

Pets, parks and parasites: Wherever you go, there they are!

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Current challenges

- More than 80% of dog owners permit their dog in the bedroom, over 75% allow the dog to lick their face, and 21% to 56% sleep with the dog in the bed^{1,2}
- Dogs and owners usually benefit from enriched social interactions, but this close relationship creates some challenges, especially in prevention and control of intestinal parasitic infections

2019 National Dog Park Study³

- Shared premises like dog parks, dog day cares, kennels, and pet-friendly public spaces bring dogs of many different backgrounds together, potentially facilitating transmission of parasites and other infections
- Recent data from this 2019 study found:
 - 1 in 5 dogs visiting the park had parasites
 - Parasites found at more than 85% of the 288 parks (from 30 cities)

Most important intestinal helminths of dogs

Cestodes

Cestodes parasitism is likely more common than we think due to lack of good diagnostics for these parasites

- **Dipylidium caninum**: in states where fleas are common, almost 50% of dogs may be infected⁴
- **Taenia spp.**: 5% to 10% of dogs in the central US may be infected⁴
- **Echinococcus spp.**: less commonly reported in the US, but have become increasingly recognized in some areas of Canada⁵. They are very small and may be overlooked. Severe implications for veterinary and public health



Nematodes

Most infections are readily identified by fecal testing although fecal flotation alone may miss many nematode infections in adult dogs⁴

- **Ancylostoma caninum**: most commonly reported gastrointestinal nematode in dogs⁴
- **Uncinaria stenocephala**: much less common and non-pathogenic
- **Trichuris vulpis**: challenging to detect in fecal samples and infections are often overlooked⁶
- **Toxocara canis**: more common in puppies⁴

Health risk to...

Humans

- Most canine intestinal helminths pose some **zoonotic risk**
- **Severity** of resultant human disease varies

Dogs

- Dogs of **all ages** are at risk
- **Ascarids** and associated clinical disease are most common in young pups⁷
- **Hookworms** and **whipworms** are more common in older pups and young adult dogs⁷

Strategies to prevent infections

Broad-Spectrum, Year-Round Parasite Control

Many monthly heartworm preventives marketed in the United States are also dewormers

Dog Management

Canine feces promptly disposed, effective flea control, deter hunting behaviors, fecal testing every 6-12 months...

KEY POINTS

Intestinal parasitism is still common in pets

Public & animal health implications

Monthly broad-spectrum parasite preventive use is critical in all dogs, year round

References

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