

## INTERNAL WORMS

## PET CARE SHEET

**Roundworms** live within the animal's intestine and the most common, *Toxocara*, can grow up to 10cm long. Dogs and cats become infected by ingesting the microscopic eggs usually from faeces contaminated soil, or by eating an infected rodent or bird. Worms can be passed on in the milk or through the placenta to an unborn puppy or kitten. Infected animals can have an enlarged abdomen (pot belly), diarrhoea, poor growth or weight loss and a harsh coat. In puppies and kittens these effects are often serious and can be fatal. **Tapeworms** also live in the intestine and the most common, *Dipylidium*, can be up to 50 cm long. Dogs and cats become infected by eating infected fleas or lice during grooming. Itching or licking around the bottom, or 'scooting' is often seen although this can also be a sign of anal gland impaction. Adult roundworms may be seen in faeces and tapeworm segments can be seen moving around on the bottom, but if these signs are not present, the only way to be sure that your animal doesn't have worms is by checking a faecal sample, or by worming. The easiest way to treat is by giving a tablet eg Milbemax, Drontal, but it is often easier to use paste, powder or liquid Panacur for pups and kittens. Profender is a spot-on multi-wormer for cats that won't take tablets. Some spot-on flea / worm products also treat roundworms e.g. Advocate, Stronghold. For tapeworms it is very important to treat all pets for fleas (and to spray the house too), otherwise the animal will re-infect when it grooms. Puppies and kittens should be treated once every 2 weeks until 12 weeks old, as wormers only kill adult worms, and not larvae (young worms which mature in 2 weeks ) Adult dogs and cats can be treated once every 3 months, based on an average lifestyle exposure to worm infection. Exceptions which may need worming more frequently, are 1) Young adult dogs + cats , as they tend to eat and chew new things , especially other animal's faeces. 2) Cats that are avid hunters of mice or birds. 3) Pets owned by families with young children, as the *Toxocara* can pass to humans and very rarely cause liver or eye problems. Please contact us for advice based on your pet's lifestyle. Hookworms and whipworms are less common but are also effectively treated by our recommended treatment regimes.

**Lungworm** (*Angiostrongylus vasorum*) - is now a common problem in UK dogs and especially the South East. Worm larvae are passed in the faeces of infected dogs and foxes. ( foxes are the natural host ) Snails and slugs ingest the larvae. Dogs are infected by eating slugs snails and frogs ( frogs eat slugs ! ) as well as licking where snails have been – eg toys, bones and food bowls left in the garden. Adult worms produce eggs which migrate as larvae to the lungs – where they cause the damage which causes disease before being coughed up to be swallowed and passed in the faeces thus completing the life cycle. Younger dogs are most at risk and there are 3 main disease patterns – 1) Respiratory disease – coughing, dyspnoea ( difficulty breathing ) and exercise intolerance. 2) Clotting defects – bleeding from minor and surgical wounds, nose and eye bleeds, bruising and anaemia 3) Neurological changes – fits, spinal pain, partial paralysis weight loss The disease is confirmed if worm larvae are identified in faeces Advocate spot on is 85% effective in one dose and 100% effective if a second dose is given one month later. We recommend all dogs are given monthly Advocate or Milbemax. Pet shop products are not effective against lungworm.

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