

CROSSROADS VETERINARY HOSPITAL

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PARASITES, PETS AND KIDS

Know the facts: Don't expose your children!

- Hookworms and roundworms can be harbored by your dog or cat and transmitted to children who are living in homes with pets. In some cases these parasites can cause blindness in humans. It is thought that 30% to 50% of dogs and cats carry GI parasites and that 1-3 million people in the U.S. have infections from the same parasites carried by pets. Children, the elderly and immunocompromised people are at high risk.
- Dogs get infected with hookworms and roundworms by walking places where other dogs have defecated. The microscopic roundworm egg and hookworm larvae end up on your dog's feet. Your dog then licks his feet and infects him or herself with these GI parasites. Three weeks later, your dog is shedding eggs and larvae from his GI tract. If your dog licks his anus and then lick your child or if your child pets your dog, he or she can become infected with these parasites.
- Cats get infected with hookworms and tapeworms by hunting prey. Even if your cat lives indoors, the ingestion of one house mouse can expose your cat to GI parasites. Cats with a flea infestation can spread cat scratch fever to children, elderly people, or immunocompromised (AIDS, cancer patients, organ transplants recipients) people.

How Can you Prevent the Risk of Spreading Parasites to your Children?

- Keep your dog on a product for heartworm protection once per month, all year. This medication helps to prevent hookworms and roundworms in your dog. Keep your dog on flea protection medication from March 1st to December 1st.. A monthly topical product is available (Advantage Multi) that protects against heartworm disease, fleas and intestinal parasites.
- Scoop the yard where your dog defecates at least weekly: ideally daily, as worm eggs and larvae are found in stool and can contaminate the environment.

- Bring a stool sample in from your dog or cat at least once per year and ideally two times per year. You do not have to bring your pet into the hospital. We will give you a special collection cup (fecalyzer) in which to collect the sample wherein you do not have to touch the stool. The stool should be fresh (less that 12 hours old). You may drop off the sample at any time. We will call you with the results
- Keep your cat on Revolution once per month, all year. This medication eliminates hookworms, which could be potentially spread to humans in the household. It also kills fleas, which can be culprits in the spread of cat scratch disease. (Cat scratch fever).
- Teach your children to wash their hands before eating, especially if they have recently handled their pet.

*** Information provided by the Veterinary Information Network – Client information series***