

ONTARIO SPCA AND HUMANE SOCIETY

Ontario's animal charity since 1873.

Disease Name:	Whipworm
Agent:	<i>Trichuris vulpis</i>
Clinical Signs:	Most infections are asymptomatic, but heavy infections can cause mucoïd diarrhea with flecks of blood. Weight loss, dehydration, anemia and death can occur in extreme cases.
Susceptible domestic species	Dogs, rarely cats. In a national fecal parasite survey, whipworms were reported from 14.3% of shelter dogs.
Zoonotic?	No
Diagnostic tests:	Fecal float (identification of eggs). Eggs are barrel- or lemon-shaped, yellow-brown, with prominent bipolar end plugs and a smooth shell.
Test sensitivity (false negatives)	Moderate. False negatives are not uncommon, Because of the long prepatent period, heavily-infected animals may show clinical signs before eggs are shed in the feces. In low-level infections, eggs may be shed intermittently.
Test specificity (false positives)	Excellent. False positives are very uncommon. However, Trichuris eggs must be distinguished from Capillarid eggs, which are slightly smaller and have a rough surface.
Vaccine available?	No
Excreted in :	Feces
Mode of transmission:	Fecal-oral
Disinfection	Very difficult. Eggs are very resistant to disinfection, especially in soil. Eggs are also resistant to drying, temperature extremes, and sunlight. Reducing exposure of dogs to embryonated eggs in the environment is best achieved by prompt removal of feces from yards and other environments where dogs defecate.
Incubation	Prepatent period (time from infection to shedding) = 3 months Eggs become infective one month after they are shed. Because the prepatent period is so long, shelter-acquired infections may not become manifest until after adoption. Dogs adopted from a <i>known</i> whipworm-contaminated shelter should be routinely tested and/or treated up to three months after adoption.
Post recovery shedding/Carrier state?	Yes. Most animals that are shedding are asymptomatic.
Effective Dewormers:	Fenbendazole (Panacur), Milbemycin (Interceptor or Sentinel), Febental (available as an ingredient in Drontal Plus). Because of the long period of maturation, deworming must be repeated three times at monthly intervals. Note: Pyrantel is NOT effective against whipworms.
PPE Required	Gloves, gown, impermeable shoe covers