Fecal Exams & Worming Schedules for Cats

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

In addition to regularly worming your adult cat, we recommend that you have annual fecal examinations performed by your veterinarian.

Adult internal gastrointestinal parasites like roundworms, hookworms, and whipworms are usually not shed in stools, making identification of a worm problem difficult. The eggs, however, are present, but are too small to be detected with the naked eye.

'Fecal flotations' are laboratory tests in which the feces is mixed with a special solution in a cylinder. The solution causes the eggs to float upward and collect on a microscope slide placed on top of the cylinder. This test will not only find eggs of the parasites listed above, it will also indicate the presence of other parasites, including giardia and coccidia, so that proper treatment can be given.

Deworming

Regular deworming is recommended by the American Association of Veterinary Parasitologists (AAVP), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Companion Animal Parasite Council (CAPC).

Kittens*

- Because prenatal infections do not occur in kittens, initiate treatment at 3 weeks; repeat at 5, 7, and 9 weeks of age, and then put on a monthly heartworm preventive that also controls intestinal parasites. Using a year-round heartworm preventive/intestinal parasite combination product decreases the risk of parasites.

Nursing Dams

- Treat at the same time as kittens.

Adult Cats

- If on a year-round heartworm preventive/intestinal parasite combination product, have a fecal test performed 1-2 times per year and treat appropriately. If not on a year-round heartworm preventive/intestinal parasite combination product, have a fecal test performed 2-4 times per year and treat appropriately. Also monitor and eliminate parasites in pet's environment.

Newly Acquired Animals

- Worm immediately, after 2 weeks, and then follow above recommendations.

*** Drs. Foster and Smith suggest that owners of newly acquired kittens should obtain the deworming history of their new pet and contact their veterinarian to determine if additional deworming is needed.**

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