Hookworm Checklist

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

One of the most common intestinal parasites affecting canines and felines alike is the hookworm. These blood-feeding parasites are found throughout the entire United States and are not limited to a particular climate, although Ancylostoma braziliense is more common in semitropical and tropical areas, and Uncinaria stenocephala in the colder north. Your dog or cat can become infected with hookworms from contaminated soil or water, by eating an infected animal, through larvae penetrating their skin, or by larvae infecting fetuses or the young in the uterus or through the milk.

Hookworms are very small and hard to detect in the stool without a veterinarian-performed fecal examination, but there are a number of symptoms that may tip you off. Before your veterinary appointment, check off the symptoms on our helpful checklist that your dog or cat may be experiencing. Not only will this checklist help you cover the common symptoms associated with hookworms, but it will also give your veterinarian clues as to the severity of the infection, which can be especially serious in young animals.

Check which symptoms your dog or cat is currently exhibiting:

- ☐ Loss of color in the gums or paler gum appearance
- ☐ Changes to feces, such as black, tarry stools
- ☐ Unexplained vomiting
- ☐ Prolonged or regular diarrhea
- ☐ Stunted growth in puppies or kittens
- ☐ Changes to coat, such as developing dull and/or dry hair
- ☐ Coughing or hacking
- ☐ Loss of weight or a lack of appetite
- ☐ Pet is exhibiting other signs of anemia (fatigue, physical weakness, shortness of breath)

Once you've completed the checklist, cut out and take it to your veterinarian so you can discuss the results together. Be sure to let your veterinarian know about any medications or supplements your dog is currently taking, including aspirin or any other NSAIDs. Work with your veterinarian to set up a regular deworming schedule for your pet. Many heartworm preventives can also help

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control hookworms. Hookworms can also cause illness in people, so prevention of hookworms and good hygiene are key.

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