



FLEAS, TICKS & INTESTINAL WORMS INFORMATION SHEET

THE FLEA LIFE CYCLE

Fleas are small, wingless insects with amazing jumping abilities. As they can reproduce super-fast, it's crucial to treat fleas on dogs and cats all year round

Female fleas feed and breed on your pet, laying up to 50 eggs per day. The eggs fall off into the environment, particularly where pets rest and sleep. In warm, humid conditions (like your cosy home in winter), the eggs hatch into microscopic larvae in a few days. The larvae look for humidity, move away from light and feed on organic debris in the environment, especially faeces (flea dirt) produced by adult fleas.

Within a few days, each larva spins a cocoon, and then pupates to a new adult flea. When environmental conditions are optimal, the development cycle from egg to adult flea may be completed in 2 weeks, but fully formed adult fleas can survive in the cocoon for up to 6 months. These pre-emerged adults make up a large reserve of parasites in the environment that can immediately emerge to jump onto a passing host, like your pet. In this way, the cycle begins again and adult fleas can re-infest your pet.

Fleas can infest your pet from an early age, so regular, consistent flea treatment must begin from the time it is a young puppy or kitten.

HEARTWORM IN DOGS

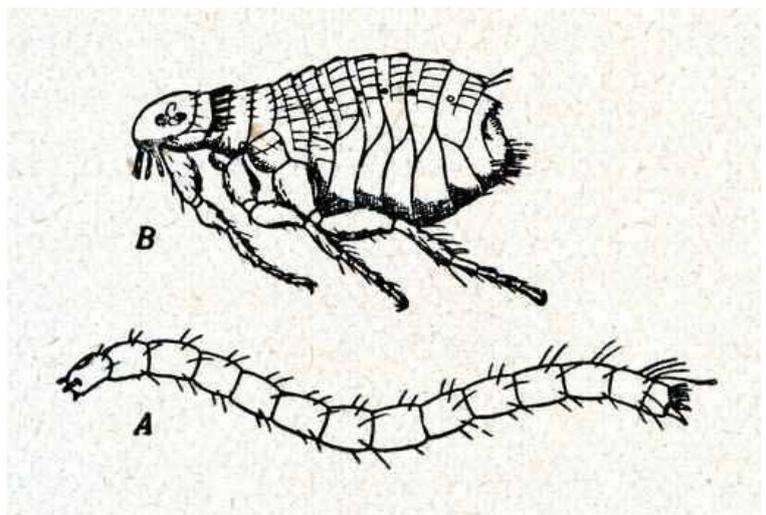
Heartworm disease is transmitted from dog to dog by mosquitoes. Adult heartworms in dogs can be up to 30cm long and can cause serious disease.

They live in the heart and blood vessels of the lungs, interfering with circulation and damaging tissues. This may eventually cause heart failure, and if left untreated, heartworm in dogs can be fatal.

Dogs rarely show immediate signs of heartworm infection as the adult worms take 6 to 7 months to develop from larvae transmitted by a mosquito bite. The signs of heartworm disease in dogs will depend on the severity of the infection, plus the health, activity level and size of your pet.

Common heartworm symptoms:

- Coughing
- Lack of energy
- Reluctance to exercise
- Weight loss



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INTESTINAL WORMS

- Intestinal worms are common in puppies and kittens, but also occur in adult pets. Puppies and kittens can be infected from their mothers before birth, after suckling milk, or from their environment.
- Many intestinal worms can be transmitted from pets to people, therefore effective, regular control and prevention is essential to protect not only your pet, but also the health of other dogs, cats and people that may be in contact with it.

The 4 types of intestinal worms:

HOOKWORMS

Hookworms feed on blood from the lining of the intestines in dogs and cats. They can cause anaemia, diarrhoea and even death in puppies and kittens. Hookworms also pose a health risk to humans

ROUNDWORMS

Puppies and kittens can be infected from their mothers during pregnancy and may be born with roundworms. They can also pick up these worms after birth through their mothers' milk.

Roundworms may cause –

- Pot belly
- Dry coat
- Stunted growth
- Coughing
- Bowel obstructions
- Death

Roundworms also pose a risk to human health.

TAPEWORMS

Immature *Dipylidium caninum* tapeworms – the most common tapeworm affecting puppies – are found in fleas. Dogs ingest these fleas during grooming and the tapeworm then develops in the dog's small intestine.

Segments of the tapeworm, full of eggs, are eliminated with faeces or may emerge from the anus on their own. After drying out, they look like rice grains stuck to the hair around the anus.

As fleas are the intermediate host for this species of tapeworm, treatment for tapeworm infestations must be combined with flea treatment. While tapeworm infestations usually cause few problems in adult dogs, they can slow the growth of puppies and cause poor coat condition and anal irritation. People can also become infected with this tapeworm.

In rural areas, ask your vet about controlling hydatid tapeworm, as it can have serious human health implications.

WHIPWORMS (DOGS ONLY)

This parasite of the large bowel is more likely to occur where multiple dogs live together and have access to faecal material. Whipworms feed on their host's blood and heavy infestations may lead to anaemia and bloody diarrhoea. Dogs of all ages can be infected by ingesting whipworm eggs, which are highly resistant and survive in the external environment for several years

