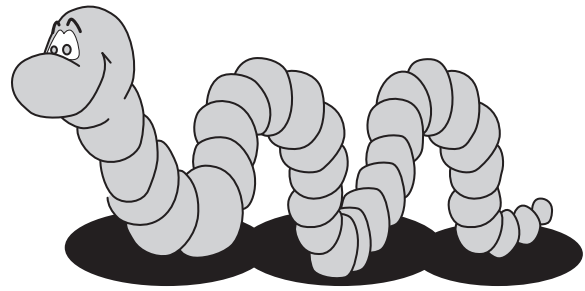
HOOKWORMS . . . are half inch long worms which attach to the lining of the small intestine, causing blood loss and diarrhea. Puppies can become infected through the mother's uterus before birth, or via her milk after birth. Older animals acquire hookworms through skin contact with the stools of other dogs or cats. Hookworm larvae cause skin disease in people.



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WHIPWORMS . . . live in the large intestine. They are not as common as the other intestinal parasites but the disease they cause can be very serious. Bloody diarrhea and weight loss are the symptoms seen. These worms are transmitted by ingestion of the stools of infested animals.

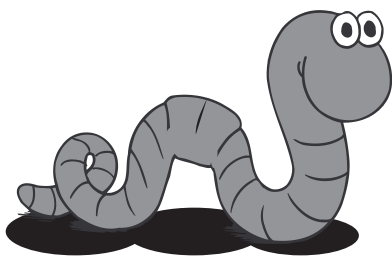


TAPEWORMS . . . live in the small intestine, where the head attaches to the intestinal wall and produces a chain of segments. Mature segments containing eggs are passed with the stool, or may be seen around the rectum. They resemble small grains of rice. They may be acquired by the ingestion of rodents or birds or, most commonly, through the ingestion of fleas. Flea control is essential to control tapeworm infestation.

COCCIDIA . . . are one celled protozoal parasites, more like bacteria rather than "worms". Puppies can pick these up from their mother and they can also be acquired by eating rabbit or other wildlife droppings. They are treated with antibiotics.

GIARDIA . . . are also protozoans. They are very difficult to pick up on a regular stool check. Antibiotics or special wormers kill them but they are difficult to eradicate completely and often flare up with stress or other intestinal problems. They cause vomiting and diarrhea in both people and pets. Pets and humans rarely carry the same strains of Giardia, however.

HEARTWORMS . . . are a deadly parasite carried by mosquitoes. By blood testing your dog each spring and giving preventative medication throughout the mosquito season you can save your dog from needless suffering and death.



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