

What is Zoonosis

AND WHY YOU SHOULD CARE ?

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 disease, mostly because children play outside and sometimes have a tendency to put objects in their mouths. The most common zoonotic parasites are roundworms and hookworms. **In fact, in the U.S. alone, nearly 20% of children contact roundworms from their pets each year.**



Hookworm effect on the skin



Roundworm effect on the eye

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Zoonotic Diseases That You Need To Be Aware Of –



TAPEWORMS – This parasite is very common in our pet population. 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.

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

HOOKWORMS – This parasite is a tiny, thread-like bloodsucking parasite with razor-sharp mouth parts that pierce your pet's skin. In humans, hookworms can infect the skin, causing a condition called cutaneous larva migrans. In dogs, hookworms can cause 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 comes in contact with the skin.

GIARDIA – Giardia are protozoa, a microscopic single-celled organism with a flagellated teardrop shape which can take up residence in the small intestine. Both animals and humans can contract these organisms by drinking contaminated water or by contact with the feces of contaminated water or a bite on contaminated water or a bite on

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.

LEPTOSPIROSIS – “Lepto” has long been considered a rare disease in dogs living in urban areas, to the extent that many small animal veterinarians in cities have never seen a case. **But nationwide, leptospirosis is making a comeback.** Several common species of wildlife, such as possums, squirrels, raccoons and rats, act as carriers of the infection. Even in

suburban areas or on walks about the neighborhoods, dogs can be exposed through contact with the urine of these animals. Lepto bacteria are passed via animal urine into water sources. Contact with contaminated (often standing) water can result in infection.

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What should I do to protect my family and pet?

- Have your veterinarian check your pet's health at least once a year, including a fecal parasite exam analysis.
- **RISK ASSESSMENT** – Review, with your veterinarian, your pet's risk for disease exposure and zoonotic disease transmission.
- Vaccinate, as advised by your veterinarian, and treat your adult pet monthly with a broad-spectrum dewormer, and have your puppy or kitten dewormed by your veterinarian at an early age (as early as 4 weeks old).
- Make unprotected outdoor play sand boxes off-limits; cover sand boxes when not in use.
- Promptly collect and hygienically dispose of any animal feces in your environment.

We take zoonotic disease prevention very serious – PLEASE – call us with questions and to schedule RISK EXAM appointment. The risk of zoonosis should not scare anyone away from the unique and rewarding experience of owning a pet. It is, however, a reminder of our responsibilities toward our pet and toward our families and community.

Erik Thompson, DVM
Stockdale Animal Hospital
ph. 619-280-7712 • www.mywebpage.com

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302 Washington St. #159
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Springtime is here... Are you providing the zoonotic disease transmission safeguards to protect both your family and pet?

Learn how to keep your family and
pets safe from "Zoonotic Disease."