



# Whipworms (*Trichuris vulpis*)

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Created June, 2006

UC DAVIS SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

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<b>Disease name:</b>	Whipworms. Most infections are asymptomatic, but heavy infections can cause mucoid diarrhea with flecks of blood. Weight loss, dehydration, anemia and death can occur in the extreme cases.
<b>Agent:</b>	<i>Trichuris vulpis</i>
<b>Sample required:</b>	Blood, serum, plasma most common & reliable. Tear and saliva test also exist.
<b>Susceptible domestic species:</b>	Dogs, rarely cats. In a national fecal parasite survey, whipworms were reported from 14.3% of shelter dogs. Whipworm eggs were present in fecal samples from 20% of dogs in the Southeast, 16% of dogs in the Midwest, and 15% of dogs in the Northeast
<b>Zoonotic?:</b>	No
<b>Diagnostic tests:</b>	Fecal float (identification of eggs). Eggs are barrel- or lemon-shaped, yellow-brown, with prominent bipolar end plugs and a smooth shell.
<b>Test sensitivity (false negatives):</b>	Moderate. False negatives are not uncommon,. Because of the long prepatent period, heavily-infected animals may show clinical signs before eggs are shed in the feces. In low-level infections, eggs may be shed intermittently.
<b>Test specificity (false positives):</b>	Excellent. False positives are very uncommon. However, <i>Trichuris</i> eggs must be distinguished from Capillarid eggs, which are slightly smaller and have a rough surface.
<b>Vaccine available?:</b>	No
<b>Excreted in:</b>	Feces
<b>Mode of transmission:</b>	Fecal-Oral
<b>Disinfection:</b>	Very difficult. Eggs are very resistant to disinfection, especially in soil. Eggs are also resistant to drying, temperature extremes, and sunlight. Reducing exposure of dogs to embryonated eggs in the environment is best achieved by prompt removal of feces from yards and other environments where dogs defecate.
<b>Incubation:</b>	Pre-patent period (time from infection to shedding) = 3 months Eggs become infective one month after they are shed. Because the prepatent period is so long, shelter-acquired infections may not become manifest until after adoption. Dogs adopted from a known whipworm contaminated shelter should be routinely tested and/or treated up to 3 months after adoption.
<b>Post-recovery shedding /carrier state?</b>	Yes. Most animals that are shedding are asymptomatic
<b>Effective Dewormers:</b>	Fenbendazole (Panacur), Milbemycin (Interceptor or Sentinel), Febental (available as an ingredient in Drontal Plus or Vercom paste)  Because of the long period of maturation, deworming must be repeated three times at monthly intervals.  <b>Note:</b> <i>Pyrantel is NOT effective against whipworms.</i>
	<a href="http://www.ShelterMedicine.com">www.ShelterMedicine.com</a>