

Parasites

what pet owners need to know

Internal Parasites

ROUNDWORMS – This intestinal parasite is very common in our pet population and is also a human health concern. Signs of a roundworm infection include diarrhea, vomiting, stunted growth, rough coat, bloated belly and abdominal discomfort. However, some pets may be asymptomatic and show no signs of infection.



TAPEWORMS – This parasite is also very common in our pet population. Tapeworm infections normally occur when your pet eats fleas, mice, or rats that carry the tapeworm larvae. An infection may cause your pet to sit down and drag its rear along the ground, and you may see worm segments that look like "rice" on the pet's rear end or bedding.



HOOKWORMS – One way in which your pet can become infected with hookworms is by ingesting soil that has been contaminated by the stool of an infected animal. Hookworm eggs are deposited in the stool, which then contaminate the soil. If your pet comes into contact with this soil, simple self-grooming afterwards could be the start of a hookworm infection.



The second way that your pet could develop a hookworm infection takes the above scenario a step further. When these hookworm eggs in the soil develop into larvae, the larvae can penetrate your pet's paws after a walk through a contaminated area. Hookworms can also present a health risk to your family members if the larvae comes in contact with skin.

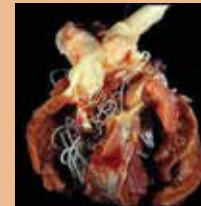
WHIPWORMS – This infestation occurs when your pet swallows whipworm eggs found in contaminated soil. Whipworms cause bloody diarrhea, anemia, dehydration and loss of appetite. A female whipworm can produce 2,000 eggs daily. Eggs are passed in feces, and can survive for years in the soil. Whipworms are very difficult to eradicate.



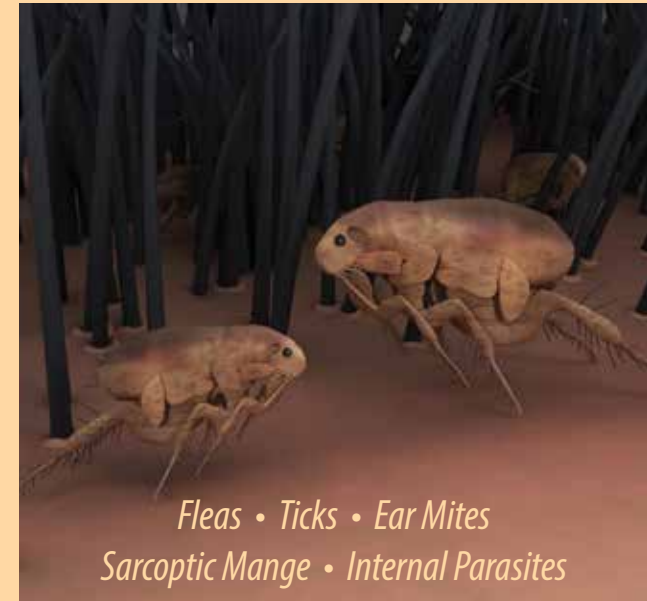
GIARDIA – Giardia are protozoa, microscopic single-celled organisms which can take up residence in the small intestine. Human and animals can contract these organisms by drinking contaminated water from streams and ponds. For your dog, just one lick of contaminated water or a bite on a contaminated stick is all it takes to contract Giardia. Pets may also become infected by eating the droppings of contaminated animals or by licking their paws/fur after walking in an infected area. Clinical signs of Giardia range from intestinal discomfort to explosive bloody diarrhea sometimes accompanied by foul-smelling gas.



HEARTWORMS – Heartworm disease in animals is a serious health threat that can ultimately result in heart failure and death. ONE BITE from an infected mosquito can transmit heartworms to your pet. Dogs are the most common victims, but cats, ferrets and other animals are also susceptible. The heartworms restrict blood flow and cause organ damage and ultimately death. Symptoms include coughing, labored breathing, and heart failure. Treatment is available for dogs, although it is expensive and may cause complications.



Prevention is the key to your pet's protection against a heartworm infection. We recommend testing your pet annually for heartworms. Once-monthly prescription medication is required to protect your pet during the year. This medication destroys any immature heartworms that exist in your pet's bloodstream. We recommend combining a comprehensive blood profile with your heartworm test to ensure your pet is in optimal health.



Fleas • Ticks • Ear Mites
Sarcoptic Mange • Internal Parasites

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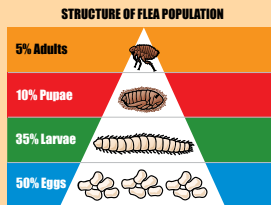
Fleas – a health hazard



Fleas transmit a number of diseases, including epidemic typhus and bubonic plague, and they are also a carrier for tapeworms. **In addition, flea saliva has been called one of the most irritating substances known to man.** Many dogs and cats are allergic to it, causing a reaction called flea allergy dermatitis, the most common allergic disease among pets.

Adult fleas are dark brown and about the size of a sesame seed. **They live their entire adult lives on your pet and feed on their blood.** Fleas can be picked up in the environment or through contact with an infected pet.

The adult female flea lays up to 50 eggs DAILY. These eggs fall from your pet, landing on the carpet, furniture, dog bedding, and anywhere your pet goes. The eggs hatch within four weeks into worm-like larvae that burrow deeper into soft furnishings, carpet, and the nooks and crannies of your home. There the pupae produce a silk-like cocoon and take 10 days to become adult fleas, which only emerge when they sense pressure, carbon dioxide (from breathing) or body heat. Once a flea emerges from a cocoon it can only survive a few days without feeding. However, cocooned fleas can survive up to nine months in the environment! An adult flea with an ideal host can have a lifespan of a few weeks. Fleas can also bite people.



It is much easier to prevent flea infestations than to treat them. We recommend a ONCE-MONTHLY flea preventive for your pet beginning as early as eight weeks old. Remember, for every flea you see on your pet there are hundreds more in your environment. Successful flea control means treating both your pet and your home.

Ticks – a health hazard



Ticks are parasites that infest every class of terrestrial vertebrate, including mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians. Ticks are not insects. They are members of the class Arachnida, which includes spiders, scorpions, and mites. Ticks live in tall grasses and heavily wooded areas, and can survive cold fall temperatures. Ticks have many advantages. They have an unusually long lifespan, which not only perpetuates the ticks, but also the diseases they may carry, making it considerably more difficult to control these diseases. In addition, they can survive through various unfavorable conditions, and their reproductive activity is high.

Ticks and Disease

Ticks pose a health threat to both pets and people. Ticks transmit disease-causing agents, several of which have risen to epidemic proportions. **Some of the most common tick-borne diseases are Lyme disease, Ehrlichiosis, Anaplasmosis and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever.**

It is important to perform a tick check anytime you or your pets are in environments favorable for ticks. Don't forget to check between the toes and behind the ears where ticks love to hang out.

Once ticks find a host, they securely attach themselves by embedding their mouth parts into the pet's skin and begin feeding on its blood. If a tick is carelessly pulled off, the head often remains attached to the skin.

The safest way to remove a tick is to lightly pull and twist a tick's body with tweezers or a tick removal tool and wait for the tick to let go. If you are in doubt about how to remove ticks, make an appointment with us to remove them for you.



Sarcoptic Mange Mites



Sarcoptic mange, also known as scabies, is a year-round skin disease caused by microscopic mites. It is highly contagious and affects dogs, cats, and even humans. Mites burrow into the skin and cause intense itching and irritation, resulting in hair loss and flaky skin. Other symptoms are small red pustules and a yellow crust on the skin. If untreated, sores and infections can develop. This is a treatable medical condition, but is highly contagious for other animals and humans.

Mites quickly move from animal to animal. Kennels, animal shelters, dog parks and groomers have a high exposure rate of mange due to the close proximity with animals that are infected. The exposure generally occurs about two to six weeks before the first symptoms of mange are displayed.

Ear Mites

Ear mites are a common and relatively mild parasite infection. They are tiny parasitic relatives of ticks that infest the area in and around an animal's external ear canals. They are easily transmitted through direct contact with a parasitized animal. Kittens are the most frequent victims, but puppies and adult animals that have been housed in close contact with one another are also at higher risk.

Pets afflicted with ear mites will typically scratch their ears excessively and shake their heads, even pulling out their own hair as they scratch. Some pets will shake their heads so much that a hematoma of the ear will form (with blood pooling in the ear due to breakage of a blood vessel). Pets with ear mites often have discharge in their ears that looks like coffee grounds (a mixture of dead and live mites, mite feces, and debris). An exam is necessary to differentiate ear mites from other types of infections.