

## **Strategic Deworming: Reducing The Parasite Risk**

### **What is strategic deworming?**

Strategic deworming consists of treating your pet for worms at regular intervals that are specifically designed to prevent parasitic disease and the shedding of parasite eggs in your yard and home.

### **How is strategic deworming different?**

Strategic deworming is based on the latest recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Association of Veterinary Parasitologists (AAVP). The new schedule for deworming is more thorough than previous practices.

### **Why is regular and more frequent deworming recommended by the CDC and AAVP?**

The new recommendations are designed to prevent the development of disease in your pet. This is especially important in young puppies and kittens, because they can be seriously harmed by parasites shortly after birth.

### **Are there any other reasons strategic deworming is best for my pet?**

Definitely. An equally important reason is strategic deworming prevents the shedding of parasite eggs by your pet. These eggs contaminate your yard, your carpet, anywhere your pet goes. The danger is not only will your pet be reinfected by these eggs, but your family members can be harmed also.

### **What are the risks to people?**

Humans can be accidentally infected with roundworms, hookworms, and tapeworms, which are common, parasites of dogs and cats. The problems caused by these infections can range from intestinal upset to death. It is estimated that 10,000 children in the United States are infected annually with roundworms and that approximately 750 will suffer permanent visual impairment or even blindness.

### **How does a human become infected with animal parasites?**

People, especially children, can be exposed to animal parasites when they work or play in contaminated soil, such as in a sandbox or garden, and accidentally put dirty hands in their mouth. Parasite eggs cannot be seen by the naked eye but are present anywhere stool from an infected animal is found. Sometimes fruits and vegetables growing close to the ground, such as strawberries and carrots, are contaminated. If not carefully washed, they can also be a source of human infection.

### **So if we all wash our hands after handling soil or playing with the pets and practice strategic deworming, will we be safe?**

Washing your hands and regularly deworming pets are very important to protect against parasites, but there are other measures you should also be taking. These include:

- Remove pet dropping from your yard at least 2-3 times a week. *Daily is best.*

- Keep your pets flea-free. Ingestion of fleas can transmit tapeworms to animals and people.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating.
- Do not allow children to go barefoot or sit or lie on playgrounds or beaches where they are exposed to pet stools. Hookworm larvae can penetrate the skin and cause serious inflammation.
- Clean cat litter boxes daily, and wash hands carefully afterward.
- Do not drink water from streams or other sources that may be contaminated with feces.
- Discuss strategic deworming with your veterinarian

### **How will I know if my pet has parasites**

You may not recognize any illness or perhaps when it is too late. Almost all puppies and kittens are born with round-worm parasites or acquire them shortly after birth from nursing. In newborn animals, the damage can be severe. And parasite eggs are shed even by animals that do not appear to be sick or un-down.