

Parasites

The following is a brief description of parasites we commonly see in the pets in our area, the symptoms they *may* cause and their **zoonoses** (contagion to humans!).

- Ascarids: commonly called roundworms, scientific name *Toxocara canis*, *Toxocara cati*. Contagious to humans! Most commonly contracted when ingesting larva stage when children eat dirt. Puppies can get roundworms from their mother both before and after birth and usually do. This is why we recommend prophylactic deworming of all puppies. Kittens can get roundworms through their mothers milk and usually do so prophylactic deworming is needed. Puppies and kittens *may* have diarrhea or may appear healthy. In severe cases ascarids can be *fatal* to pets. **In humans an infection can lead to damage in the eye, brain, liver and lung or even death!**
- Hookworms: Scientific name *Ancylostoma*. Contagious to humans! Both puppies and kittens acquire hookworms either from their mother milk, ingestion or skin penetration. Pets may appear healthy but in puppies and kittens this infection is usually fatal. Diarrhea may or may not be seen. Prophylactic deworming is recommended for puppies and kittens. Humans can acquire this infection from ingestion or skin penetration in contaminated environment. The symptoms in a human are skin eruptions and enteritis.
- Giardia: Acquired by humans and pets by ingestion usually from contaminated mountain streams or standing pools of water. Usually causes diarrhea. May be fatal in the very young or very old. Treated when found.
- Fleas, ticks, and sarcoptic mange are topical parasites that may infest humans but usually don't. Ringworm is a fungal infection that may infect humans and pets.
- Other parasites we may see that are not contagious to humans include heartworms (blood parasite), whipworms, and demodectic mange.

Annual physicals and parasite checks can detect these parasites and we can treat them!