

WORMING YOUR CAT

WHAT ARE TAPEWORMS AND ROUNDWORMS?

Tapeworms and roundworms are two of the most common intestinal parasites of cats.

Tapeworms

These are long flat worms composed of many individual segments which live in the cat intestine. Mature segments (which contain eggs) are shed in the faeces, or sometimes seen around the anus. They look a little like grains of rice and can be mobile.

Roundworms

These are shorted with rounder bodies, and produce microscopic eggs which are shed in faeces. They may occasionally be vomited up from the stomach.

HOW DOES MY CAT GET TAPEWORMS?

There are a variety of different tapeworms that infect cats but the two most common are *diplydium caninum* and *taenia taeniaformis*. The tapeworm segments shed in the faeces contain eggs which are eaten by an intermediate host (flea larvae or small rodents). When the cat eats an infected flea (when grooming) or kills and eats an infected rodent the life cycle of the tapeworm is completed as the tapeworm develops and attaches to the lining of the cat's intestines. All cats that come into contact with fleas or who hunt are likely to be infected with tapeworms.

HOW DOES MY CAT GET ROUNDWORMS?

The common roundworms of the cat are *toxacara cati* and *toxascaris leonina*. With both these worms, infection is by the ingestion of infective eggs or eating another animal (intermediate host) such as a mouse that is itself infected. *Toxacara cati* may also be transmitted through the milk of the queen (mother) meaning kittens can be infected with roundworms from a very young age. Roundworm infections are extremely common and it is safe to assume that all kittens will be infected.



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CAN THESE WORMS INFECT HUMANS?

It is possible for humans to be infected with roundworms, both *toxocara cati* and *dipylidium caninum*, although the latter is rare. *Toxocara cati* is a concern, particularly in children, where ingestion of the eggs may result in migration of the worm larvae through the body and potential damage. This is much more of a risk with the dog roundworm (*toxocara canis*) but can still occur occasionally with *toxocara cati*.

Due to the potential human health hazard, as well as the possible health of your cat regular worming of cats is important. In addition, careful disposal of litter from litter trays will reduce the risk of passing on other infections (such as toxoplasma) which can occasionally be passed from cats to humans.

WHAT SHOULD I USE TO WORM MY CAT?

As kittens can be infected with roundworms from a very young age it is important that worming is started early and repeated regularly. We recommend that all kittens are wormed from 6-8 weeks against roundworm for three consecutive days each month with "**Panacur**" or monthly with "**Advocate**" spot-on which also treats fleas and ear mites.

From 6 months of age we recommend that cats are wormed every 3 months with "**Milbemax**" or "**Drontal**" tablets. There is also a spot-on "**Profender**". All of these products are effective against both tape and roundworms.

If it is not possible for you to give your cat a pill we can do this for you or apply "**Profender**".

Pregnant queens can safely be wormed with "**Panacur**" but since transmission does not occur during pregnancy it is more appropriate to worm her whilst she is nursing the kittens.



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SUGGESTED WORMING PROGRAM

UNWEANED KITTENS

2, 5, 8 Weeks

“PANACUR” LIQUID or PASTE

KITTENS 2-6 MONTHS

Once monthly

“ADVOCATE” Spot-on

or

3 consecutive days each month

“PANACUR” LIQUID or PASTE

If tapeworms seen use *“Milbemax” Tablets*

ADULT CATS

Every 3 months

“MILBEMAX” Tablets

or

“PROFENDER” Spot-on

