

What are Zoonotic Diseases?

Zoonoses are animal diseases that may also be transmitted and affect humans. As you know, pets provide many benefits to us and are an important part of our family structure; they comfort us and provide loyal companionship. Learn some simple tips for preventing zoonotic disease in your home.

What every pet owner should know:

Although the risk of contracting a zoonotic infection is low, the consequences of infection with zoonotic diseases cannot be ignored.

Always dispose of your pet's faeces promptly!

Worms:

Intestinal parasites of dogs and cats such as roundworms, hook-worms and tapeworms can cause infection in people. Intestinal worming of pets is very effective in preventing the spread of worms to humans.

Here are some tips to prevent worms:

- Worm your pet regularly to prevent infection from intestinal worms. Adult dogs and cats should be wormed every 3 months and more frequently for puppies and kittens. For a worming regime to suit your pet, please ask our healthcare team for more information.
- Take your pet for regular veterinary health check-ups;
- Do not feed your pet uncooked offal
- Prevent pets from wandering and scavenging.

Worm adult aged cats and dogs every 3 months

Ringworm:

This is a fungus and you can come into contact with ringworm via an animal or directly from soil.

Giardia:

This parasite lives in the intestine of infected humans or animals and their environment. Giardia can cause diarrhoea and intestinal problems.

Sarcoptes:

Is a mite and when a human comes into contact with an affected animal the mites can crawl onto people or another pet. Minimal handling of affected pets until treatment is successful is the best prevention.

Cat Scratch Disease (CSD)

Is a bacterial infection which usually causes fever, fatigue, and swollen lymph nodes. It is transmitted to people by scratches and bites. Prevent CSD by discouraging your cat from scratching and biting you;

avoid rough play; keep your cat's nails trimmed short; never allow a cat to lick open wounds on your body; and wash all bites and scratches with soap and water.

Wash your hands after touching, playing with or caring for your pet.

Toxoplasmosis:

This is a protozoan infection that may cause potentially serious infection to pregnant women and people with compromised immune systems. Cats usually shed the organism in their faeces for a short time just once in their life. People most commonly become infected by handling raw meat or eating under cooked meat. Simple hygiene measures around cats and raw meat are effective.

Tips for a healthy family:

- Bath and groom your dog regularly.
- Keep your pet's environment, including bedding, clean.
- Dispose of your pet's faeces promptly.
- Encourage good hygiene in children from a young age by encouraging them to wash their hands regularly, especially before eating and after handling pets or toys.
- Always wash children's hands after playing in dirt or sandpits.
- Wear gloves when gardening and always wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.
- If you are pregnant, ask another family member to change the cat's litter box, do not handle unfamiliar cats (strays), and feed your cat a canned or dried commercial cat food instead of raw meat.

A final note...

Researchers have found that there are many health benefits of owning a pet.

Zoonotic diseases can be prevented by regular worming and by following good hygiene practices. By adopting the recommendations in this leaflet your family and pets will enjoy a healthy and happy life together.

If you have any further questions please ring or come in and see us for any help and advice.