

COMMON WORMS IN CATS

Cats and kittens may be prone to several worm infestations. Worms may cause various health problems; therefore, it is recommended that cats be seen by a veterinarian any time the presence of worms is suspected.

ROUNDWORMS

Roundworms are worms that resemble thin strands of spaghetti that can be found in the cat's feces or vomit. Cats and kittens affected by roundworms develop vomiting, diarrhea, bloody stools and pot bellies.

TAPEWORMS

Tapeworm segments resemble grains of rice and are often found stuck to the hair near the cat's anal area. Affected cats generally do not develop any significant symptoms other than anal itchiness.

HOOKWORMS

Unlike the other worms, hookworms measure only 1/8 inch and are not visible to the naked eye. Affected cats generally develop bloody stools, dull coats, loss of appetite and weight loss.

Considerations

Several other types of worms can be present in cats, such as whipworms, heartworms and lungworms, but they are much less common. Cat owners should have their cats undergo faecal tests once a year to screen for worms.

Warning

Some worms in cats may be transmissible to humans. Roundworm and hookworm larvae may infect humans, particularly children, and may migrate to various organs, causing complications (such as larva migrans)

HOW ARE CATS INFECTED WITH WORMS

Worms are a common type of intestinal parasite that infects cats, dogs and other animals. Feline parasites, such as worms, can weaken the cat's immune system. The causes of an infection depend in part upon the type of worm.

Roundworm

Roundworms (*Toxocara cati* and *Toxascaris leonina*) spread through cat faeces. The faeces contain the eggs of the roundworm. The infection passes after eating faeces or body tissues that contain the roundworm eggs.

Hookworm

Hookworm (*Ancylostoma* and *Uncinaria*) spreads when the larvae penetrate the skin or when the cat ingests the parasite.

Tapeworm

Tapeworm (cestodes) causes an infection when a cat ingests infected fleas while grooming. The cat may also become infected by ingesting tapeworm eggs when consuming an infected rodent.

Ollanulus Tricuspis

Ollanulus tricuspis is a stomach worm. *Ollanulus tricuspis* infections spread when a cat ingests the infected vomit of another cat.

Physaloptera

Physaloptera is a stomach worm found in insect species, such as crickets and beetles. The infection spreads when the cat ingests an infected insect or another animal, such as a frog or mouse that has eaten an infected insect.

HOW TO TREAT A CAT'S WORMS

Worms are a common parasite that many cats contract. Worms can wreak havoc on your cat's system and can cause serious health problems if left untreated. You can offer certain worm treatments at home while other worms will warrant a visit to the vet.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Look for the signs of worms. Most cat owners will notice worms in their cat's stools. For example, roundworms look like thin spaghetti while tapeworms resemble rice.

- Examine the cat for other signs of worms. Only tapeworms and roundworms can be seen by the naked eye. Other signs of worms include weight loss, bloody diarrhea, vomiting and a distended belly.

- Offer a monthly treatment. Since roundworms are so common, many owners give their pets a monthly dose of worm treatment.

- Get wormer tablets. Wormer tablets treat tapeworm, roundworm and hookworm. You crush the tablets and place the residue in the cat's food. Most pet stores carry these tablets.

- Give the cat a wormer paste. These pastes are effective against all types of worms. You place the nozzle inside of the cat's mouth and squirt it inside. A popular brand used is Valucat All Wormer Paste.

TIPS & WARNINGS

- If you have any questions about the best treatment for your cat, contact your vet. Your vet may wish to run some tests on the cat including stool and blood samples.
- None of these treatments will work for heartworm. Heartworm is a serious condition that needs to be treated by a vet.