

INTERNAL PARASITES AND THEIR TREATMENT

Client Information Series

In their day to day lives dogs and cats can potentially be exposed to a wide variety of internal parasites such as Heartworms, Roundworms and Tapeworms.

Heartworm disease is spread through infected mosquitoes and can result in serious health concerns and even death in dogs and cats. Animals can go a long time without exhibiting signs of the disease. Signs can include coughing, difficulty breathing panting, exercise intolerance, and death. We offer two tests for heartworm disease. We can run a heartworm blood test or we can run a 4DX test that tests for heartworm disease as well as three tick borne diseases. We do recommend testing yearly. If heartworm disease is diagnosed there are several treatment options available. There are preventative products available and as a clinic we recommend either Heartgard® or Sentinal®. These are monthly heartworm preventative product that most animals take as a treat. We also recommend year round use of these products.

The most common intestinal parasites that are seen are Roundworms, Hookworms, Tapeworms and Coccidia. Roundworms, Hookworms and Coccidia are most commonly transmitted through a fecal-oral route meaning that the animal came into contact with infected feces. Tapeworms are transmitted through ingestion of fleas, rodents, and rabbits. Most of the time there are no outward signs of an intestinal parasite infection however segments of adult tapeworms can be seen. The best way to determine if your pet has any intestinal parasites is to check a fecal sample on a yearly basis. There are several deworming medications available and the doctor would determine which is the most appropriate for your animal.

Giardia is another common intestinal parasite. Animals mainly come into contact with giardia through drinking giardia contaminated water. The most common sign of giardia is diarrhea. There is a test that can be run on a stool sample to determine if giardia is present. The doctor would then determine the best medication to use to treat your pet.

The best way to reduce the exposure to intestinal parasites is to practice good hygiene. Cleaning up after your pets is key. It is also recommended that if there are multiple animals in the household to treat all of the animals if one animal is found to have intestinal parasites.

“Caring for your pets...as if they were our own”