



**Good Friends  
Animal  
Hospital**

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## *Whipworms*

Whipworms are a common parasite of the large intestine in dogs. Eggs are passed out into the stool, and larvae develop inside the egg. A dog is infected by eating eggs with larvae in them. The eggs hatch in the small intestine, undergo further development, and then pass to the large intestine and develop into adults. The process from egg to adult takes 70–90 days.

The most common symptom of whipworms is diarrhea. The stool may have mucous or blood in it. The diarrhea may be intermittent, alternating with bouts of normal stool. In chronic cases the dog may lose weight. There may also be vomiting, constipation, straining to defecate or abdominal pain.

Whipworms are difficult to diagnose. The worms pass low numbers of eggs intermittently. They can be easily missed if just one stool sample is examined. Often the easiest way to diagnose whipworms is to treat the dog and see if the diarrhea clears up. Because it can take up to 90 days for the larvae to mature into adults, treatment should be repeated in 3 weeks and again 3 months after the first treatment. The medicine only kills the adult worms and not the developing larvae.

Cats do not get whipworms and they are not a threat to humans.