

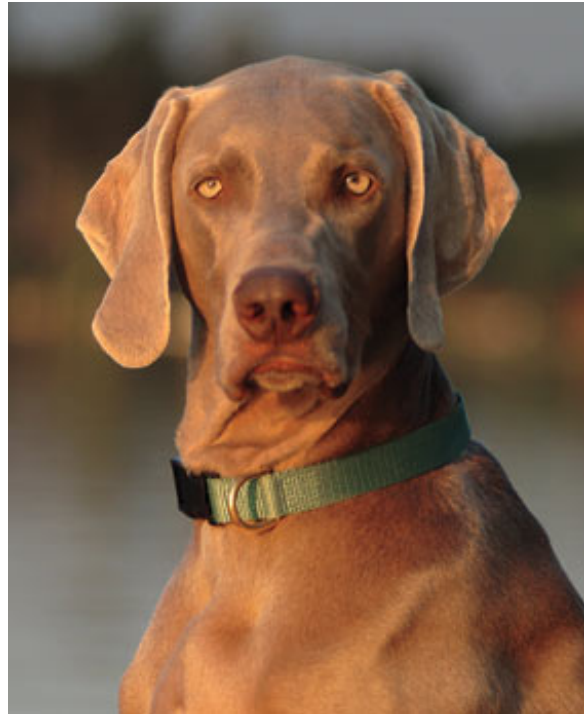
Worms: Transmission to Humans Possible

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Pet to human intestinal worm transmission - possible, yet preventable

Your pet shares so very much love and devotion with you. It seems unthinkable that your dog or cat could share something you'd never want: worms. Each year, thousands of people in the U.S. become infected with roundworms and hookworms from their pet.

By worming your pet and practicing good hygiene, you can dramatically lessen the chance you and your family members will ever have to worry about these intestinal parasites.



Roundworm infection

Humans become infected with roundworms when they ingest infective eggs from the soil or from their hands or another object. Large numbers of the eggs can accumulate in the soil where dogs and cats are allowed to defecate. The eggs are sticky, and can collect on the hands and under the fingernails of people. If a human ingests roundworm eggs, the subsequent larvae can migrate through body tissues (this condition is called "visceral larva migrans") or the eyes ("ocular larva migrans"). Children, and others who may not practice good hygiene, are most prone to becoming infected.

Hookworm infection

People become infected with hookworms when hookworm larvae in the ground migrate through the skin, causing a disease known as "cutaneous larval migrans." Persons who have contact with the ground, especially for long periods of time, such as plumbers or electricians, and sunbathers, especially those lying on wet sand or ground, are at increased risk. Roundworm eggs and hookworms eggs and larvae must be in the environment approximately two weeks before becoming infective, so direct contact with an infected animal generally does not result in transmission. However, young puppies may continually contaminate their entire litter area. Adults and children who handle the mother dog or puppies, or those who clean the area, may be especially at risk.

Simple infection prevention

To prevent human infection with roundworms or hookworms, [worm your pets](#) as recommended, keep your pets' environment clean, and practice good hygiene. Teach children, especially, to wash their hands after playing with pets and before eating. Do not let children play in areas where dogs or cats may have defecated. Also, do not allow cats to use sandboxes or gardens as litter boxes.