

THE MONSTERS YOU DON'T WANT WITHIN YOU

BY: LAURIE-TECHNICIAN

You may wonder why we at Snoqualmie Valley Animal Hospital have such a fascination with dog and cat poop. We *love* to see you carrying that tell-tale bag when you bring your pet in for a yearly physical.

Truth is, we just want to make sure your little bundle of fur isn't harboring some intestinal parasite that has the potential to infect you or your family.

In our area of the country, we typically only see round or hook worms. *Toxicara* spp or *Ancylostoma* spp, respectively. Puppies and kittens are infected by their mothers. Adult animals pick them up from infected grass and soil. Additionally, adult cats can become infected with round worms by eating rodents.

With the exception of eating rodents, humans can pick up these parasites in much the same way, but they don't belong in our bodies. *Toxicara* cause a condition called "larval migrans". The worms don't stay in the intestine but instead cause mechanical damage to such organs as the liver, eyes, or brain. Children are at greater risk for this condition because of their play and hygiene habits. Our northwest species of *Ancylostoma* are not highly infective, but can enter the body by mouth or through the skin when we go barefoot or otherwise come into contact with infected grass and soil.

To protect yourself, your family, and your pets from intestinal parasites you need only look as far as SVAH. First, we will do a fecal float using the gold standard of diagnostic techniques. If *Toxicara*, *Ancylostoma*, or evidence of any other intestinal parasite is seen under the microscope, the doctor will prescribe treatment specific to that organism. In addition, we recommend using a monthly deworming treatment.

For dogs, we recommend a monthly topical treatment, Advantage Multi, or the oral treatment, Interceptor. For cats we recommend the topical treatment Revolution. Please call us or stop by the clinic and we will help you decide which treatment is right for your pet.