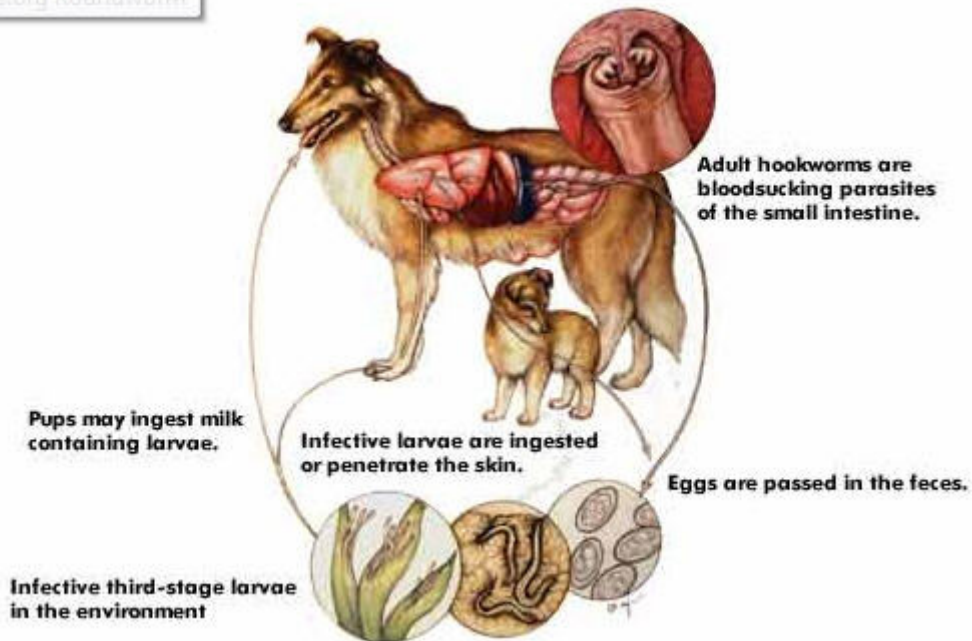


# Hookworm

## HOOKWORM

ePaws.org Roundworm



Hookworm infection in Dogs and Cats.

Hookworms have a direct life cycle meaning that they do not necessarily need a host to be transmitted. In pets, hookworm ova(egg) are passed in the host's feces and develop to the first larval stage if the temperature and humidity are adequate. Ova can hatch in 10-12 hours at 30 degrees centigrade and in 9 hours at 37 degrees centigrade. Infection can occur via ingestion or skin penetration (commonly infested thru the feet) followed by a pulmonary migration, a developmental stage in the gastric glands, or an arrested state in the muscular tissue in older animals. Migration and maturation occur in 17 days. Transport hosts, especially rodents, may play a role in the transmission of this parasite. Hookworms

Young dogs and cats are affected more severely, since they are less able to cope with depleted iron reserves.

Clinical signs may be one or more of the following:

1. Intestinal blood loss causing anemia
2. Bloody diarrhea

3. Weight loss
4. Poor hair coat

Hookworms are diagnosed by fecal flotation (Veterinarian). The ova are unembryonated and must be taken from a fresh specimen since they hatch rapidly in warm weather. Therefore, unless you are going to the veterinarian quickly it is best to refrigerate stool samples or better yet have the vet extract the stool sample at their office. Your pet may not like that idea but it will yield the more accurate result.

There are many de-wormers available over-the-counter but they contain medications that are designed to "flush out" the parasite. But as the name implies, Hookworms hook onto the intestinal wall and "do not come off without a fight". Many pets experience mild to severe distress because of these de-wormers. These de-wormers were used by veterinarians decades ago, but veterinary medicine has come a long way since then.

Today, many anthelmintics are effective against hookworms in both dogs and cats. An aggressive treatment and prevention program as defined by your veterinarian normally entails two initial treatments 2 weeks apart (killing the hatched eggs and before they can hatch again and reproduce administering a second dose), plus an aggressive preventive program. Since the medication can only kill what's in the system monthly checkups for 3-4 months are needed until a pattern of negative tests results are established. Because of the life-cycle of the hookworm, monthly combo preventative can help control but not usually eliminate the problem.



Also, it is extremely important to thoroughly clean and disinfect the affected areas. If this is not feasible walk your pet in a different area and if possible away from where other pets go. ALWAYS, pick up after your pet goes to the bathroom to minimize the chance of reinfection.

The most important aspect of hookworms is that they could pose a health hazard to humans. Especially if you have children, it is imperative to keep on top of the situation and have your pet regularly tested. In humans, hookworms causes cutaneous larval migrans. The parasite can penetrate human skin and cause a linear, tortuous, erythematous, and pruritic dermatitis (kids are more susceptible). Therefore, if you own a pet good hygiene, prevention and management of stool area should be #1 on your list.