

Whipworms

A parasite is an organism that lives at the expense of another living being. Internal parasites, like intestinal worms and heartworms, live inside the body. Dogs and cats are subject to a variety of internal parasites, but some parasites are species specific.

Description

Whipworms usually occur only in dogs. Whipworms live in the large intestine and the colon. They usually do not cause major illness (unless the infection is severe). Clinical signs of whipworm infection include weight loss, poor hair coat and a loose stool that may contain blood or mucus. Whipworms cannot be transmitted to humans.

Treatment

Whipworm eggs are detected by a fecal flotation test, although they can be more difficult to detect than hookworm and roundworm eggs. Whipworm infection is treated with one of several deworming medications. Infested animals should be dewormed again in several weeks.

Prevention

Once again, a clean yard, free of stools, and early detection are the best ways to prevent severe infestation. Monthly oral medication is available and is often used in areas of frequent reinfection.