

Why are fecals an important part of your pet's health?

How often should my pets stools be checked for worms?

Your pet should have their stools checked for worms at least once between the ages of 4 weeks and one year. If worms are found then the fecal flotation should be repeated one month after the last de-worming. If your pet's stool sample comes up negative then stools should be checked yearly.

I don't see any worms in my pet's stools, why do I need to have them checked?

In most cases you will not see any worms in your pet's stools unless they have tapeworms and then you will see segments on and around the anus. When we do a fecal flotation, we are not looking for the worms themselves, but the worm eggs. The stool is floated in a sugar solution, which causes the eggs to float to the top and then we look at them through a microscope to identify which type of eggs they are.

Can I get worms from my pet?

Yes. There is a chance of people, especially small children of becoming infected with the larvae of roundworms, hookworms, or tapeworms. In most cases, humans become infected by accidental ingestion of the worm eggs. Infected dogs, cats, and contaminated environments are the most common sources of infection. Infected pets often pass large numbers of worm eggs in their feces.

How did my pet get worms?

The most common ways for your pet to pick up worms are eating infectious eggs, (i.e. roundworms, whipworms) or larvae (i.e. hookworms), by active larval invasion through the healthy skin of the host (i.e. hookworms), or by eating an infected intermediate host like a rabbit, mouse or flea (i.e. tapeworms), and also by eating an infected animal's feces.

What kind of worms can my pet get?

The most common worms your pet can acquire are roundworms (which are long, thin white worms that live in the small intestines) hookworms (tiny, white to reddish brown worms that live in the small intestines, they puncture the intestinal lining and feed on blood), whipworms (white, 2-3 inch long worms that live in the colon and cecum), and tapeworms (a long segmented tape-like body structure, which attach to the intestinal mucosa, and continuously shed segments, which you will notice as small rice-like segments around your pet's anus).

What kinds of problems can worms cause my pet?

In cases where there is a heavy worm infestation, there can be tissue damage from the larva migrating through the host. Worms can cause obstruction of the gut and bile ducts when present in large numbers. Worms can also cause your pet to become anemic from blood loss, deprive them from vitamins, minerals and other vital substances. Worms can also impair the immune system and cause your pet to start to look "unthrifty".

What can I do if my pet has worms?

Please give us a call at our Owatonna Office (507)-214-7387 and we can get your pet set up with a deworming schedule. At home, you can make sure to clean out all litter boxes for cats, and clean up all stools in yard for dogs.