

Internal Parasites



Intestinal worms are a very common problem in puppies! They are infected from their mothers before birth, after suckling milk, or from their environment. These worms are parasites, in other words, they live at the expense of their host's health; in this case your puppy. Intestinal parasitic infection may cause growth disorders, anaemia, diarrhoea and vomiting in puppies. Effective and regular control and prevention of these parasites is essential to protect not only your puppy's health, but also the health of other dogs and humans that may be in contact.

What types of intestinal worms affect puppies?

There are two types: "round" worms (ascarids, hookworms, whipworms) and "flat" or "tape" worms (Taenia and Dipylidium).

Roundworms

Ascarids

● *Ascarids (Toxocara canis)* are whitish worms measuring up to 20 centimetres long when adults. Young puppies are often infested, either directly in their mother's womb or via the milk. These worms survive by living on food given to the puppy. When numerous, they may cause slow growth and loss of weight. Digestive symptoms are frequent: alternation of diarrhoea and constipation, vomiting (of worms, at times), abdominal swelling, and rarely intestinal obstruction and perforation.

● A danger for humans

Ascarid eggs eaten by humans, (especially children), cause serious disease related to the migration of larvae through organs of the body (ascarid Larva migrans). Infection most often occurs when handling young puppies, which have not been wormed or by playing in areas contaminated by dogs' faeces, such as children's sand-pits, parks and gardens.



Ascarids within a piece of intestine

How to get rid of them?

● The only solution is to administer a wormer, your vet will recommend an effective treatment. If worming treatments are missed, re-infection may occur which can lead to your puppy vomiting adult roundworms despite having been treated in the past.

Whipworms

● *Whipworms (Trichuris vulpis)* are parasites of the dog's large intestine. They are attached to the intestinal lining and measure from 2 to 4cm. They feed on their host's blood. Heavy infestations may lead to anaemia and bloody diarrhoea (haemorrhagic colitis). Dogs of all ages can be infected by ingestion of whipworm eggs. *Trichuris* eggs are highly resistant and survive in the external environment for several years.

How to get rid of them ?

● These worms are often resistant to some wormers, seek your vet's advice on treatment.



Trichuris



Tapeworms

Dipylidium

● *Dipylidium caninum* is the most common tapeworm in dog and cat. It can measure up to 80cm long. The tapeworm segments containing eggs are eliminated with the animal faeces. The segments are mobile and look like small rice grains. They can be seen on fresh faeces or on the hair of the puppy's peri-anal area where they cause irritation, anal rubbing and "scooting" along the ground.



How to get rid of them?

● The presence of this parasite is strongly associated with flea infestation. Dogs become infected with this tapeworm by swallowing fleas, which are already carrying the developing *Dipylidium* larvae ! So, fleas act as the intermediate host (or 'carrier') for this species of tapeworm.

To be effective, the treatment for this tapeworm must be combined with flea control measures, such as Frontline®.

When is it best to de-worm puppies and adults?

● ***Worming products for dogs are not long lasting.*** This is why animals should be re-treated at regular intervals. The de-worming schedule varies with the risk of infection, your vet will be able to advise.

Which anthelmintic to choose for intestinal worms?

Before selecting a de-wormer, ask yourself the following question.

● ***Is the treatment I intend to buy effective against all dog intestinal worms (Ascarids/ Tapeworms/ Whipworms)?***
Your vet can advise.

A good drug has to be effective against all the main dog intestinal parasites especially ascarids, whipworms and *Dipylidium*. Tablets, powders and liquid formulations are available.

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