



DOES YOUR PET'S FECES CONTAIN A SPECIES? BY: LEAH BRAUN

You may wonder why year after year we ask for a sample of your pet's poo. The answer is simple and no, it's not because we enjoy basking in the pleasant aroma. Animal fecal matter can contain intestinal parasites which can give valuable answers to many common ailments. Also there are some intestinal parasites that can be transferred from your furry friend to you. So, year after year we ask to check a fecal sample to assist you in keeping your pet happy and healthy.

There are six common types of intestinal parasites. They are roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, tapeworms, coccidia and giardia. Each type of parasite can present itself in different ways at different times. The typical symptoms may include diarrhea, a bloated looking belly, vomiting and gas to name a few. Sometimes you may even see worms in your pet's stool or vomit. If this occurs you should have your pet seen as soon as possible.

ROUNDWORMS



These can effect animals of any age, but are most common in puppies and kittens. The roundworm larvae can actually be transferred from the mother dog or cat to the nursing pup or kitten through the mother's milk.

TAPEWORMS



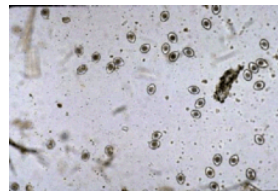
Tapeworms are actually transmitted with the help of another parasite, the flea. Fleas like to eat tapeworm eggs and when animals with fleas groom themselves they ingest the eggs as well. Animals can also get tapeworm by eating wildlife or rodents that infested with fleas or tapeworms themselves

HOOKWORMS



Hookworms are much more common in dogs than in cats. The larvae can be transferred through mother's milk, but the hookworm larvae can also be transferred through contact with stool-contaminated soil.

COCCIDIA



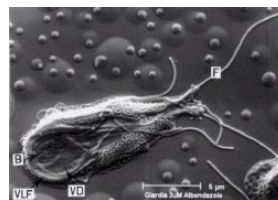
Coccidia is most prevalent in puppies and kittens under 6 months of age. It is transmitted through fecal/oral contact and therefore, like hookworm can be transmitted through contact with stool-contaminated soil. The main symptom is diarrhea.

WHIPWORMS



Whipworms are seen more in dogs than in cats. The most common symptoms of whipworm include chronic weight loss and soft stool that seems to have a mucous-like covering.

GIARDIA



Giardia is actually a single-celled organism, or protozoa, that can live in the intestines of dogs and cats. This parasite is transmitted primarily through fecal/oral contact and the main symptom is diarrhea.

There are many different treatments for these different parasites. Some of them treat multiple types of parasites. Others treat the one specific parasite diagnosed. It is very important if your dog is having any type digestive issue such as diarrhea, soreness in the abdomen or vomiting, really any type of illness can warrant a quick fecal examination. Parasites are relatively easy to treat and dropping off a sample of your pet's #2 regularly can keep your family and your pets healthy and happy. So, don't forget to scoop your yard or clean your litterbox regularly and at least once a year bring in a sample so we can see if your pet's feces may indeed have a species.