



MACRITCHIE VET ERINARY PRACTICE

Beechwood Veterinary Centre
139 Glasgow Road, Baillieston
Glasgow G69 6TA
Tel. 0141 771 5565
Open: Mon-Fri 8.30am to 7pm,
Sat 8.30am-1.30pm

Low Waters Veterinary Centre
84 Portland Place
Hamilton
Tel. 01698 283400
Open: Mon-Fri 8.30am to 7pm
Sat 9am-11am

Consultations by appointment
24-hour emergency service

FACTSHEET: WORMS

Worms come in many forms: roundworms, hookworms, tapeworms, whipworms, and heartworms – are all parasites that can live inside a cat or dog and rob it of vital nutrients. Worms can cause anaemia (low levels of red blood cells), lethargy, poor appetite, and even death.

Roundworms

Roundworms can be a problem in both dogs and cats, but the biggest problem is children!

All pups and cats have some roundworms living in their intestines. Once mature, these lay eggs which are passed out of the body in with the faeces. They are sticky and as a result stick to the hairs around the anus, and can cause pets to rub their bottoms. All animals groom themselves, so the eggs can become stuck to hairs around the mouth, and can often be swallowed to begin the cycle over again. Surveys have confirmed that most of our public parks are contaminated with roundworm eggs, and since they can't be decontaminated, children's play areas are often fenced off to prevent dogs fouling them.

Obviously people can easily pick up the eggs from handling their pets, and as adults we know to wash our hands, but unfortunately many children don't! If these eggs were swallowed by a child and developed into worms in our bowels, that wouldn't be such a serious problem. Most of them form small inactive cysts in our muscles, but occasionally a cyst develops at the back of the eye which can be extremely serious.

Worming your pet is easy and inexpensive, and should be done at least every 6 months, but more frequently if there are young children in the house. There is a wide variety of preparations available, do check with our staff at the surgery to find the most appropriate for your pet.

Tapeworms

Tapeworms are long, segmented worms that live in a cat or dog's small intestine. There are several species of tapeworms. For example, *Dipylidium Caninum* develop as larvae in fleas (the disease carrier) and are transmitted when a cat or dog ingests the fleas while grooming. *Taenia* tapeworms are transmitted when a dog or cat eats infective eggs, which live in the soil, or larvae which live in small rodents. *Taenia* infection is more common among hunting dogs and cats. Tapeworm infection generally causes very little harm to the host animal. Depending on the species, severe infection could cause these symptoms:

- Abdominal discomfort
- Nervousness
- Severe itching around the anus
- Vomiting
- Weight Loss

Diagnosis can be made by observing tapeworm segments which look like rice, in stools, near the anus, or on your pet's fur.

Treatment usually involves a single tablet, an injection, or simply a spot of chemical on the neck.

Preventative measures include flea control and, if possible, keeping your pet from hunting rodents.