

# **TAPEWORMS**

Tapeworms are one of the most common types of “worms” found in the dog and cat. They are more difficult to detect during a routine stool sample examination and also more difficult to eradicate from pets.

**DIAGNOSIS: Microscopic examination of a fecal specimen usually does NOT disclose the presence of tapeworms.**

**YOU DETECT THE PRESENCE OF TAPEWORMS BY ACTUALLY SEEING THE TAPEWORM SEGMENTS IN THE STOOLS.**

Segments may be found on the surface of freshly-passed stools, where they look like small grains of “rice” or “cucumber seeds.” Segments may or may not be seen moving. These segments may sometimes be seen “crawling” out from the rectum, or attached to the hair in the rectal area. They sometimes may be found in the pet’s bedding.

Segments are **NOT** passed regularly. There may be several in a bowel movement, and then none seen for a week or two. **IF SEEN ONLY ONCE, THEY OBVIOUSLY PROVE THAT THE PET HAS A TAPEWORM INFESTATION.** The condition may go undetected for months or years, especially in pets that eliminate outside where the stools are not usually seen by the owner.

**TRANSMISSION: Tapeworms must go through “Intermediate Hosts,” which is primarily the FLEA in dogs and cats.** Infested birds or rabbits can also spread the parasite to your pet. Fleas eat into the segments passed by the pet; and then become infested with tapeworm larvae. The pet then eats the flea when it gets on your pet’s skin, and therefore becomes infested with tapeworms.

**TREATMENT: Effective medication is available only through your veterinarian.** The medication is available in a tablet and injectable form. Over-the counter medications will **NOT** be effective against tapeworms! Don’t waste **YOUR** money.

**CURE: You can be sure of a cure ONLY when segments are not seen on any freshly passed stool for a period of at least one month.**

**PREVENTION: As in all diseases, prevention is far superior to treatment.**

- 1. KEEP PETS FREE OF FLEAS!**
- 2. Do NOT allow pets to eat birds, rabbits, rodents, etc.**
- 3. Treat infested pets as we direct.**

**PUBLIC HEALTH: Humans CANNOT be infected UNLESS they eat infested FLEAS!**

Should a child eat tapeworm segments, it will **NOT** cause any problem whatsoever. The intermediate host (which is the flea) would have to be ingested to cause tapeworm infestation.