



ANIMAL ANTICS

Note for Pet Owners:

Pet Patrol 365 provides this information for educational purposes only. You should seek the advice of your veterinarian if your pet is ill, as only they can correctly advise on the diagnosis and the recommended treatment for your pet.

WORMS - KNOW THE FACTS!

It is extremely important to be hygienic when clearing up after your dog. Hands should be washed as soon as possible afterwards. Dog faeces can contain several parasites that can affect human health, such as tapeworms. However, probably the best known is the roundworm *Toxocara Canis* (*T. Canis*).

Toxocara Canis



T. Canis is an ascarid roundworm that is parasitic mainly in dogs and man (mostly children under four years of age in the UK). The life cycle is fairly simple involving dogs, man and intermediate 'reservoir hosts' such as rodents. The adult worm is easily identifiable in dog faeces or vomit as it is white, round and up to 20cm in length. The adult worms cannot survive outside the body and die soon after they are shed. It is the eggs in the faeces that are infectious. However, the eggs are not infectious in fresh faeces but develop into the infective larval stage usually after three weeks, thus highlighting the importance of clearing up after your dog as soon as possible.

All dogs are infected by *T. Canis* at some stage in their life (mostly as puppies). The risk to human health is relatively small but each year a number of children are affected by the *T. Canis* worm. In most cases human stomach acids will kill any infective larvae ingested. However, occasionally the larvae can infect human tissue where they migrate to an organ and lodge in the organ tissue. It is when the infective larvae migrate to the optic nerve that loss of vision may occur. Studies have shown that other effects of *T. Canis* found in humans include tissue damage (due to larval migration), fever, inflammation of the heart muscle, asthma and bronchitis. It is difficult to establish the number of cases of childhood infection per year in the UK as many common symptoms could be unrecognised as a *T. Canis* infection.

T. Canis can be controlled with regular worming treatment which is essential as adult dogs do not always show symptoms. Worming is effective, easy and not too costly. Worming treatments are available in many places including pet shops and some supermarkets but the more effective worming treatments are only available from vets, such as 'Drontal +'. To be effective, the treatment must be given on a regular basis, usually every three months. If all dog owners wormed their dogs regularly and cleaned up after their dogs the number of *T. Canis* infections in humans and dogs should decrease.

Grab It, Bag It & Bin It!



The Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 was introduced to encourage responsible dog ownership and reduce the amount of dog fouling in the environment. In 2008 the UK dog population was estimated at 7.3 million, with dogs producing approximately 1,000 tonnes* of excrement per day! However, there still appears to be a problem in many areas because a small number of irresponsible dog owners put dogs in a bad light.

And, if you think you can get away with it be warned ... each local authority is responsible for enforcing this legislation and have the power to impose an 'on the spot' fixed penalty fine or prosecute the dog's owners for which there is a maximum fine of £1,000.

Dog excrement can easily be removed using newspaper, plastic bags (bio-degradable) or 'pooper-scoopers' (available at all pet shops and most supermarkets) and deposited in the nearest dog bin. But, by far the best method of ensuring that a dog does not foul when out in public is to train the dog to 'perform' in the garden before its walk.

To find out more information on The Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 and what control procedures are in your area contact your local authority. If you wish to report an offence, contact your local authority dog warden.

NEWS

Hartfield Village Fete & Fun Dog Show with a Doggie Dash and Professional Dog Whisperer!
Look out for more details in the September issue.

*Source: ENCAMS

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