



ZOONOTIC ALERT –

What is zoonosis and why should you care?

Zoonosis refers to a parasite, bacteria, or virus (such as rabies), that can be passed directly from animals to humans. Members of your family can unknowingly pick up a zoonotic disease at the park, playground, or even in your own backyard. Children are especially vulnerable to zoonotic diseases because they play outside and are more likely to put contaminated objects into their mouths. The most common zoonotic parasites are roundworms and hookworms. **The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports that almost 14% of the U.S. population is infected with roundworms.**

The staff of Ellington Center Animal Clinic takes parasite infections and zoonotic disease transmission very seriously. We **STRONGLY** recommend annual parasite testing for your pet and a year-round monthly prevention program. Even indoor cats are exposed to parasites if you have other pets that go outside. Fleas may “hitch a ride” on your shoes or pant legs and jump onto your indoor cat. It is estimated that 15% of commercially available potting soil is contaminated with roundworm eggs. Even indoor cats can hunt mice. Mosquitos frequently enter our homes.

In multi-cat homes, when it is difficult to identify which fecal specimen belongs to which cat, we recommend testing a stool specimen every year and if parasites are found, deworming all cats in the household.

FECAL TESTING = INTESTINAL PARASITE SCREEN

☐ The fecal sample you brought today will be analyzed at the laboratory. You will receive a telephone call with results in 24 – 48 hours.

☐ A pre-paid fecal collection vial will be added to today's invoice. At your convenience, you can drop off a specimen with our front office staff. Results will be available in 24 - 48 hours.

ROUNDWORMS: This parasite is very common in our pet population and is also a human health concern. Signs of a roundworm infection may include diarrhea, vomiting, slow growth, rough coat and a distended belly. Some pets may have no symptoms or signs of infection. Infections may be passed maternally or contracted from pets ingesting contaminated stool samples or hunting wildlife. ***A roundworm infection in humans can result in blindness.***

HOOKWORMS: This parasite is a thread-like, bloodsucking parasite with razor-sharp mouth parts that attach to your pet's small intestine. Tissue damage, blood loss, anemia, and diarrhea may result. Hookworms can infect your pet in two ways: 1) ingesting eggs deposited in the soil from an infected animal or 2) Hookworm larvae may penetrate your pet's feet after a walk through a contaminated area. Hookworms can present a health risk to family members if the larvae come in contact with the skin.

TAPEWORMS: This parasite is very common in our pet population. Tapeworm infections normally occur when your pet ingests fleas while grooming or by ingesting mice that are infected with the tapeworm larvae. Tapeworms do not generally cause any outward signs of disease. An infection may cause your pet to sit down and drag along the ground.

WHIPWORMS: This infestation occurs when your pet swallows whipworm eggs found in contaminated soil. Whipworm infection causes bloody diarrhea, anemia, dehydration and loss of appetite. A female whipworm can produce 2,000 eggs daily. Eggs are passed in animals' feces, and can survive for YEARS in the soil. Whipworms are very difficult to eradicate.

GIARDIA: Giardia are a microscopic single-celled organism that can live in the small intestine. Giardia can be contracted by drinking contaminated water from streams and ponds. For your dog, just one lap of contaminated water is all it takes to contract giardia. Pets may also become infected by eating the stool of infected animals or by licking their paws/fur after walking through an infected area.

TOXOPLASMA: Cats are infected with Toxoplasma by eating infected rodents, birds or other small animals, or anything contaminated with feces from another cat that is shedding the microscopic parasite in its feces. Toxoplasmosis can cause severe illness in infants infected before birth (when their mothers are newly infected during pregnancy), or in persons with weakened immune systems.

BLOOD TEST = FELINE COMBO® FIV-FeLV TEST

The Ellington Center Animal Clinic uses a blood test known as a SNAP Combo® Test to screen for feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) antibodies and feline leukemia virus (FeLV) antigens in your cat's blood. The blood test is done in the clinic and provides an accurate, in-house result in just ten minutes.

The Feline Immunodeficiency Virus and Feline Leukemia Virus are both transmitted from cat to cat via physical contact and body fluids. Mother cats can pass the virus directly to their kittens via milk. Both viruses weaken a cat's immune system and leave them vulnerable to opportunistic infections that would not be a problem for otherwise healthy cats. We use a simple blood test to screen for FIV antibodies and FeLV antigens. All kittens should be tested for FIV and FeLV after 9 weeks of age. Cats adopted later in life, especially those with unknown histories, should be screened for the presence of these viruses. Many cats live long, happy lives despite these incurable chronic infections. Knowing the FIV and FeLV status helps manage the illness.

Parasites that can transmit vector-borne illnesses:

FLEAS: Fleas transmit a number of diseases, including typhus and plague, and they are a carrier for tapeworms. In addition, flea saliva is one of the most irritating substances known. Many dogs and cats are allergic to flea saliva that results in an allergic reaction. Flea allergy dermatitis is the most common allergic disease among pets.

Because fleas are small and difficult to see, their presence may be detected by observing "flea dirt" (the excrement a flea leaves behind after eating a blood meal). If you notice a pepper like material on your pet, try combing some of this dirt onto a paper towel and moisten it. If the dirt turns reddish-brown, you can be certain that your pet has been bitten by fleas.

TICKS: Lyme disease, Anaplasmosis, and Ehrlichiosis are some diseases that are transmitted by ticks. Connecticut is the epicenter of many tick-borne diseases. Dogs are 50% more likely than humans to contract Lyme disease. Cornell University has researched cats and Lyme disease and although the bacteria that cause Lyme disease is capable of infecting cats, *the disease has never been seen in a cat outside of a laboratory setting.*

MOSQUITOS: Heartworm disease is transmitted from the bite from an infected mosquito. Although people are not typical hosts for the heartworm, dogs, cats and ferrets are susceptible. Mosquitos are also responsible for spreading other serious diseases such as West Nile Virus, Malaria, Dengue Fever and Chikungunya.



Protect all your pets from insect bites. In Connecticut, use monthly flea and tick preventives during most, if not all months of the year. Topical products like Revolution®, Frontline Gold® and Seresto® collars are all excellent choices to control fleas and ticks in our area.



(Revolution® is not labeled to control ticks, but is very effective against fleas, mites AND intestinal parasites.)

VACCINES FOR YOUR CAT

Every cat is unique and Ellington Center Animal Clinic takes your cat's lifestyle into account when we recommend vaccines. Not every pet should receive every available vaccine. Talk with our veterinarians and decide which vaccines are right for your pet. While vaccines are a very important part of good health, routine physical exams are the BEST strategy to keep your pet healthy.



☐Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (FVR): is an upper respiratory infection in cats caused by a herpes virus. FVR is very contagious and can cause coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge, conjunctivitis and sometimes a very high fever. Pneumonia may develop and may be fatal, especially in young kittens.

☐Calicivirus (C): is a virus that affects the upper respiratory system, eyes, musculoskeletal system, and gastrointestinal tract. Common symptoms usually appear suddenly and develop rapidly. Symptoms include painful lameness, fever, mild loss of appetite, pneumonia, ulcerations on the tongue, palate, lips or tip of the nose and upper respiratory infection with eye and nose discharge.

☐Panleukopenia (P): is a highly contagious, and life-threatening viral disease that affects the gastrointestinal system and bone marrow. The virus is ubiquitous and can be found in most places that are not routinely disinfected. Kittens with immature immune systems and unvaccinated cats are particularly susceptible.

Together, these 3 vaccines are given in a single injection known as the FVRCP vaccine. This is considered a core vaccine, since all cats are at risk. Vaccination begins at 6-8 weeks of age, and continues every 3-4 weeks until the kitten is 12 weeks or older. The last vaccine is considered effective for one year. After the first year, the FVRCP vaccine is boosted every three years.

☐RABIES: Connecticut state law requires all dogs and cats to be vaccinated against rabies. Pets are exposed to rabies by a bite from an infected animal. The rabies virus attacks the brain. There is no treatment available and the disease is always fatal. Kittens receive their first vaccine at 3 calendar months of age. The first vaccine is considered effective for 1-year. After the first year, rabies vaccines are boosted every three years.

☐Feline Leukemia Virus (FELV): This virus is transmitted through bodily secretions such as saliva, urine, feces, and blood. Many times it is transmitted between cats that spend time outdoors and get into cat fights. The virus can suppress blood cell production and thus weaken a cat's immune system. The feline leukemia vaccine is recommended for all cats that go outside. Vaccination requires an initial injection and a booster 3-4 weeks later. The booster vaccine is considered effective for one year. After the first year, a booster vaccine is administered every three years until the cat reaches 10 years of age.

It is not uncommon for pets to experience mild side effects after being vaccinated such as soreness or local swelling at the injection site, usually starting within hours of the vaccination. A mild fever or decreased activity and appetite may be observed. If these side effects last more than a day, or cause your pet significant discomfort, it is important that you contact us.

More serious, but less common side effects could occur. These allergic reactions involve facial swelling or hives that develop within hours after vaccination. Anaphylactic life-threatening emergencies are very uncommon but may occur.

Contact us immediately if your pet experiences:

- ☐ Swelling of the muzzle, neck, eyes or ears
- ☐ Itchy skin that may seem bumpy ("hives")

Seek immediate care if your pet experiences:

- ☐ Persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- ☐ Severe coughing or difficulty breathing
- ☐ Collapse

A small, firm swelling under the skin may develop at the site of a recent rabies vaccination. The mass will start to disappear within a couple of weeks. Always inform your veterinarian if your pet has had prior reactions to any vaccines or medications.

🐾 Cats are masters at hiding illness. Any change in behavior could be the first sign of sickness. A comprehensive physical examination performed yearly is the most effective means of detecting illness and disease at the earliest and most treatable stage.

Toxoplasmosis: An Important Message for Cat Owners

What role do cats play in the spread of toxoplasmosis?

Cats get *Toxoplasma* infection by eating infected rodents, birds or other small animals, or anything contaminated with feces from another cat that is shedding the microscopic parasite in its feces. After a cat has been infected, it can shed the parasite for up to two weeks. The parasite becomes infective one to five days after it is passed in the feces of the cat. The parasite can live in the environment for many months and contaminate soil, water, fruits and vegetables, sandboxes, grass where animals graze for food, litter boxes, or any place where an infected cat may have defecated.

What is toxoplasmosis?

Toxoplasmosis is an infection caused by a microscopic parasite called *Toxoplasma gondii*. More than 60 million people in the United States carry the *Toxoplasma* parasite. Toxoplasmosis can cause severe illness in infants infected before birth (when their mothers are newly infected during pregnancy), or in persons with a weakened immune system.

How are people infected with Toxoplasma?

People become infected with toxoplasmosis several ways:

- Eating food, drinking water, or accidentally swallowing soil that has been contaminated with infected cat feces.
- Eating raw or undercooked meat from animals (especially pigs, lamb, or wild game) that have been infected with *Toxoplasma*.
- Directly from a pregnant woman to her unborn child when the mother becomes infected with *Toxoplasma* just before or during pregnancy.



What are the symptoms of toxoplasmosis?

Individuals with healthy immune systems:

Most people who become infected with *Toxoplasma* do not know it and have no symptoms. However, when illness occurs, it is usually mild. Some may feel like they have the "flu," with swollen lymph glands, or muscle aches and pains that last for several weeks or more. Rarely, eye disease occurs.

Individuals with weakened immune systems:

People with weakened immune systems may experience severe symptoms. The most common symptoms in people with HIV infection are headache, confusion, and fever. Other symptoms include seizures, poor coordination, and nausea or vomiting.

Infants infected before birth:

Most infants infected with *Toxoplasma* before birth show no symptoms at birth. However, many are likely to develop symptoms later in life. These include vision loss, mental disability, and seizures.

How can I protect myself from toxoplasmosis?

Several steps can be taken to protect yourself and others from toxoplasmosis:

- Change cat litter boxes daily. *Toxoplasma* takes more than one day to become infectious. If you are pregnant or have a weakened immune system, ask someone else to change the litter box. If this is not possible, wear disposable gloves and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water afterwards.
- Cover any outdoor sandboxes when not in use to keep cats from defecating in them.
- Avoid adopting stray cats, especially kittens. Younger cats are more like to be releasing *Toxoplasma* in their feces.
- Do not eat undercooked meat. Cook meat until the internal temperature reaches 160°F.
- Wash all kitchen supplies (such as knives and cutting boards) that have been in contact with raw meat.
- If you have a weakened immune system, it is important to talk to your health care provider about getting a blood test to determine if you have been infected with *Toxoplasma*.



How can I protect my cat from toxoplasmosis?

Protecting your cat from toxoplasmosis may also help to protect you from toxoplasmosis.

- Feed your cat commercial dry or canned food.
- Never feed cats raw meat because this can be a source of *Toxoplasma* infection.
- Keep indoor cats indoors so they do not become infected by eating small animals.

Do I have to get rid of my cat?

No, you do not have to give up your cat. Owning a cat does not mean you will be infected with the parasite. It is unlikely that you would be exposed to the parasite by touching an infected cat because cats usually do not carry the parasite on their fur. In addition, cats kept indoors (that do not hunt prey or are not fed raw meat) are not likely to be infected with *Toxoplasma*. But, if you are pregnant, planning on becoming pregnant, or have a weakened immune system, it is important to protect yourself from infection.

Can toxoplasmosis be treated?

Yes. There is treatment for toxoplasmosis. In an otherwise healthy person, mild symptoms typically go away within several weeks to months and treatment is not needed. However, treatment may be recommended for an otherwise healthy person with eye disease due to toxoplasmosis. A woman who becomes infected during pregnancy can be treated with medication that may protect her unborn baby from toxoplasmosis. Mother and baby should be monitored closely during the pregnancy and after the baby is born.

For more information on toxoplasmosis, visit www.cdc.gov/parasites/toxoplasmosis



Purchasing Pet Drugs Online: Buyer Beware



“Discount pet drugs—no prescription required” may appeal to pet owners surfing the Web, but FDA experts say it can be risky to buy drugs online from sites that tout this message and others like it.

Some of the Internet sites that sell pet drugs represent legitimate, reputable pharmacies, says Martine Hartogensis, D.V.M., deputy director of the Office of Surveillance and Compliance in FDA’s Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM). But others are fronts for unscrupulous businesses operating against the law.

FDA has found companies that sell unapproved pet drugs and counterfeit pet products, make fraudulent claims, dispense prescription drugs without requiring a prescription, and sell expired drugs.

Pet owners who purchase drugs from these companies may think they are saving money, says Hartogensis, but in reality, they may be short-changing their pet’s health and putting its life at risk.

CVM regulates the manufacture and distribution of animal drugs, while individual state pharmacy boards regulate the dispensing of prescription veterinary products.

Red Flags

Some foreign Internet pharmacies advertise that veterinary prescription

When ordering online

1. *Order from a Web site that belongs to a Vet-VIPPS accredited pharmacy.*
2. *Mail the prescription provided by your veterinarian to the pharmacy after your pet receives a physical examination.*
3. *Order from an outsourced prescription management service that your veterinarian uses.*

A veterinarian should physically examine an animal prior to making a diagnosis to determine the appropriate therapy.

drugs are available to U.S. citizens without a prescription. But, says Hartogensis, "There is a risk of the drugs not being FDA-approved."

A foreign or domestic pharmacy may claim that one of its veterinarians on staff will "evaluate" the pet after looking over a form filled out by the pet owner, and then prescribe the drug. "A veterinarian should physically examine an animal prior to making a diagnosis to determine the appropriate therapy," says Hartogensis.

CVM is especially concerned that pet owners are going online to buy two types of commonly used prescription veterinary drugs—nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and heartworm preventives.

"Both drugs can be dangerous if there is no professional involvement," says Hartogensis. "It's not generally a concern if the owner uses a legitimate online pharmacy and mails in a prescription from their veterinarian, who is monitoring the animal. But if there is no veterinarian-client-patient relationship, it's a dangerous practice."

NSAIDs and Heartworm Preventives

Veterinarians often prescribe NSAIDs to relieve pain in dogs. NSAIDs should not be purchased on the Internet without a veterinarian's involvement because

- dogs should undergo blood testing and a thorough physical examination before starting NSAIDs
- dogs should be monitored by a veterinarian while they are taking NSAIDs
- veterinarians should discuss possible side effects of NSAIDs with the owner

- the prescription should be accompanied by a Client Information Sheet that explains important safety information to the owner

Heartworm disease is a potentially fatal condition transmitted by the bite of a mosquito that is carrying infected larvae of the heartworm parasite. Dogs, cats, and ferrets can get heartworm. Heartworm preventives, given daily, monthly, or semiannually depending on the product, kill the larvae before they become adult worms.

The American Heartworm Society recommends

- using heartworm medication for dogs year-round, no matter where you live in the United States
- getting dogs tested yearly to make sure they're not infected with heartworm

"Testing is important even in dogs regularly treated with heartworm preventive products due to the occasional reports of product ineffectiveness," says Hartogensis. An Internet pharmacy veterinarian cannot draw blood from the animal to perform the test. If the test isn't done, a pet owner could be giving heartworm preventives to a dog that has heartworms, potentially leading to severe reactions.

Tips for Buying Pet Drugs Online

- Order from a Web site that belongs to a Vet-VIPPS accredited pharmacy. Vet-VIPPS—the Veterinary-Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites—is a voluntary accreditation program of the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP). NABP gives the



Vet-VIPPS seal to online pharmacies that dispense prescription animal drugs and comply with NABP's strict criteria, including federal and state licensing and inspection requirements, protecting patient confidentiality, quality assurance, and validity of prescription orders. Look for the Vet-VIPPS seal displayed on a pharmacy's Web site or check with NABP at www.nabp.net (click on "Accreditation Programs") to find out if a pharmacy is Vet-VIPPS accredited. Because this is a new program, begun in 2009, a small number of pharmacies are currently Vet-VIPPS accredited.

- Order from an outsourced prescription management service that your veterinarian uses.

These state-licensed Internet pharmacy services work directly with the veterinarian, require that a prescription be written by the veterinarian, and support the veterinarian-client-patient relationship. Ask your veterinary hospital if it uses an Internet pharmacy service.

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Fun Facts About Your Cat!

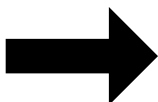
- Cats have 30 adult teeth
- Average body temperature is 100-103 F
- The majority of cats do not have a collarbone. (They can fit through any opening the size of their head).
- A cat's nose is unique to each animal- like fingerprints are for people
- Cats were domesticated 4,500-9,000 years ago by the Chinese

A group of cats is called a clowder, a male cat is called a tom, a female cat is called a molly or queen while young cats are called kittens

- The medical term for a hairball is a "trichobezoar."
- A cat can't climb head first down a tree because every claw on a cat's paw points the same way. To get down from a tree, a cat must back down.
- A cat rubs against people not only to be affectionate but also to mark out its territory with scent glands around its face.

	Life stage	Age of cat	Human equivalent
 Tigger 3 months old	Kitten birth to 6 months	0 – 1 month	0 – 1 year
		2 – 3 months	2 – 4 years
		4 months	6 – 8 years
		6 months	10 years
 Sugar 13 months old	Junior 7 months to 2 years	7 months	12 years
		12 months	15 years
		18 months	21 years
		2 years	24 years
 Rosie 3 years old	Prime 3 years to 6 years	3	28
		4	32
		5	36
		6	40
 Nemo 8 years old	Mature 7 years to 10 years	7	44
		8	48
		9	52
		10	56
 George 13 years old	Senior 11 years to 14 years	11	60
		12	64
		13	68
		14	72
 Chinarose 16 years old	Geriatric 15 years+	15	76
		16	80
		17	84
		18	88
		19	92
		20	96
		21	100
		22	104
		23	108
		24	112
		25	116

This is how your cat
sees the rainbow!



Did you know?

Purple, yellow, and green are the colors cats see best!



Name: _____

Kitten Word Search

F	G	B	G	O	U	R	A	G	D	O	L	L	O	Y	V	V	Q
T	I	C	K	S	I	A	M	E	S	E	Q	X	M	Z	E	M	D
T	W	M	A	I	N	E	C	O	O	N	Q	W	R	I	T	I	R
F	L	E	A	S	M	H	O	O	K	W	O	R	M	P	E	C	O
S	C	R	A	T	C	H	I	N	G	P	O	S	T	A	R	R	U
P	L	A	Y	F	U	L	R	A	B	I	E	S	T	R	I	O	T
R	O	U	N	D	W	O	R	M	Q	U	S	R	R	A	N	C	I
N	A	I	L	T	R	I	M	X	V	G	Y	C	E	S	A	H	N
L	I	T	T	E	R	B	O	X	Q	C	O	I	A	I	R	I	E
H	E	S	B	K	P	C	A	R	R	I	E	R	T	T	I	P	K
B	T	Y	K	I	T	T	E	N	G	B	X	T	S	E	A	G	R
J	P	L	K	A	W	T	E	N	E	U	T	E	R	S	N	X	V

Find the following words in the puzzle.

Words are hidden → ↓ and ↘ .

CARRIER

FLEAS

HOOKWORM

KITTEN

LITTERBOX

MAINECOON

MICROCHIP

NAILTRIM

NEUTER

PARASITE

PLAYFUL

RABIES

RAGDOLL

ROUNDWORM

ROUTINE

SCRATCHINGPOST

SIAMESE

TICKS

TREATS

VETERINARIAN