

Flea & Worm Information

Fleas and worms are not only a nuisance to your pet; they can also cause health problems. Even healthy looking cats and dogs may have some worms which can be passed on to people, potentially leading to serious illness. Risks to humans include Toxocariasis which is caused by infection with roundworm eggs and can lead to blindness.

There is now a threat to the UK dog population in the form of the lungworm *Angiostrongylus vasorum*. Recently reported in the national press, this parasite is carried by slugs, and snails. The problem arises when dogs purposefully or accidentally eat these common garden visitors when they are rummaging through undergrowth, eating grass, drinking from outdoor water bowls, or pick them up from toys left out in the garden. This worm is not treated through the conventional use of worming tablets. However, treatment and prevention is available in the form of a prescription spot-on wormer which is available following a clinical assessment at our practice.

Lungworm infection – what to look out for

Any dog can potentially become infected with *Angiostrongylus vasorum* if they happen to eat a slug or snail carrying the larvae of the parasite. Symptoms are many and varied but can include breathing difficulties, ranging from a lack of energy to coughing. Dogs may also show general signs of being unwell including weight loss, reduced appetite and vomiting. Persistent bleeding, even from minor cuts is also a sign to watch out for. However, the symptoms can be varied so if owners are concerned about their dog's health, they should seek veterinary advice immediately.

What to do next?

Call to make an appointment with one of our team to get further advice on how to protect your pet and family from the risks posed by fleas, worms, mites and lice, and for further advice on *Angiostrongylus vasorum*.