

WORMING YOUR PETS

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Even Our Healthy Pet can use a Worming once in awhile.

New pets and worms usually come together although we do not like to think about it. Worms have lived with our pets for many years and their life cycles are very much intertwined.

Early worm stages lying dormant in the tissues of the mama are awakened and move to the newborns on their way out into their new world. Other forms of transmission are through insects, directly through the paws or through the oral/fecal route. From the early beginnings, the worms can be there. If the worm load is large, troubles can start as early as two to three weeks of age causing poor digestion, bloating and possibly intestinal blockage.

The worms are quite busy reproducing themselves. Their motto is "safety in numbers"; as with flies and most insects, when the conditions are right, rapid effective reproduction ensures their survival until the next opportunistic time. Most pet intestinal worms reproduce in cycles of two to three weeks, almost constantly showering the intestine with massive numbers of eggs. The adult worms are essentially egg factories, sending the eggs out individually or reproducing neatly packaged versions for further travels in the animal and plant kingdoms.

Signs of worms can be quite varied, from vomiting, coughing, poor haircoat, underweight, and overweight, loose and/or bloody bowels, hyperactivity, to no signs at all. Signs suggestive of worms usually require some form of treatment although no eggs are seen in the stool. Diarrhea will wash away the eggs or the adults can be in a rest period from producing eggs. Worms will not effect a strong and healthy animal; the vitality will keep the worm numbers low or almost non-existent, through strong digestion and excellent immune function.

Most of our pets need a little help, especially in the beginning. The newer worm medications are extremely effective, safe and gentle. There are still older more harsh and less effective products available, these are best to be left alone. Pyrantel (Strongid-T), fenbendazole (Panacur), and febantel (Rintal) are safe and effective for many of the common pet intestinal worms. A treatment best consists of two doses of medication approximately 18 days apart. This is due to the medication removing only the adult worms; in two to three weeks, the larval stages that have matured into adults must also be killed to break the reproductive cycle. There are also time tested natural herbs and remedies for aiding in the expulsion of worms. Garlic, cloves, thyme extract, Zymex and many more have been used. Rigorous testing of these products is absent as little money can be made in using readily available natural food items, hence little or no scientific studies. Ridding our pets of excessive worms is an added boost for helping them get on the right road to health. Worm medications and herbs can be abused; as the frequent need for limiting the worm load indicates an

underlying lack of vitality. This is usually based on poor nutrition, poor breeding, and unnatural environment and/or over vaccination; combinations of any of these factors can reduce vitality significantly.

Providing the pet with fresh, wholesome food, in balance with what is natural for them, along with fresh air, exercise and loving and meaningful interaction will maximally ensure a vital, beautiful, vibrant pet.