

PARASITES AND YOUR FAMILY

Some parasites can be passed from animals to people (a zoonotic infection) and some of these infections can be quite serious. The following are guidelines developed by the Companion Animal Parasite Council to help prevent and control parasitic infections in dogs and cats:

- Administer a year-round heartworm and intestinal parasite preventative on a monthly basis.
- Administer monthly flea and tick preventative on a year-round basis.
- Have your pet examined at least once a year. Make sure to give us a complete history including if your pet hunts and what it catches and/or eats.
- Test dogs on a yearly basis for heartworm disease and cats on an as needed basis.
- Feed pets cooked foods (not raw meat) only and fresh water on a daily basis.
- Have your pet's stools examined 2-4 times during their first year of life and 1-2 times per year in adults. We look microscopically for eggs. If you ever see a live worm, bring it in for identification.
- Deworm puppies at 2, 4, 6, and 8 weeks of age, then start them on a monthly heartworm and intestinal parasite prevention.
- Deworm kittens at 3, 5, 7, and 9 weeks of age, then start them on a monthly heartworm and intestinal parasite preventative.
- Treat nursing bitches and queens at the same time as their offspring.
- Keep stools picked up daily in the yard, especially with new puppies.
- Clean litter boxes daily.

Young children and adults that are immunocompromised (ie: people undergoing chemotherapy or with serious infections) are more at risk of developing a serious infection from animal parasites. Young children may not use good hygiene (they may not wash their hands before they eat and may put contaminated things in their mouths) and are more susceptible to these infections. Adults that are immunocompromised are also more at

risk because their immune system is not functioning as well as it should. In these households, it is even more important to use good hygiene (wash hands regularly, particularly before eating), keep your pet on monthly heartworm and intestinal parasite preventatives, have regular stool sample exams, keep stools picked up or litter boxes clean on a daily basis (have a healthy adult do this), keep your pet on monthly flea and tick preventatives and discuss any questions with your veterinarian.