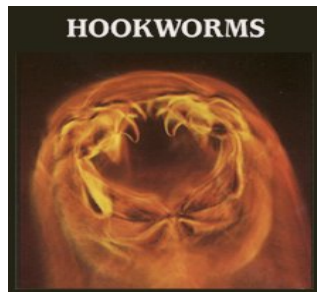


COMMON INTESTINAL PARASITES IN DOGS

Dogs are victims of several internal parasites frequently referred to as worms. The most common are the roundworms that infest most puppies at some time in their young lives and tapeworms that can be a big problem when flea infestations are high.

Evidence of roundworms and tapeworms can be seen without the aid of a microscope, but other worms are not so easily diagnosed. Occasionally adult whipworms can be seen in the stool when the infestation has already caused some debilitation or weight loss in the dog.

Early diagnosis of the presence and species of intestinal parasites is important, for not all worms respond to the same treatment. Therefore, stool samples should be taken to the veterinarian for microscopic examination if worms are suspected. Many veterinarians include the stool check as part of the annual health examination.



Several worms that infect and re-infect dogs can also infect humans, so treatment and eradication of the worms in the environment are important. Remove dog feces from back yards at least weekly, use appropriate vermicides under veterinary supervision, and have the dog's feces checked frequently in persistent cases. Do not mix wormers and do not use any wormer if your dog is currently taking any other medication, including heartworm preventative, without consulting the veterinarian.

When walking the dog in a neighborhood or park, remove all feces so that the dog does not contribute to contamination of the soil away from home as well.

Dogs that are in generally good condition are not threatened by worm infestations and may not even show symptoms. However, it's a good idea to keep the dog as worm-free as possible so that if disease or stress do take a toll, you're not fighting worms in a sick pet.