

Cat Worms and Fecal Testing FAQ's

Almost all cats have worms, whether they live indoors or outdoors (all cats should be wormed yearly). Knowing these telltale symptoms can help you deal with the problem before your cat's health declines. Kitty Connection recommends that a fecal sample be done on your newly adopted cat after adoption. Although Kitty Connection worms all cats prior to adoption, an egg can still live and reinfest itself in the cat. Always bring a stool sample in if the stool doesn't look normal. The treatment of worms in a cat should be done under the direction of a veterinarian. While over-the-counter worm medications may work, they can also cause additional stomach distress for your pet, and they may not kill the pests.

Common Symptoms of Cat Worms

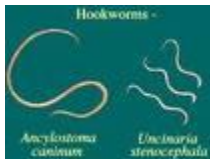
Having worms is no fun for your cat. Symptoms can be extreme, such as chronic diarrhea and less obvious, such as lethargy. The following is a list of types of worms common to cats and the symptoms from each type.



Roundworms

Roundworms (*Toxocara cati*, *Toxascaris leonine*) are one of the most common parasites with which your cat may come in contact. They are two to four inches long, are usually a milky white or tan color and have tapered ends. Your cat passes them either through vomiting or in his or her stool, and they look like spaghetti.

In kittens, the presence of roundworms will cause the animal to have a pot-bellied look and constantly feel hungry. In adult felines, the animal will vomit, have chronic diarrhea and will not be as active as he or she had been. It is important to note that roundworms can be transmitted to humans.



Hookworms

Hookworms (*Ancylostoma braziliense*) are also a common parasite in felines, although they cannot be seen with the naked eye. They feed off the blood of the animal they have infested and cause anemia. This can be fatal in felines, especially for [kittens](#). Adult cats often have built up immunity to these parasites, so they may not exhibit any symptoms. Symptoms caused by hookworms are blood in the stool, diarrhea and abdominal [pain](#). Hookworms can be transmitted to humans through the feet.



Tapeworms

Tapeworms (*Dipylidium caninum*, *T. taeniaeformis*) are very common in animals, especially those that have a flea infestation. Tapeworms are easily seen by the naked eye; they are small and white in color. They are usually found in the pet's stools or stuck in the fur under and around a cat's tail. Dead segments of the tapeworm can be identified as tiny rice-like balls in your pet's bedding. Cats get tapeworms from ingesting fleas that are carriers of this parasite. These worms stick to the intestinal lining of the animal. Symptoms of tapeworms include seeing small segments of the worms, and your pet may appear to lose weight even though he constantly seems hungry. Luckily, tapeworms are not easily transmitted to humans.



Heartworms

Heartworms are seen more often in dogs than in cats. Generally, cats are not natural hosts of this particular parasite and probably will not suffer from it unless they are ill and have a compromised immune system. The animal gets the parasite through a bite from a mosquito. Infected animals will have little or no symptoms of cat worms. Infected animals may die from this kind of infestation or suffer heart/lung damage. There is no single blood test to help identify this parasite. Usually a combination of tests will help a vet make the determination of the presence of heartworms.



Stomach Worms

Stomach worms (*Ollanulus tricuspis* and *Physaloptera*) live in a cat's stomach. *Ollanulus* is rare in the United States, but can still be found in stray cats and households or facilities that have multiple cats. Animals become infected with this stomach worm by ingesting the vomit of an infected animal. Symptoms of *Ollanulus* worms in cats are vomiting, weight loss and lethargy. This worm can be identified by a veterinarian through inspection of the infected animal's vomit.

Cats can become infected with the *Physaloptera* worm by ingesting crickets or cockroaches. It can also be obtained by eating a transport host, such as a rodent, that has also eaten the infected cricket or cockroach.

Symptoms of the presence of the *Physaloptera* worm include vomiting, loss of appetite and lethargy. A veterinarian can inspect the animal's vomit or stools to identify the presence of these worm eggs.