

Is my puppy bugged?

The right parasite preventives will help keep intestinal worms and other menaces out of your new friend.

The most important thing for you to know about parasites: You usually can't see them, and they can cause big trouble before you even realize they're there. Some parasites have evolved to be able to hide inside the mother dog and come out specifically to target her puppies, so no matter how well cared for mom is, puppies are still at great risk for intestinal parasites.

Can I tell if my puppy has worms?

Intestinal worms, like hookworms and roundworms, can cause signs like vomiting and diarrhea, but they can be present even if your pet seems unaffected. These parasites tend to damage the intestinal walls where they attach, and just their presence causes inflammation.

Juvenile animals seem to be the most severely affected, and puppies can die from worms. It's a common misconception that a person can see worms in the stool if they look, but your veterinarian has special tests to find the worms. Occasionally, pet owners will see worms, but many of the worms only "appear" in the stool after you administer a dewormer.

Worms will seed the soil where



your pet hangs out and serve as a source of reinfection for your pets and other animals. Worms have evolved to be very effective at infecting animals, and it takes you and your veterinary team to head off these intestinal invaders.

Can I just buy a pet store dewormer?

There are certainly over-the-counter deworming options, but it's wiser to let your veterinary team find out for sure *which* type of parasites you need to treat. Only prescription medications kill certain types of worms, and if there are other parasites that aren't technically worms (like *Coccidia* or *Giardia*), a completely different type of medication may be required. No one wants their puppy to die from a treatable problem or to get medication that's inappropriate or unneeded.

What about fleas?

Fleas can make pets miserable. Flea saliva is an extremely irritating substance, and flea bites cause pruritus (the medical term for "itching") for pets and people too. Fleas are another thing you won't see until the infestation is truly severe.

Fleas love to get indoors, where they can live year-round. Their goal is to have a blood meal so they can lay eggs and make baby fleas. The fleas will only be on the puppy where you can see them for a small part of their life cycle.

That means that for every flea you see with your eyes, there are countless more in the environment. If you see a flea, alert your veterinary team.

Your veterinarian is well versed in puppy parasites and can recommend safe and effective products to help your puppy not be bugged!