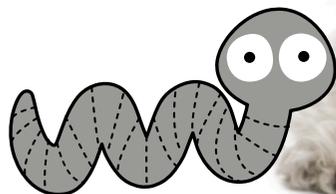


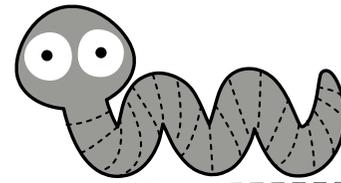


Dogs and Worms

Advice For Your Pet



Dogs and Worms



Article Features

What are worms

How your dog can get worms

How to prevent worms

Worms and their symptoms

How to respond to them

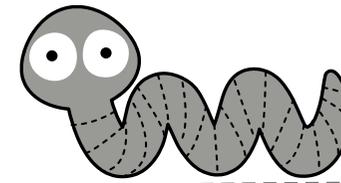
Worms are a parasite found in dogs and come in a variety of types: the most common are roundworms and tapeworms, although hookworms, whipworms and heartworms can also infect dogs. They can be difficult

to detect, and in small numbers your pet might not show any symptoms at all. However, if an infection is left untreated, it can cause problems for your dog's health.

Fortunately most worms are treatable with the right medication, but it is helpful to know what symptoms to look for. This guide explains the symptoms, treatment methods and ways to prevent worms.



What Are Worms?

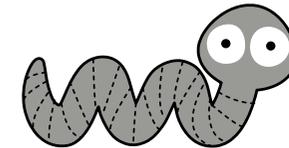


Worms are internal parasites - that is, they live inside your pet rather than on its coat like fleas or ticks. Most of them live in the intestinal tract, where they feed on nutrients as they pass through the dog's body, although some types live in other organs.

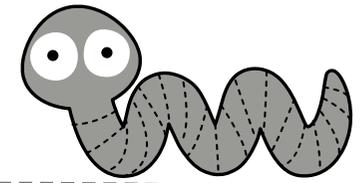
Worms can affect your pet's health, and in rare cases they can spread to humans. If you suspect your dog has worms, you should consult a vet or one of Pets at Home's specialist flea and worm advisors for more guidance.



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How Can Your Dog Get Worms?

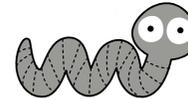


Worms spread in different ways depending on the type. They often get into your dog's body when it eats eggs from the ground, although they can be transferred to puppies from the mother. External parasites can also transmit worms to your dog.

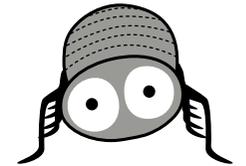
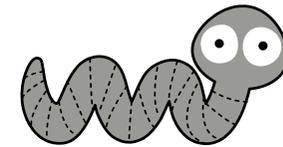
From Food

Dogs can ingest worm eggs from what they eat; sometimes when they come into contact with infected faeces or dirt, from drinking contaminated water or when they pick up wild animals in their mouths. Ingestion is one of the most common ways for dogs to get worms.

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Tapeworm eggs can live in fleas. If your dog swallows fleas when it grooms, it may contract a tapeworm infection when the flea moves to the gut.



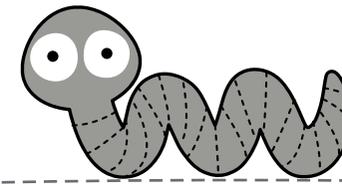
From Their Mother

Roundworm eggs can form cysts in adult dogs that lie dormant until the dog becomes pregnant, at which point they become active and infect the puppies. The mother's milk can also pass a roundworm infection to puppies.

From Parasites and Insects

Tapeworm eggs can live in fleas. If your dog swallows fleas when it grooms, it may contract a tapeworm infection when the flea moves to the gut. Beetles and other small insects may also carry worm eggs that cause infections when they are eaten.

How to Prevent Worms



It's better to take regular preventative measures against parasites than to wait until your pet becomes infected before beginning treatment. Dogs should be wormed at least once every three months: products like Drontal are effective against most types of intestinal worm and are delivered in the form of tablets or syrup for puppies. Ask a vet or a flea and worm advisor from Pets at Home for the best advice on how to how to keep your dog worm-free.

Tips for preventing worms in your home

Many of the major worm prevention techniques are tasks that you will probably carry out anyway as part of the routine of taking care of your dog. However, it's important to be aware of everything you can do to prevent the spread of infection, and remove unnecessary risks.

Checking and treating your dogs for ticks and fleas is vital for preventing the spread of worms. Tapeworm eggs can be carried inside fleas, and if swallowed can soon establish themselves inside your pet's stomach. Flea breeding grounds such as soft furnishings and dog beds should also be kept clean.

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Consider regular treatment against worms to lower the risk of infection.

While pests such as rodents are usually put off by the presence of dogs, you should still work to ensure that there is no way for rats and mice to get into your house. Your dog is likely to catch them, and they can spread infection if carried in the mouth.

If one dog falls sick, try to quarantine them away from other pets, to ensure they do not pass anything on. Have all pets in your household checked to ensure they have not contracted the infection.

Ensure you dispose of faeces quickly and properly, and change litter boxes at least once a day. Segments of the infection may otherwise be picked up by mites and fleas, and can cause the worms to spread to other pets.

Dogs do groom themselves but they're also notorious for getting themselves dirty. Make sure you groom dogs regularly, regardless of how clean they usually are, to ensure they're free from fleas and ticks.

Consider regular treatment against worms to lower the risk of infection.

If your dog becomes pregnant, talk to your vet about administering a preventative treatment for worms to ensure that any potential infection is not passed on.



Types of Worms and Their Symptoms

Different types of worm have their own symptoms, so it's important to know what to look for. However, don't wait for symptoms to appear before taking action: the preventative measures outlined above are better than the cure! These symptoms should be taken as a guideline only: if you think your dog has worms, you should take them to the vet for a diagnosis.

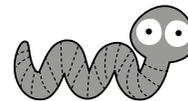


Roundworms are the most common type of worms found in dogs. They are whitish in colour and look a bit like spaghetti, and live in your dog's intestinal tract. Vets generally advise that dogs are treated for roundworms every three to six months.

Symptoms of roundworms include:

- > Your dog passing them through its stool or diarrhoea
- > Dull coat and frequent shedding
- > Pale lips and gums
- > Loss of appetite
- > Pot belly caused by protein deficiency

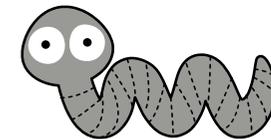
Roundworms are the most common type of worms found in dogs.



Tapeworms are long and flat, with white segmented bodies. They attach themselves to the inside of your

dog's intestine via a hook-like mouth and feed off nutrients. As they mature, tail segments containing eggs drop off and are passed in stool. These worms are fairly common in dogs and vets advise tapeworm treatment every three to six months.

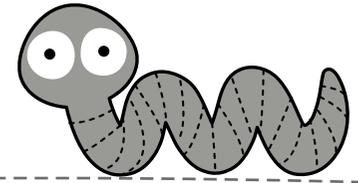
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Symptoms of tapeworms include:

- > Rice-like segments in your dog's stool or in fur under the tail
- > Dog dragging its rear on the floor due to irritation
- > Weight loss despite no change in appetite
- > Diarrhoea
- > Vomiting

How You Can Treat Your Pet



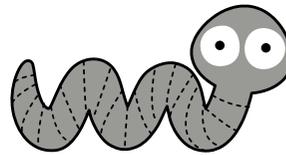
There are several ways to treat worms for your dog, depending on the type of worm. Generally speaking you'll be able to tackle worms more easily if you catch them before they manage to spread and multiply; however, you can still treat more advanced cases with the guidance of a vet. Here, we take a look at the most effective ways of dealing with worms in dogs.



Over-the-counter treatments

There is an over-the-counter treatment for more or less every type of worm infestation, although the most common ones are aimed at roundworm and tapeworm. Often these will also tackle other types, such as hookworms, but you should always check the label before administering. Consult one of Pets at Homes' specialist flea and worm advisors for more information on the best treatments.

There is an over-the-counter treatment for more or less every type of worm infestation.



Most treatments are given to your pet orally, usually by hiding in food, or via tablets and syrups.

Prescription treatments

If your dog's case of worms is quite severe or cannot be treated using over-the-counter medication, you should

seek veterinary advice. They will be able to prescribe a course of medication for your pet.

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