



Always consult with a veterinarian that you feel comfortable with before diagnosing or treating any disease on your own. This information is for reference only.

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## Roundworms

### Issue Description

*Roundworms are the most common intestinal parasites found in dogs – and especially in young puppies, that are often infected at birth, or soon thereafter.*

### Cause

The larvae of one of the roundworms – *Toxocara canis* – lie dormant in the tissues of most adult female dogs. Hormonal changes during pregnancy can activate these larvae, which then migrate through the placenta to infect the unborn puppies.

Some immature forms of canine roundworms can also be transmitted through the nursing mother's milk, although this is a less common route of infection.

Puppies can also become infected by eating dirt or feces containing worm eggs and larvae, by licking contaminated fur or paws, or by drinking contaminated water.

Most adult dogs become infected through contact with worm eggs and larvae in the environment.

### Symptoms and Diagnosis

Puppies affected by roundworm often vomit them up putting these worms up for display. Coughing, developing a potbelly, diarrhea, weakness, emaciation (extreme weight loss) and pneumonia are all common signs and can be severe enough to cause death if not treated soon enough.

### Treatment

Prevention and treatment are nearly one in the same. Regular deworming is a popular choice as the same medication that treats or kills the worms in its various stages is also nicely suited to ensure that when your canine companion gets contaminated, the parasites are killed on the spot.

Preventing roundworm is also done through the use of plain old common sense. Maintain hygiene in and around your home by disposing of feces, washing hands regularly and keep your dog clean. Don't take your dog to unsanitary dog parks and make sure any meat your dog eats is well cooked. Keep kennels clean and dry. Using bleach when mopping will kill the larvae.

Treatment is highly important as roundworm can also affect humans. Annual deworming and checkups are recommended for adult dogs. Puppies usually have already been treated for worms by the breeder or handler before finding their new homes. It is smart to obtain the deworming history before accepting a new pet.

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