

## ***Internal Parasites- How they affect your pet & family***

Recent medical studies in both people and pets have shown internal parasites to be far more of a problem than had previously been realized. These studies have also shown that ***internal parasites in pets are much more commonly spread to people*** than thought.

Children, the elderly and those who are immuno-compromised are at much higher risk for serious medical problems caused by these parasites. Due to cleanliness issues, children are the most susceptible to contracting internal parasites from their family pets. Recent medical studies have found exposure to Canine Roundworms (*Toxicara*) evident in 5-7% of children, ages 5-15. *Toxicara* infection has been linked to 37% of diagnosed retinal disease in pediatric patients, in the most serious cases causing permanent blindness.

Due to this recent information coming to light, ***our medical staff will now recommend strongly that a stool test be done at least once each year on every dog and outdoor cat we see in our office.*** Indoor cats should be tested initially and then again should they become potentially exposed to parasites. Hopefully with early detection of these parasites, we can keep your pet and your family healthy. Basic descriptions of the internal parasites common to this area can be found on the back of this sheet.

***Running a stool test is easy and is in no way intrusive to your pet.*** Simply bring in a **fresh** (soft & moist) stool sample, in an air tight container or baggy, anytime during regular office hours Monday through Thursday 8 am-6pm and Friday 8am-5pm. If your sample has been obtained more than an hour before you're able to bring it in, please keep it refrigerated until you are able to drop it off. A sample can be kept fresh enough in this manner for 24 hours. Only a small sample is needed, roughly equal to a tablespoon.

Results will be called to you by the next business day. If your pet tests positive for any internal parasites, we will let you know at that time if we need to see your pet in our office for treatment or if you can simply pick up medication to use at home. We strongly recommend bringing in a ***follow up sample two weeks after treatment*** to be sure all parasites have been killed. It is possible for larvae to be unaffected by the de-worming process, therefore a second course of treatment may be necessary- but we can only determine this by checking a follow up stool sample. It is important during this treatment period to pick up all stools daily to prevent recontamination.

Please keep in mind that it is uncommon for the presence of tapeworms to be detected during a standard stool examination. Tapeworms are most often detected by external observation of egg sacks around the rectum and on the surface of the stool. If you notice signs of tapeworms, please call us for medication. ***Tapeworms are most often caused by exposure to fleas and/or wildlife.*** If Raccoons are the cause, it is important keep them out of your yard as they can also carry a variety of roundworm that is a danger to humans. It is also important to treat your pet for fleas, with a product such as **Frontline Plus**, before beginning tapeworm medication or treatment will not be curative due to re-exposure.

In Dogs, use of ***Heartgard Plus*** (which we recommend for all of our canine patients for the prevention of Heartworm Disease) ***will help prevent/treat many common intestinal parasites.***

**Please ask our staff if you have any questions or concerns regarding internal parasites.**