

## Windsor Animal Hospital

### Information Sheet - Pet-to-People Worms

1. 36% of dogs nationwide have intestinal worms. Dog & cat intestinal worms live in the pet's intestine and shed their eggs in the pet's feces. These eggs are microscopic and are what we look for when we do a "fecal exam" on your pet. A single female worm can shed more than 100,000 eggs per day. The typical worm infestation is 10-50 worms, so millions of eggs are shed each day by an infected dog. These eggs can remain infective in the environment for years. So . . . **CLEAN UP YOUR PET'S FECES ON A REGULAR BASIS.**
2. Dog and cat worm eggs when ingested by humans form "larva migrans syndrome" which is a condition where the worm develops in organs other than the intestine. The most typical sites for this are the abdominal cavity, the skin, liver, lung and the eye. The CDC (United States Centers for Disease Control) discussion of this problem in humans can be found at their website: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/ascaris/prevention.htm> Dogs are increasingly becoming infected with a raccoon worm (*Baylisascaris procyonis*). This worm egg when ingested by humans can go to the brain causing irreparable brain damage and death. So . . . **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE AN ANNUAL OR BIENNIAL FECAL EXAM DONE ON YOUR PET.**
3. The CDC has identified children as being the highest "at-risk" group due to their play habits with pets, eating dirt (contaminated with worm eggs) and hygiene. So . . . **USE PROPHYLACTIC MONTHLY WORMERS ON YOUR PET.** The second highest group are plumbers and electricians due to their trade requiring them to often crawl through dirt under buildings, and sunbathers who lie on contaminated sand (hookworm larvae can penetrate the skin).
4. Dog intestinal worms cross the placenta (during pregnancy) and mammary tissue (during nursing) to infect puppies. Cat intestinal worms cross the mammary tissue and infect kittens. This causes intestinal worm infestations in puppies and kittens as young as 2 weeks old. If the pups or kittens get infected from the environment (not from their mother) they will infect the mother (and then the rest of the litter) because the mothers groom their young and ingest the worm eggs. Hence mothers should be wormed along with their litters. **WORM PUPPIES AND THEIR MOTHERS from 2-24 WEEKS AND WORM KITTENS AND THEIR MOTHERS from 3-24 WEEKS.**
5. Animals that roam or have access to other pet's feces (dog parks) are more likely to become infected with intestinal worms. So . . . **THESE PETS NEED BIENNIAL FECAL EXAMS WITH YOUR VETERINARIAN.**

#### The CDC recommends:

- Clean up your pet's feces on a regular basis
- Have a regular fecal exam done by your veterinarian
- Worm puppies and their mothers @ 2,4,6,8,12,16,20,24 weeks
- Worm kittens and their mothers @ 3,5,7,9,12,16,20,24 weeks
- Prophylactic treatment with wormers substantially helps decrease the problem
- Keep children and pets away from areas contaminated with pet feces

#### Windsor Animal Hospital recommends:

1. Annual fecal exam on all dogs and cats; biennial if they visit areas other pets frequent
2. Cats are treated with Revolution® monthly or wormed annually to biennially
3. Dogs off HeartGard® are wormed annually during exam with 2<sup>nd</sup> worming sent home
4. Dogs on HeartGard® - no worming as they receive prophylactic monthly worming
5. Puppies and their mothers all wormed 2,4,6,8 weeks then start HeartGard® at 12 weeks
6. Kittens and their mothers all wormed 3,5,7,9 weeks then start Revolution® at 12 weeks
7. Clean up all feces ASAP!