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**KENNEL CLUB ASSURED BREEDER SCHEME
NEW PUPPY OWNER ADVICE SHEET**

**KEEP YOUR DOG HEALTHY AND HAPPY
WORM REGULARLY**

Worming your dog throughout its lifetime is important, and you should talk to your vet about a suitable worming programme for your puppy at the earliest opportunity. Regular worming not only protects your dog's health, but helps to prevent the spread of infection and potentially hazardous health risks to other animals and humans too. Worm infections carried by your dog do not always display obvious symptoms, so an adequate treatment schedule is vital.

Some worming treatment will have been carried out prior to you receiving your puppy and if this is the case the breeder should have provided you with a record of this. Do discuss this with your own veterinary surgeon.

Signs aren't always obvious

Dogs can appear healthy even when they have worm infections. Detecting an infection can be tricky, particularly as worm eggs are too small to be easily visible in your pet's faeces. In addition, your dog may be more at risk from some worm infections than others depending on where you live. It is therefore extremely important to keep your dog's treatment regular and up-to-date.

Specific signs will be described for each worm, but remember that not all worm infections will be obvious in your dog, so some more general signs to look for include:

- The presence of visible worm segments that could stick to your dog's bottom and become itchy. This can cause dogs to "scoot", whereby they drag their bottoms along the ground with their back legs. Doing this also means that your dog will be rubbing its infected bottom on your floor or carpet, which is naturally unhygienic
- Weight loss
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- A dull, lifeless coat
- A change in appetite (it may be either increased or decreased depending on the worms present)
- A lack of energy
- A pot-bellied appearance (most commonly seen in puppies)
- Breathing difficulties and coughing
- General changes in behaviour

You should seek advice from your vet if you see any of the above signs in your dog. Many of these symptoms may be indicative of other illnesses. Your vet will be able to investigate the problem and provide appropriate advice and treatment.

Worming Products

There are a wide variety of worming products available from a number of different sources. These products vary in activity spectrum (the worms they treat or prevent), how you administer the treatment (spot-on / injection / oral medication), dosage instructions and speed or duration of activity.

Always check with your vet before initiating a worming regime. This way you can be confident that you are using the most appropriate products, and following the best treatment for the needs of your dog and family.

How Often Should You Worm?

All animals are at risk from acquiring worm infections. However some animals will be at higher risk than others depending on factors such as their lifestyle and area in which you live. Children are at increased risk of disease from worms; if you have a young family or your dog often comes into contact with children, you should pay particular attention to regular worming. Again, always consult with your vet with regard to the most appropriate treatment schedule.

Control Check List

As well as following a worming plan following consultation with your vet, there are also many other practical things you can do to help prevent the spread of worm infections among your pets and family. These are as follows:

- 'Poop scooping' - make sure you pick up your dog's faeces immediately on a walk and remove it from the lawn or surrounding outdoor environment daily - bag it, and put it in designated poop bins, burn it or flush it down the toilet
- Ensure you and your children wash your hands after handling / stroking your dog
- Wash all food including fruit and vegetables before eating them
- Don't allow children to put dirt in their mouths
- Throw away any food dropped on the floor / ground rather than eating it
- Cover children's sandpits when not in use

Travelling Pets

There are specific parasitic worms to which your pet may be exposed to on visiting countries outside the UK. Two notable worms are **Heartworm** (*Dirofilaria immitis*), transmitted by a mosquito bite, which could be fatal in your dog if not prevented, and one type of **Tapeworm** (*Echinococcus multilocularis*), which can cause serious and fatal disease in people.

If you are intending to travel with your dog, you should talk to your vet in plenty of time to establish the best worming regime to ensure the protection of both your dog's health and that of your family.

For further information about what you need to do before, during, and after travel abroad with your dog, refer to the [Pet Travel Scheme guidelines](http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel) on the DEFRA website, www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel.

Further reading and information

ESCCAP UK provides practical advice to dog owners to protect pets from parasitic infections and to minimise the risk of their transmission between animals and humans. To find out more, visit www.esccapuk.org.uk.

The Kennel Club aims to promote the health, happiness and general wellbeing of all dogs, and to provide you with an invaluable resource for every aspect of life with your dog.

To find out more, visit us today at www.thekennelclub.org.uk