

**We here at Peaceful Paws wish to keep your furry companion healthy as well as everyone else's that come to enjoy their stay with us. This is why we require the fecal testing be done and results reported to us. All the information in this document is a little overwhelming. Please if you have any questions or concern voice them with us.**

A fecal test enables your veterinarian to determine if your pet has intestinal parasites. Intestinal parasites are a major cause of morbidity in pets and also a concern for people. Since intestinal parasites live in your pet’s gastrointestinal tract, they are usually hidden from view. Unlike external parasites like [fleas](http://pethealthnetwork.com/lifestyle/fleas-101) and [ticks,](http://www.pethealthnetwork.com/lifestyle/ticks-101) most intestinal parasites are never seen. The only way to detect the presence of intestinal parasites and identify them is by doing a fecal.

However, with all that said, not every sample you take to your vet will present with intestinal parasites if the parasites are not in the “shedding” time of their cycle. So, rely on your vision to identify anything you think is amiss with your pup. It may need a second or third sample run. The following information is a list of common parasites that your veterinarian looks for when they run the fecal test.

So, speaking of fleas and ticks, if any are noted on your pup, a dose of “Frontline” (weight size appropriate) will be applied at the owner’s expense. This will be added to your daycare or boarding charges.

**Tapeworms**, *Dipylidium caninum*, this parasite requires an intermediate host, in this case, fleas. An infected animal releases tapeworm segments or eggs in its feces. Fleas ingest the eggs which grow inside of them to a larval stage. These fleas find their way to the nearest dog. During regular grooming, of course, a dog not only scratches, but licks and chews at them self. On occasion, a dog will ingest an infected flea. Tapeworm larvae travel the digestive tract before attaching the hooks of their scolex to the dog’s small intestine, where they grow by absorbing nutrients through their skin. Adult tapeworms in dogs can be anywhere from four to 28 inches long. Each segment of the tapeworm is filled with eggs. Periodically, segments break off, to be released in the dog’s feces so that the cycle may start afresh. These are some tapeworm symptoms that you can look out for. The first would be scooting, best defined as what you see when a dog slides their bottom across the ground or the floor. There are [several reasons](https://www.dogster.com/lifestyle/do-tapeworms-cause-itchy-rears) a dog may drag it’s rear against the ground, so a closer look may be required. To be ingested by fleas, tapeworm eggs must be very small indeed, but tapeworm segments are visible to the naked eye. Like other broken flatworms, segments that emerge in fresh feces may still move under their own power. These segments, white at first, and turning a golden color once dry, resemble grains of rice. These segments may also be seen on or around the dog’s anus after defecation.

**Roundworms** are the most common type of parasitic worm found inside our pets. Up to 30% of dogs and 70% of puppies are infected with *Toxocara*. Roundworms are highly prolific and females can lay up to 300,000 eggs per day. Infected dogs shed these microscopic eggs via their droppings into the environment, where they become infective after 2 to 3 weeks. The eggs can stay alive and remain viable for up to 5 years, as they are resistant to hot and cold temperatures, as well as disinfectants. Other dogs become infected as they swallow these eggs when they sniff or lick soil or other substances soiled by the infected feces. Dogs may also get infected if they eat rodents or other small mammals that can carry roundworm larvae. Puppies can be infected with roundworms from

**Roundworms Cont’d.**birth as the mother can pass worms to her puppies during pregnancy, and via her milk when nursing. Adult roundworms live in the dog's intestines and many dogs do not show any sign of illness. However, dogs that have a major infestation, particularly puppies, can show digestive signs such as a potbelly, diarrhea and vomiting. They may also have respiratory signs as the immature worms pass through their lungs, leading to coughing and pneumonia.

**Hookworms** similarly to roundworms, are parasites that live in the dog’s digestive system. The hookworm attaches to the lining of the dog’s intestinal wall and feeds on tissue and blood. Its eggs are laid in the dog’s digestive tract and pass into the environment via the feces. Larvae hatch out from hookworm eggs after about 10 days and live in the soil. These larvae can infect your dog by means of contact and penetration of the skin or through swallowing after sniffing or licking contaminated areas. Through their feeding activity, hookworms cause internal blood loss. They are a serious threat to dogs, especially to young puppies as they can induce bloody diarrhea and severe anemia which sometimes will lead to death. In older dogs the blood loss may be more chronic, and the dog may additionally lose weight.

**Whipworms** are named for their characteristically whip-shaped body. The body is composed of a thin end (the lash of the whip) and a thick end (the handle). They attach themselves to the walls of the large intestine and feed on blood. Your dog may become infected with whipworms by swallowing eggs in soil or other substances contaminated by infected dog feces. These eggs are particularly resistant in the environment, surviving for at least 5 years. An infestation can happen any time your dog sniffs the ground, roots in the dirt, or plays with toys that have been in contact with contaminated soil. Dogs infected with a few whipworms may not show any sign of infection. However, a severe whipworm infestation will cause bloody diarrhea and severe anemia, and could lead to death in the absence of treatment. Chronic infestation causes progressive weight loss.

**Giardia** is a parasite, but it’s not like a [tapeworm](https://www.dogster.com/lifestyle/tapeworms-in-dogs-symptoms-treatment-and-prevention) or roundworm. Instead, it is a protozoal parasite, which means it’s a one-celled organism. Inside the body, giardia parasites attach themselves to the wall of your dog’s intestine, where they feed. The most common route of transmission is drinking water contaminated by infected animals, including pet dogs and cats, wild mammals and birds. Dogs can also ingest giardia cysts by licking or sniffing places on the ground that are contaminated. Outside the body, giardia can survive for several months, especially in water or in places that are wet or damp. Giardia is found in a lot of different locations, such as places where there is wildlife, particularly water fowl, or other dogs, so dog parks and places where there is standing water, can be areas where you can find quite a bit of giardia. Most adult dogs are resistant to giardia, have been exposed and will not become symptomatic. The dogs that really struggle and have trouble are the ones that have disease in their intestinal tract, like [inflammatory bowel disease,](https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/issues/6_10/features/5575-1.html) or very young dogs. It’s not uncommon at all for puppies to have giardia. Dogs infected with giardia will have gastrointestinal symptoms. It will cause large volumes of mucous-y, very foul-smelling stool. It can make it very difficult to [housebreak a puppy](https://www.dogster.com/dog-training/house-training-a-puppy) because they have an urgency [to go] that they simply can’t overcome because of the giardia.

**Coccidia** are tiny single-celled parasites that live in the wall of your dog’s intestine. They are found more often in puppies, but they can also infect older dogs and cats. Dogs become infected by swallowing soil that contains coccidia or other substances in the environment that may contain dog feces. Coccidiosis, the disease caused by coccidia, may not cause any signs in dogs but is usually more serious in puppies. The most common sign of coccidiosis is diarrhea. More severe infections can cause bloody diarrhea. Severe infections, especially in puppies, can kill them.