

# Parasites & Prevention



Pets & Parasites ©

## ZOONOTIC DISEASE

Zoonosis refers to a parasite or other disease, like rabies, that can be passed from animals to humans. Members of your family can unknowingly pick up a zoonotic disease at the park, on a sidewalk, or even in their own backyard. Children are especially vulnerable to zoonotic diseases because they play outside and have a tendency to put objects in their mouths. Roundworms and hookworms are the most common zoonotic parasites.

Stack Veterinary Hospital takes parasites and zoonotic disease transmission very seriously. We **STRONGLY** recommend annual parasite testing and monthly prevention.

# Intestinal Parasites

## ROUNDWORMS

Roundworms are the most common intestinal worm found inside a dog or cat. Almost all dogs become infected with them at some time in their lives, usually as puppies. Roundworms can be contracted in many different ways which makes them easy to spread and hard to control. This poses as a significant health concern for people especially children and pregnant women. Signs of roundworm infection may include diarrhea, vomiting, stunted growth, rough coat and bloated belly, however some pets may not show any symptoms. If the roundworms have migrated to the lungs the dog or cat may cough. Contact with contaminated soil or dog or cat feces can result in human ingestion and infection. Roundworm eggs may accumulate in significant numbers in the soil where pets deposit feces. Once infected, the worms can cause eye, lung, heart and neurologic signs in people.



## HOOKWORMS



This parasite is a tiny, thread-like bloodsucking parasite with razor-sharp mouth-parts that pierce your pet's small intestine, resulting in tissue damage, blood loss, anemia, and diarrhea. Hookworms can infect your pet in two ways. Eggs are deposited in the stool of the infected animal and the surrounding soil becomes contaminated with these eggs, which your pet may ingest. The second way is that hookworm eggs that are in the soil develop into larvae. These larvae can penetrate your pet's feet after a walk through a contaminated area. Hookworms can present a health risk to family members if the larvae come in contact

with the skin. This can happen when walking barefoot on the beach, working in the garden or other areas where pets may defecate. Infection usually results in an itching sensation where the larvae enters the skin. They can also leave visible tracks on the skin. Infection is easily treated but can cause mild to extreme discomfort in the affected person.

## TAPEWORMS

This parasite is very common in our pet population. Tapeworms are long, flat worms that attach themselves to your dog's or cat's intestines. A tapeworm body consists of multiple parts, or segments. Tapeworm infections are usually diagnosed by finding segments—which appear as small white worms that may look like grains of rice or seeds—on the rear end of your dog, in your dog's feces, or where your dog lives and sleeps. Tapeworm infections normally occur when your pet eats fleas, mice, or rats that

carry the tapeworm larvae. Tapeworms do not generally cause any outward signs of disease. An infection may cause your pet to sit down and drag its rear along the ground. Certain types of tapeworms can cause disease in humans but are easily treated with prescription medication.



## WHIPWORMS



Whipworms live in the cecum which is where the small intestine and large intestine meet. This infection occurs when your pet swallows whipworm eggs found in contaminated soil or other substances. Whipworms can cause bloody diarrhea, anemia, dehydration and loss of appetite. A female whipworm can produce as many as 2,000 eggs a day. Eggs are passed in feces, and can survive in the soil for years making them very difficult to get rid of. Routine removal of feces and monthly prevention are the best ways to prevent infection.

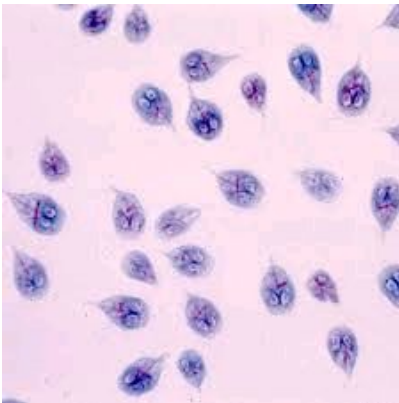
## COCCIDIA

Coccidia are microscopic parasites that live within cells of the intestinal lining. These protozoa often are confused with worms because they live in the intestines and commonly cause diarrhea. The oocysts (immature coccidia) are passed in the stool of the infected animal. Once in the environment, they sporulate (mature) into a more developed oocyst, which can infect the animal again. Other dogs, cats, or mice may also become infected. This process can occur in as little as 6 hours, but usually takes 7-10 days. If the sporulated oocysts are swallowed, they mature in the animal's intestine to complete the life cycle. If the oocysts should be swallowed by a mouse, the animal can become infected by ingesting the mouse. In healthy adult animals, coccidia may cause a watery and even blood tinged diarrhea. In young or debilitated animals, coccidia can cause severe, watery diarrhea,



dehydration, abdominal distress and vomiting. In severe cases, death may occur.

## GIARDIA



Giardia is a single-celled parasite or protozoan that lives in the small intestine. Both animals and humans can contract these organisms by drinking contaminated water from streams and ponds. For your dog, just one lap of contaminated water or a bite on a contaminated stick is all it takes to contract Giardia. Pets may also become infected by eating the droppings of contaminated animals or licking their paws/fur after walking in an infected area. Dogs with Giardia may present with diarrhea. If they have a persistent infection other symptoms such as weight loss and poor body condition may be present.

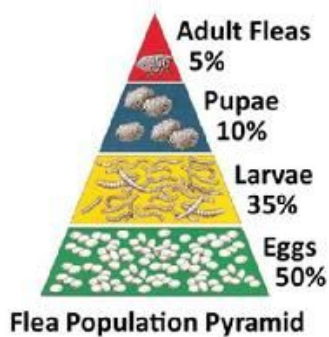
## External Parasites

### Ticks

Ticks are a common pest for animals that are outside for any period of time and are found throughout the United States. Ticks are most prevalent during the spring and fall, but are found all year round. Ticks bury their heads in the skin and gorge themselves on blood, causing mild irritation; *however*, ticks may also carry several debilitating diseases that pose a serious threat to animals and humans. Ticks rarely cause clinical signs unless a disease has been transmitted. Symptoms of infection may include fever, anemia, loss of appetite, and lethargy or depression.

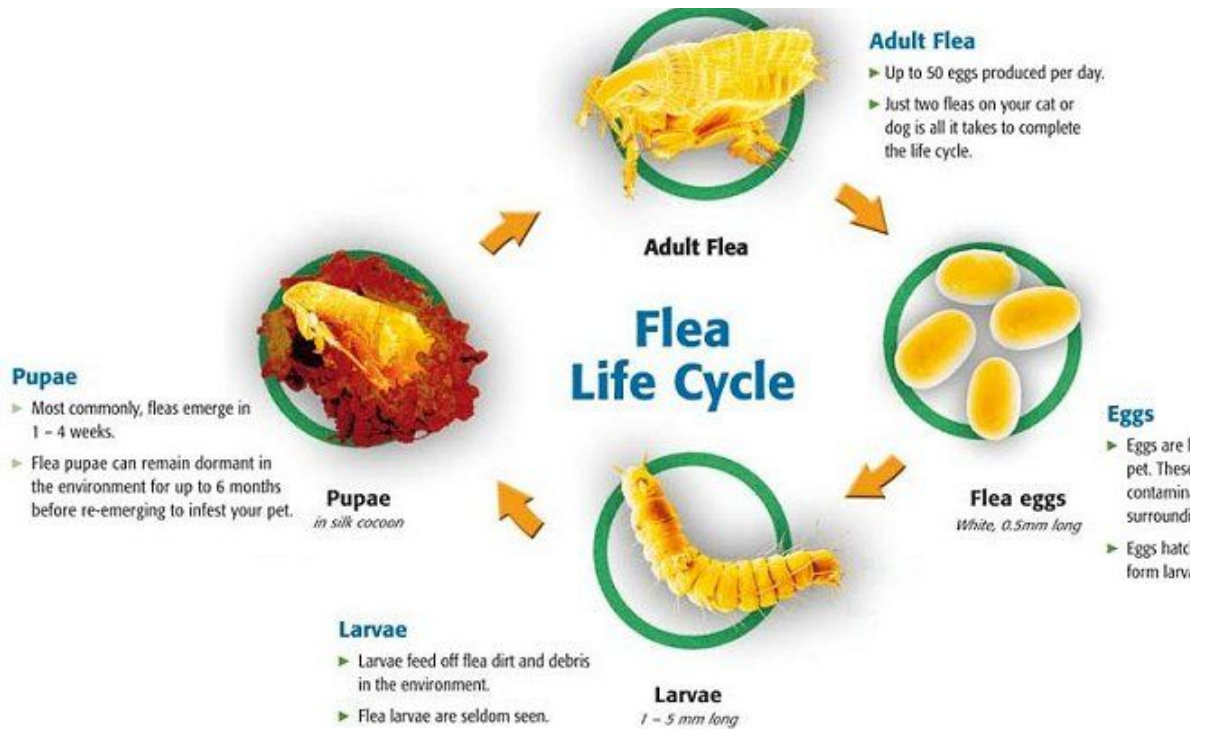


### FLEAS



Fleas are the most common external parasite found on cats and dogs. Although fleas are more likely to be a problem during warm-weather months, they can also cause problems during cooler seasons due to their ability to continue their life cycle indoors. Fleas can transmit a number of diseases including Epidemic Typhus and Bubonic Plague. They are also a carrier for tapeworms. In addition, flea saliva has been called one of the most irritating substances known to man and dogs. Many dogs and cats are allergic to it, causing a reaction called flea allergy dermatitis, the most common allergic disease among pets. Proper flea treatment for all pets in the household and thorough cleaning will help prevent flea infestations.

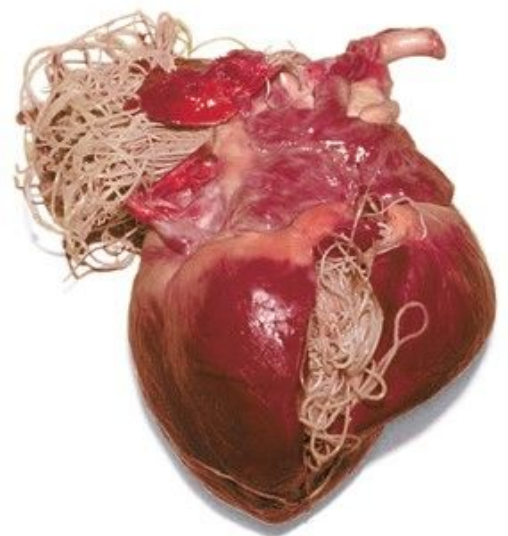
Proper flea treatment for all pets in the household and thorough cleaning will help prevent flea infestations.



# Blood Parasites

## HEARTWORM

Heartworms are parasites that invade the circulatory system and heart. Adult heartworms produce offspring called microfilariae that circulate the blood of an infected pet. When a mosquito feeds on the blood of a pet that has already been infected, it ingests the microfilariae. The mosquito then serves as a host while the microfilariae mature into larvae. The larvae are transferred to healthy pets when it bites the pet for a blood meal. Over the course of 6 to 7 months, the heartworm larvae migrate through the tissues and circulatory system to reach the heart. By the time they reach the heart they are worms about 5 inches long. Once they reach the heart and pulmonary vessels they stay there to mature, grow and reproduce. Mature heartworms can reach 12 inches or longer in length and live for about 7 years if a pet goes undiagnosed. An infected dog's heart could contain up to 300 worms.



Heartworms clog the heart and main blood vessels to the lungs. As a result, breathing and blood flow are affected. Symptoms of heartworm disease may include coughing, difficulty breathing, lethargy, exercise intolerance, fatigue and weight loss. If infected, a pet can be treated but at a great cost. Heartworm can be easily prevented though with a once a month pill.

For more information visit [Pets and Parasites](#).

Ask your veterinarian about monthly parasite prevention to best suite your pet's lifestyle and needs.


### For Dogs

<p><a href="#"><u>Sentinel Flavor Tabs</u></a></p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Heartgard Plus</u></a></p>
<p>Monthly Oral Heartworm, Intestinal Parasite &amp; Flea Prevention</p>	<p>Monthly Oral Heartworm &amp; Intestinal Parasite Prevention</p>
	
<p><a href="#"><u>Interceptor Plus</u></a></p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Seresto Flea &amp; Tick Collar</u></a></p>
<p>Monthly Oral Heartworm &amp; Intestinal Parasite Prevention</p>	<p>8 Month Flea &amp; Tick Prevention</p>
	

<a href="#"><u>Advantix II</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Bravecto</u></a>
Monthly Topical Flea & Tick Preventative	3 Month Oral Flea & Tick Preventative
	

## For Cats

<a href="#"><u>Revolution</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Seresto Flea &amp; Tick Collar</u></a>
Flea, Ear Mite, Roundworm, Hookworm, and Heartworm Prevention	8 Month Flea & Tick Prevention
	
<a href="#"><u>Profender</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Frontline Gold</u></a>
Topical Intestinal Parasite Prevention	Topical Flea & Tick Preventative
	

<p><u><a href="#">Bravecto</a></u></p>	
<p>3 Month Topical Flea &amp; Tick Preventative</p>	
	

Please visit our online pharmacy [stackvethospital.vetsfirstchoice.com/](http://stackvethospital.vetsfirstchoice.com/) for more canine and feline heartworm or flea & tick preventatives.