

Veterinary Connections



News about Animal Health, Food Safety, and One Health.
Army Public Health Center

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Microchipping Your Pet

Every year thousands of pets wander off or become lost, and sadly, many are never returned to their families. Collars with identification tags are important, but can easily slip off or be taken off. Microchipping your pet can dramatically increase the chances of your pet being returned to you.

A microchip is a tiny radio-frequency identification (RFID) implant, roughly the size of a long grain of rice, which contains a unique identification number that can be read by a microchip scanner. The microchip can be scanned and read by most animal shelters and veterinary clinics in the U.S. The microchip itself has no internal energy source, so it will last for the life of your pet. It is read by passing a microchip scanner over the pet's shoulder blades. The scanner emits a low radio frequency that provides the power necessary, where the chip is located, to transmit the microchip's unique ID code and positively identify the pet. A microchip does not have Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) capabilities and cannot track you or your pet's location.

There is more than one type and multiple brands of microchips. The American Veterinary Medical Association recommends International Standards Organization (ISO) microchips for all species, and ISO microchips are required for international pet travel. ISO microchips contain 15 digits and are 134.2 kHz in frequency.

Cats and dogs both should be microchipped, even if the pet stays primarily indoors. Puppies and kittens may be microchipped as early as 6-8 weeks, depending on their size. It only takes two to three seconds for the veterinarian to inject the chip under your pet's skin between the shoulder blades. Talk with your veterinarian about what is best for your particular pet.

You are responsible for submitting your contact information and your pet's information to the microchip manufacturer's registry and keeping the information up to date. The chip itself does not hold your pet's medical information or contact information. The manufacturer's registry holds the information provided. Your veterinary clinic can assist with providing the microchip manufacturer's registry forms and contact information.

Microchipping your pet is required by many installations, communities, and countries where our service members and families live. Consult with your veterinarian before a permanent change of station move to ensure your pet meets all of the necessary health and microchip requirements for your new location.

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Microchipping Your Pet

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Pets with microchips are more likely to be reunited with their families. Your local Veterinary Treatment Facility can microchip your pet. To locate the facility closest to you visit: <https://tiny.army.mil/r/JG66r/VTFs>

Once your pet is microchipped, remember to:

1. Register the microchip.
2. Ask your veterinarian to scan your pet's microchip at least once per a year to make sure it is working properly.
3. Keep your contact information up-to-date.

> Content contributed by Joseph G. Williamson, VMD, MPH, DACVPM, Veterinary Services and Public Health Sanitation Directorate, Army Public Health Center



Dangerous Household Items

Is your home safe for your pets? Many items that we consider commonplace in our households can actually pose a serious health risk to your pets. The following article provides information on some of the most common culprits!

Plants

Having plants within the house always adds a nice touch to décor. However, certain plants are toxic to your pets when eaten. Always keep household plants out of reach of your pets and, if in doubt, consult with your veterinarian before bringing a new plant into the house. A few of the most common toxic plants found in homes are:

- Poinsettias, which can cause irritation of the mouth and stomach and may cause vomiting.
- Hollies and pines, whose needles can cause irritation of the mouth, low energy, diarrhea, weakness, and, in severe cases, trembling.
- Lilies, which are especially toxic to our feline friends and can cause kidney failure.
- Mistletoe, which can cause vomiting, diarrhea, erratic behavior, collapse, and potentially death.

Electrical cords

Electrical cords can present a tempting chew toy to dogs, cats, and other small pets. Chewing on electrical cords can lead to electrocution. Other injuries can range from cuts and burns in the mouth to fluid collecting in the lungs and death. Electrical cords should be replaced if frayed, they should be tucked out of sight and reach when possible. Also, be sure to use grounded 3-pronged extension cords to help protect your pet from shock.

Batteries

There has been a recent up-surge (pun intended!) in cases of button-battery ingestion by pets and infants. Batteries greater than 2 centimeters in diameter can present a choking hazard. More importantly, when chewed and swallowed, batteries can cause serious and life-threatening complications in the digestive tract. Seek veterinary assistance immediately if you believe your pet has swallowed a battery. Always make sure batteries are properly secured inside their intended appliances and kept well out of reach of your furry family members.

Clothes and Other Objects

Every household gets messy! However, laundry, toys, and other small objects can be dangerous for pets. Be aware of common everyday items that may be dangerous for your pet:

- Underwear and socks are a favorite for chewing and eating by our bored canine friends. Eating these types of items can lead to vomiting or in severe cases intestinal blockages that may require emergency surgery.
- String, ribbon, rubber bands, and hair ties can be entertaining for our pets to play with but can cause serious and potentially life-threatening complications when eaten.

Other toxic or dangerous household items include antifreeze, rat poison, fertilizers, and holiday lights and ornaments. If you have any questions about what types of household items can be a danger to your pet or if you are concerned that your pet may have ingested something hazardous or toxic, call your veterinarian for additional guidance. You can also call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 426 4435, but you may be charged a fee for the call.

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Intestinal Parasites

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Often a veterinarian will ask pet owners to bring a fecal sample to their pet's annual appointment. Although this is sometimes a smelly inconvenience, it is usually the easiest way for the doctor to check cats and dogs for intestinal parasites.

Let's sort out the differences between four common worms that can be found in your pets to keep them (and you) safe!

	Roundworms	Tapeworms	Whipworms	Hookworms
Common intestinal parasites found in dogs and cats:				
Scientific Name	<i>Toxocara canis</i> (dogs only)	<i>Dipylidium caninum</i> (dogs and cats)	<i>Trichuris vulpis</i> (usually dogs only)	<i>Ancylostoma spp.</i> (dogs and cats)
	<i>Toxocara cati</i> (cats only)	<i>Taenia spp.</i> (dogs and cats)		<i>Uncinaria stenocephala</i> (dogs, rarely cats)
What does this parasite look like?	White or light brown worm a few inches long, often described as looking like spaghetti.	Tapeworm segments seen near the rectum look like small, white grains of rice.	Tiny white pieces of thread, about 1/4 inch long.	Very small white worms within the intestinal tract.
Will I be able to see it in my pet's stool?	Yes	Yes	Rarely	No
What pets are usually affected?	All pets can get roundworms, but kittens and puppies are the most commonly infected.	Pets of all ages can be infected.	Pets of all ages can be infected.	Pets of all ages; can cause severe illness or death in young animals.
Symptoms	Vomiting, weight loss, "pot-bellied" appearance, and in severe cases intestinal blockage.	Often minimal signs but may see itching of the rectum.	Watery and/or bloody diarrhea, weight loss.	Weight loss, bloody diarrhea, anemia, weakness, or poor endurance.
How did my pet get this parasite?	From their mothers during pregnancy and while nursing; exposure to stool-contaminated soil.	From fleas.	From contaminated food or water. Whipworm eggs can live in an environment for up to 5 years.	From their mothers during pregnancy and while nursing; exposure to contaminated soil.
Can it be spread to people? (zoonotic)	Yes, easily spread to children who play in areas where dogs have gone to the bathroom.	No	No	Yes, by walking barefoot on contaminated soil.
Deworming Recommendations	Pyrantel pamoate—a medication given orally once.	Fenbendazole or praziquantel—a medication given orally once.	Fenbendazole or febantel, medications given orally; requires multiple treatments over a 3-month period.	Fenbendazole for several days.

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The Military Pet Education (milPetED) Mobile application is the one place Service members, beneficiaries, and retirees need to go to obtain animal health information, tips, and resources.

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-  Easy to use
-  Find a Veterinary Treatment Facility near you

LUNCH BAG FOOD SAFETY

Whether you're off to school, work, or a picnic, follow these lunch-packing guidelines to ensure your bag lunch is safe to eat.

Packing a Safe and Satisfying Bag Lunch



NON-PERISHABLE

No refrigeration needed

- Whole fruits
- PB&J sandwich
- Crackers



PERISHABLE

Must be kept COLD

- Lunchmeat
- Salads with tuna/egg
- Cheese

Food Safety Tips



PREPARATION

- Wash hands
- Do NOT mix your raw and cooked ingredients
- Washing fruits and veggies in cold water
- Use separate and clean cutting boards and utensils for each dish to avoid cross-contamination



TRANSPORT and STORAGE

Keep HOT foods HOT

- 140°F or warmer with a thermos or insulated container

Keep COLD foods COLD

- 40°F or colder with an insulated lunchbox and ice packs or frozen drinks



CLEAN UP

- Refrigerate leftovers or throw them away
- Do NOT reuse paper lunch bags, sandwich bags, foil, or plastic wrap. Once used, these are contaminated and could cause you to get sick

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Veterinary Connections

Goal of publication:

- Veterinary Connections is a quarterly publication written by Army Veterinary Service personnel and published by the Army Public Health Center to inform and educate Service members, beneficiaries, and retirees about Animal Health, Food Safety, and One Health.
- One Health refers to the intersection and overlap between animals, humans, and the environment.
- Army Veterinary Service personnel serve around the world supporting the Department of Defense as proponents for Animal Health and Food Protection.

Comments or questions regarding content can be directed to ARMY-VSPublications@mail.mil

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Place "Veterinary Connections" in the subject line.

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Facility at <https://tiny.army.mil/r/JG66r/VTFs>

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