



Checking for Worms by Fecal Analysis

Why do I need to check a stool sample on my pet? I don't see any worms.

Most serious internal parasites do not shed visible worms in the feces. Many don't shed at all, or pass only microscopic eggs. These parasites are dangerous to your pet as well as to you; many are contagious to people.

Almost all puppies and kittens have some internal parasites. These may cause such symptoms as abdominal discomfort, whimpering, potbellied appearance, dull haircoat, stunted growth and diarrhea. Rarely, large tangled masses of worms will block the intestines and can cause death. In young animals with light infestations, and in adults, infection is most commonly asymptomatic. We recommend testing all pets by fecal floatation at least once a year. If owners forgot or are unaware of the necessity of bringing in a fecal sample, one is easily obtained by the technicians with a "fecal loop" (an instrument similar to a rectal thermometer.)

All people, especially children and pregnant women, are capable of getting worms from their pets. They can get them from accidentally ingesting the eggs (from the feces) or through the skin (as with hookworms). Worm infestations can cause severe health disorders in people. Animals that have intestinal parasites are a public health concern. It is important to have your pet checked every year to prevent problems.

Ask the receptionist or your veterinarian how long it has been since your pet was tested.