

Felines and your Family

Companion Animal Parasite Council
www.petsandparasites.org



Cat owners know the joy these loving creatures bring to our lives. Because cats are independent by nature, they can be easier to care for when it comes to sharing our homes with them. However, cats can conceal their illnesses very effectively so be sure to have your cat examined at least yearly. To help keep your cat healthy feed only prepared or cooked foods. By following your veterinarian's recommendations and having your pet tested for parasites annually, you can protect your cat and your family from these potentially harmful parasites all year long.

Parasites that may affect your pet

- Coccidia
- Giardia
- Mange Mites
- Ticks
- Ear Mites
- Heartworms
- Roundworms
- Toxoplasmosis
- Fleas
- Hookworms
- Tapeworms
- Whipworms

Year-round prevention

The use of year-round heartworm and broad-spectrum parasite medications, as well as appropriate flea and/or tick products, is the foundation of an effective parasite control program for your cat.

What can I do?

Responsible pet parasite control can reduce the risks associated with transmission of parasitic diseases from pets to people. By following a few simple guidelines, pet owners can better protect their pets and their family.

- Practice good personal hygiene.
- Visit your veterinarian for annual testing and physical examination.
- Minimize exposure to high-traffic pet areas.
- Ask your veterinarian about parasite infection risks and effective year-round preventative control measures administered monthly.

Heartworm

Heartworms represent an increasingly recognized problem in cats. As in dogs, heartworms are transmitted by mosquitoes and, once mature, take residence in the right side of the heart and the large vessels of the lungs. For cats, the prevalence of heartworm infection is directly related to the number of infected dogs in the area.

How do I prevent my pet from getting heartworm?

Heartworms are found in cats in all 50 states, so all cats are at risk, even those animals that live indoors. However, heartworms are preventable. Ask your veterinarian about heartworm prevention. Preventive treatment should begin after a blood test has been conducted to determine if your cat has already been exposed or is infected.

Fleas and Ticks

Fleas are probably the most common ectoparasite (external parasite) of cats worldwide. In addition to just being a nuisance, fleas are responsible for flea allergy dermatitis (FAD) in cats, which is estimated to account for over 50 percent of all the dermatological cases reported to veterinarians.

Ticks are also ectoparasites. Ticks are second only to mosquitoes as vectors of human disease, both infectious and toxic. Control and prevention of ticks is extremely important in reducing the risk of disease associated with ticks.

How do I prevent my cat from getting fleas?

To control fleas, you must stop them from reproducing. Carpets, pet bedding, furniture, and other indoor areas where your cat spends much time will contain the highest number of developing fleas. Frequent vacuuming of these areas and frequent washing of pet bedding can greatly reduce the number of developing fleas inside your home.

Toxoplasma gondii

Toxoplasma is a tiny parasite that infects people as well as birds and other animals. Only cats and other members of the cat family shed Toxoplasma in their feces. Cats may shed the parasite in their feces for 7-21 days the first time they get infected with Toxoplasma. If they are allowed outside, pet cats can get infected when they catch and eat animals.

Protect your environment

Keep water going to sewage treatment plants or septic systems Toxoplasma free. Sewage treatment may not kill Toxoplasma in cat feces. Throwing cat feces or litter down the toilet or outdoors could allow more Toxoplasma parasites to get into our rivers and oceans, putting wildlife at risk of infection, including sea otters.

- Put cat feces in plastic bags for disposal in a sanitary landfill.
- Remove cat feces from your yard.

Toxoplasma lives for months in soil and can be carried over long distances in water. Following these guidelines will help prevent Toxoplasma infections in cats, people and wildlife.

The Companion Animal Parasite Council

The Companion Animal Parasite Council (CAPC) is an independent council of veterinarians and other health care professionals established to create guidelines for the optimal control of internal and external parasites that threaten the health of pets and people. It brings together broad expertise in parasitology, internal medicine, human health care, public health, veterinary law, private practice and association leadership.

For more information about how parasites may affect your pet, please visit us at www.petsandparasites.org.

The CAPC guidelines are endorsed by The American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and The American Heartworm Society (AHS).

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