



## Animal Clinic of Michigan City

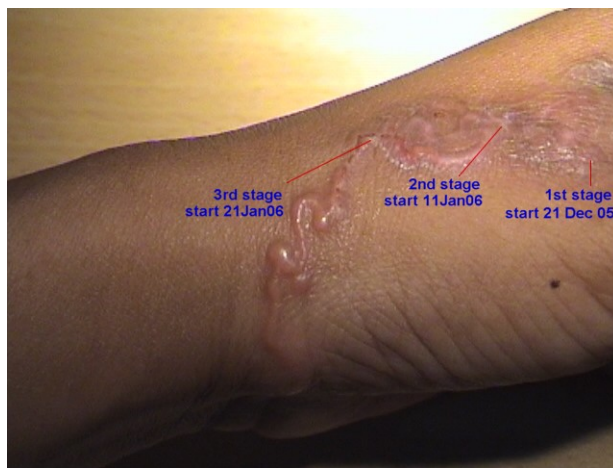
### WORMS!!

Intestinal parasites. Worms. These are things that the average person doesn't think about often, but pet owners should. Did you know that you can become infected with your pet's parasites? It's estimated that 36% of dogs carry worms. That's about one in three pets! Pets can become infected by eating feces, contaminated soil, and dead wildlife or drinking contaminated water. Don't forget that your pets can pick up parasites even in the winter months; you can bring them into the house on the bottom of your shoes. Yearly fecal exams can catch parasite infections before they become serious infestations. Home owners who own infected pets can be sued for negligence if someone becomes infected with parasites on their property. Most monthly heartworm preventions also help protect your pet from the three most common intestinal parasites: roundworms, hookworms, and whipworms. The eggs and larva of these worms are shed in animal feces. Hookworm larva can burrow through skin to infect people. 10,000 people are infected yearly with roundworms. They travel toward the eyes causing 700 people to lose their vision each year. Accidentally swallowing a flea could cause a tapeworm infection. Fleas are easily prevented by using a topical product like Frontline™ or Revolution™ every month.

Intestinal parasites pose 3 risks. The first is transmission to family members and human disease. The second is illness to the pet such as weight loss, diarrhea, and even blood loss. The third problem is often overlooked; worms can cause a weakened immune system. This can lead to poor immunity from vaccinations, increased risk for pneumonia and other infections, and even a poor response to medications.

By following a few simple guidelines you can keep you and your pets safe from parasite invasion.

1. Keep your yard feces free.
2. Never allow children to play where pets use the restroom.
3. Due to personal hygiene, children are the number one group at risk for parasite infection.
4. Wash your hands!
5. Keep all outside water containers clean. Standing water is easily contaminated by parasites like giardia. Giardia causes acute diarrhea in humans.
6. Keep you pets on **heartworm prevention all year long** to help prevent parasites.
7. Use a safe topical flea and tick product such as frontline.
8. Fecal exams yearly for all pets.
9. Catching parasite infections in pets early can help prevent serious infestations.



Hookworm infection in a person.

Websites to view:

[www.petsandparasites.org](http://www.petsandparasites.org)

[www.thepetcenter.com/exa/worms.html](http://www.thepetcenter.com/exa/worms.html)