



Is my puppy bugged?

An article by dvm360 in association with Kathryn Primm, DVM, and modified for Evergreen Veterinary Hospital

The most important thing for you to know about parasites is that you usually cannot see them, and they can cause big trouble before you even realize they are there. Some parasites have evolved to be able to hide inside the mother dog and come out specifically to target her puppies, so no matter how well-cared for mom is, the puppies are still at great risk for intestinal parasites.

Can I tell if my puppy has worms?

Intestinal worms, like hookworms and roundworms, can cause signs like vomiting and diarrhea, but they can be present even if your pet seems unaffected. These parasites tend to damage the intestinal walls where they attach, and just their presence can cause inflammation.

Juvenile animals seem to be the most severely affected, and if severe enough, puppies can die from worms. It is a common misconception that a person can see worms in the stool if they look, but Evergreen Veterinary Hospital sends the stool for testing to find the worms microscopically. Occasionally, you may see worms, but many of the worms only “appear” in the stool after a de-wormer has been administered.

Worms will seed the soil where your pet hangs out and serve as a source of reinfection for your pets and other animals. Worms have evolved to be very effective at infecting animals, and it takes both you and Evergreen as a team to clear these intestinal invaders.

Do the worms affect me?

Intestinal worms will not affect humans in the same manner that they affect pets, but they can still cause problems in people. Roundworms and hookworms can affect the eyes and skin of people, respectively.

Can I just buy a pet store de-wormer?

There are certainly over-the-counter de-worming options, but it is wiser to let your Evergreen Veterinary Team find out for sure *which* type of parasites you need to treat them. Only prescription medications kill certain types of worms, and if there are other parasites that are not technically worms (like *Coccidia* or *Giardia*), a completely different type of medication may be required.



What about fleas?

Fleas can make pets miserable. Flea saliva is an extremely irritating substance and flea bites cause pruritus (the medical term for itching) for pets and people alike. Fleas are another thing you will not see until the infestation is truly severe.

Fleas love to get indoors, where they can live year-round. Their goal is to have a blood meal so that they can lay eggs and produce baby fleas to continue the cycle all over again. The fleas will be on your puppy where you can see them only for a short part of their life cycle. That means for every flea you see with your eyes, there are countless more in the environment. If you see a flea, alert the Evergreen Veterinary Team right away!