

# Why should I have a fecal parasite test done annually?

It is very important to have a fecal sample tested every year to be sure that your pet is free of intestinal parasites. Intestinal parasites can be transmitted from many different places; they may even be carried in on your shoes.

Some dogs and cats do show symptoms of having intestinal parasites but with others, the first indication that an animal is infected with some type of parasite is, very often, the presence of "something" in the dog's or cat's feces. If your dog or cat (or other pet) passes anything unusual in its feces, SAVE IT! Your veterinarian will usually find it more helpful to "see" what was in your pet's feces than to listen to your description of it.

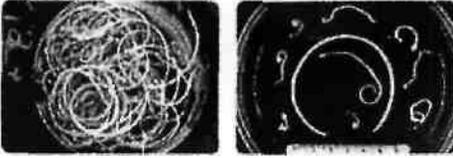
What can parasites do to my pet? They can cause weight loss, diarrhea, anemia, loss of appetite and vomiting. On the back side of this sheet we have listed the common parasites and what they cause.

Why is it important to know about the possible parasites that can affect your dog? It is important, because many of the parasites that infest pets are zoonotic (can be transmitted to humans), and as you interact with your pet, you are also susceptible, as are any children in your home.

How to reduce the risk of transmission

- Do not walk barefoot or contact the soil with bare hands, where there is likely to be feces (stool) in the soil.
- Pregnant women should not clean litter boxes.
- Clean up after your pet. at least once a week, place the feces in a plastic bag and dispose of it properly.
- Wash your hands after gardening or after your hands have been in the soil outside.
- Don't allow children to play in areas that are harboring animal feces.
- Wash your hands after playing with dogs and cats.
- Cover the sandbox when it is not in use
- Teach children it is dangerous to eat dirt/soil
- Use flea control products and heartworm preventative on your pets April through December or year round.

## Roundworm



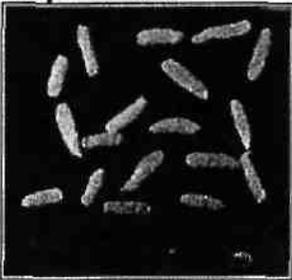
Most puppies contract from their mothers before birth or from her milk. They can also be picked up from the soil (smelling or eating things off the ground). A number of symptoms may be noticed such as diarrhea, vomiting, bloody stools and some with have a potbelly appearance.

## Hookworm



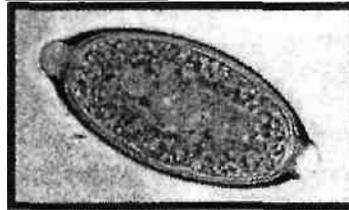
This parasite is contracted from pets that sniff the ground and then inhale the parasites that are in the dirt/soil. This parasite persists in the environment long periods of time and can reoccur if feces are not properly disposed of.

## Tapeworm



Dogs and cats are infected by swallowing an infected flea. The larva that are ingested develop into adult tapeworm. With this parasite there are generally no symptoms but the tapeworm shed's into segments and are passed in the feces. Most commonly they will be seen by the anal area and look like grains of rice.

## Whipworm



Whipworm is also another parasite that is picked up from the dirt/soil. Symptoms of this parasite are diarrhea with mucous. It can be hard to detect persists in the environment for long periods of time. Again feces should be properly disposed of to prevent re infestation.

## Coccidia



Animal can pick this parasite up from anyplace outside especially if they are around animal already infected with coccidia. Symptoms that are seen with this are diarrhea and it may contain blood and mucous. Weight loss is seen in chronic cases.

## Giardia



Giardia can be difficult to see when performing a fecal test. If a fecal test comes back negative (no parasites found) an antigen test would be the next step to determine if your pet is infected with this parasite. It can cause vomiting in severe cases but most often animal have soft stool containing blood and mucou