

Worms

Find out what a vet recommends for treating worms.

Elaine Wexler-Mitchell, D.V.M.

Q. How do I know if my cat has worms?

Elaine Wexler-Mitchell, D.V.M., says: Cats get worms by eating raw meat, ingesting fleas, or from a queen, or mother cat, who passes worms through her placenta or milk to her kittens. If you notice your cat dragging, or scooting, her rear end along the floor, she could have any one of several varieties of worms. Tapeworm segments look like small pieces of rice when they pass in a cats stool, but when they dry and stick to the hair under a cats tail, they look like sesame seeds. Roundworms are longer, spaghetti-type worms that usually cause diarrhea, vomiting, or weight loss. Hookworms and whipworms are other long white worms that live in and damage the intestines. Regardless of the variety, worms are a nuisance and a threat to your cats health. If live worms or segments are not observed externally, a microscopic fecal examination for worm eggs by your vet is the best way to discover if intestinal worms are present. No matter the circumstance, it is best to check with your veterinarian about diagnosis and treatment.

Once your vet identifies specific intestinal worms, he or she can administer oral or injectable medications to kill the parasites. Heavy worm loads in young animals can lead to dehydration and starvation, so animals with these clinical signs require additional supportive care. To help prevent intestinal worms in your cat, control fleas and make sure any meat fed to your cat is fully cooked.

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