

SUNSET LAKES ANIMAL CLINIC

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INTESTINAL PARASITES AND OTHER INTERNAL PARASITIC OF DOGS & CATS

Does your pet have intestinal parasites?

A stool sample is used to diagnose the presence of intestinal parasites. Your veterinarian should test a fresh stool sample from puppies or kittens when they're 6 to 8 week's of age. Adult pet's should have their stool tested every 6 to 12 months.

A blood sample is taken to test your pet for evidence of "heartworm infection"

TYPES OF INTESTINAL PARASITES

ROUNDWORMS: or ascarids are intestinal parasites found in both dogs and cats. The common ascarid of cats does not infect dogs and vice versa. Roundworm infection can be fatal in young puppies and kittens. Infection in healthy adult pets is seldom serious.

HOOKWORMS: are bloodsucking parasites found in both dogs and cats. The common hookworm in dogs does not infect cats and vice versa. Hookworm infection can cause severe, and even fatal blood loss, especially in puppies.

TAPEWORMS: are common intestinal parasites of dogs and cats. Fleas, rabbits, mice, rats, and other animals carry an intermediate stage in the life cycle of tapeworms. Dogs and cats become infected with tapeworms by eating these carriers. Fleas carry the most common tapeworm of dogs and cats. If your pet is exposed to fleas, watch for tapeworm segments passing with your pet's stool.

WHIPWORMS: are intestinal; parasites of dogs. They sometimes cause diarrhea.

COCCIDIA: are intestinal parasites of dogs and cats, which can cause diarrhea and weight loss. Coccidiosis usually affects young dogs and cats especially those from places where large numbers of animals are kept together, such as kennels, catteries and pet stores.

TOXOPLASMA: are intestinal parasites of cats that can infect people. Cats can become infected after eating mice, birds, or meat containing Toxoplasma cysts.

HEARTWORMS: are most common in dogs but cats have been known to be infected. They are parasites that spend their adult life in the heart and large blood vessels. Mosquitoes transmit heartworms.

Puppies should generally be checked for intestinal parasites between 6 to 8 weeks of age. If a bitch has had a litter with roundworm or hookworm infection than future litters should be treated at 2,4,5, and 8 weeks of age. Kittens should be checked between 6 to 8 weeks of age also.

Adult dogs and cats should have their stool checked at least once a year as part of their annual exam and vaccinations. Heartworm infection is difficult to treat. Be sure that your pet is on a monthly prevention for this parasite. Dogs can be started as early as 4 weeks of age.