

Intestinal Parasites

Niles Animal Hospital and Bird Medical Center
7278 N. Milwaukee Ave. Niles, IL 60714
(847)-647-9325 FAX (847)-647-8498
www.nilesanimalhospital.com

Overview

A parasite is a plant or animal that lives upon or within another living organism. They can be either internal or external parasites – living primarily on the skin (fleas), in the respiratory tract (lungworms), in the gastrointestinal tract (roundworms) or in the blood vessels and heart (heartworms).

Some gastrointestinal parasites are very small and the only way to diagnose them is by microscopic examination of feces for the eggs shed by the adult worms. Others are large enough to be observed in your dog's bowel movements or after he vomits. Some tapeworms produce *proglottids*, which can be seen around the hair on the anus or in the stool, appearing as bits of moving "white rice."

Among the important gastrointestinal parasites of dogs and cats are roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, tapeworms, and microscopic parasites *Coccidia*, *Giardia* and *Strongyloides* species.

Intestinal parasites are most often obtained by ingesting worm eggs. They are most common in puppies but can affect any age, sex or breed of dog or cat. Most cause either no signs of illness or gastrointestinal signs. Some worms, such as hookworms, ingest blood so severely affected animals may become lethargic and anemic.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Intestinal parasites are generally diagnosed by microscopic examination of a fresh fecal sample.
- Treatment depends on the type of parasite, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. Most dogs respond well to treatment with medications directed at killing the specific parasite. If debilitated, the affected dog or cat may require fluid therapy or possibly a blood transfusion. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

What to Watch for*:

- Nausea

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Anemia
- Weight loss

**Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!*