

Oh no! Oh YUCK! My pet has WORMS!!!!!!

What type of worms does my animal have?

Roundworms are probably the most common type of worm we see in puppies and kittens. Frequently, the long spaghetti-like adult worms are passed in feces (poo) and occasionally in vomit. The worms can be transmitted from the mom to the baby animal through the placenta before the baby is born, through the milk as the baby nurses, or the worms can be transmitted from feces directly to the mouth. People can get roundworms as well. Roundworm infection in people can cause fever, enlargement of the liver, and even blindness.

Hookworms are also very common in young animals. They can come from the young animal's mother, from infected soil, and through fecal-oral transmission. These parasites can be acquired through the skin.

Whipworms tend to make dogs very sick. Dogs with whipworm infections often have diarrhea (sometimes even bloody diarrhea), vomiting, and weight loss. Whipworm eggs can live in the soil for a VERY long time – up to 5 years. So getting rid of a whipworm infestation once you have it in your environment can be difficult.

Tapeworms are transmitted to dogs and cats by fleas and to dogs and cats that hunt and eat small furry animals like bunnies and mice. Frequently, the first indication that an animal has a tapeworm infection is the little rice-like tapeworm segments showing up on the animal's tail, in its bed, or in the litter box!

Coccidia are a single celled parasite that can cause diarrhea, weight loss, and dehydration. We usually see coccidian infections at times when the animal is stressed. Coccidia infections are treated with sulfa medication – an antibiotic.

If I don't see any worms in my animal's stool that means that there aren't any worms...right?

NO!! Many worms don't show up in the feces. That is why it is very important to check fecal samples on puppies EACH time they come in for vaccinations and on adult dogs annually. We deworm puppies and kittens at each visit because some worms are not shedding eggs all the time. We want to keep our young animals and their owners healthy!

How do I keep from getting worms?

Practice good hygiene! Don't ingest feces. That seems obvious, but think about the fact that just because you don't see feces, it doesn't mean that there is no feces present. When your puppy runs around in the yard, he or she tromps through feces in the yard. When he or she comes in and you dry his or her feet you may have gotten some feces on your hands. Then you eat lunch. The feces on your hands may get in your mouth. YOU ATE FECES!! Always wash your hands after handling your young animals. Always wash your hands before you eat. Teach your children good hand washing techniques!!!

How do I keep my pet from getting worms?

Prevention, prevention, prevention and more prevention. Allow us to deworm your young animals. Check regular fecal samples. Keep your adult dogs on monthly heartworm prevention. The heartworm prevention is also helpful in preventing other types of worms.

Clean up your pet's waste. No one likes to clean up feces, but weekly (or even better, daily) cleaning of the animal's environment will help prevent the spread of parasites.