

# ASK OUR VETERINARIANS



## Intestinal Parasites

Do you see worms in your pets' stool? If not, do you think this means they are parasite free? Chances are you're correct; however, many parasites are not visible to the naked eye. For example, hookworms, giardia, and coccidia are all microscopic. While roundworms and tapeworms are technically visible to the naked eye, many pets do not shed these parasites despite having infections. The best way to detect intestinal parasites is by annual or semi-annual fecal examinations. Even a negative fecal sample does not completely exclude the possibility that your pet has intestinal parasites. Some parasites intermittently shed their eggs into the stool sample, so not every piece of stool is affected. Monthly deworming for some parasites occurs along with most heartworm preventions. Intestinal parasite prevention and detection is an important part of keeping not only your pet healthy, but your family healthy as well. Children are especially susceptible to certain parasite infections from contaminated ground soil. Signs of intestinal parasites include: diarrhea, weight loss or inadequate weight gain, poor coat quality, and occasionally vomiting. In humans, these parasites can be transmitted through the skin (hookworm larvae), or by ingestion of the parasite eggs. If you suspect your pet has intestinal parasites, please contact your veterinarian.

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