



## Zoonotic Diseases

A zoonotic disease is a disease you can get from your pet. People most at risk are children, the elderly, pregnant women or people who are living with chronic diseases like diabetes, cancer, HIV, or many other chronic illnesses. This is a brief summary of the most common diseases. More in-depth information can be provided if you are interested. You may obtain additional information at [cdc.gov/healthypets](https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets). You may also contact your human healthcare provider.

### Diseases you can get from animal feces:

- **Baylisascaris** is the raccoon roundworm. People can be exposed to this parasite in raccoon feces. Prevention is to not feed wildlife and *do not* keep raccoons as pets. This disease can be fatal in humans.
- **Hookworms** are common intestinal parasites of dogs and cats. Eggs are passed in the feces, develop into larvae in the soil, then chew through the skin of their next host (victim). Both humans and animals can be affected. Prevention includes multiple deworming of all young animals, on-going parasite control in adults, yearly fecal exams and daily removal of feces from the yard.
- **Roundworms** are common intestinal parasites of dogs and cats. Transmission to people is by accidentally getting feces in the mouth, (small children most at risk.) Prevention includes multiple dewormings of all young animals, on-going parasite control in adults, yearly fecal exams and timely removal of feces from the house/yard. Teach children good sanitary habits, i.e. wash hands after playing with pet or playing outside.
- **Toxoplasmosis** is a protozoan. Accidental ingestion of contaminated cat feces or from eating undercooked meat are sources of human infection. The organism can cause abortion or birth defects in humans. Pregnant women should not clean litter boxes. All people should wear gloves when gardening, eat fully cooked meat and thoroughly wash vegetables to prevent the disease.
- **Tapeworms** are common intestinal parasites of dogs and cats. Dogs and cats contract them from fleas.

### Diseases you can get from casual contact with animals:

- **Ringworm** is a fungus. You can come into contact with it on an affected animal or directly from the soil. Prevention includes a timely diagnosis and treatment of affected pets and intensive household cleaning.

- **Sarcoptes** is a mite. Contact with an affected animal may allow mites to crawl onto people or another pet. Minimal handling of affected pets until successfully treated is the prevention.

#### Diseases you can get from a bite or scratch:

- **Cat Scratch Disease** is caused by bacteria. Kittens are more commonly involved. Prevent cat scratches and bites by discouraging aggressive play. Maintain flea control (which is how the organism is transmitted from cat to cat). Cleanse all scratches or bites immediately. Contact your human healthcare provider if you are concerned about a cat bite/scratch wound.
- **Rabies** is a virus. It is transmitted by a bite or scratch from affected mammals or from inhalation of bat guano (feces) in caves. Vaccination of all companion animals, avoiding contact with wildlife, especially if showing abnormal behavior (e.g. if seem overly friendly or a usually nocturnal animal is out during the day) are prevention strategies.

#### Diseases you can get from urine or standing water:

- **Leptospirosis** is a bacteria. This organism can be found in standing water, wetlands or urine from affected animals. Vaccination of at-risk dogs, controlling rodent populations, minimizing access to standing water and to wildlife are all prevention strategies. Use caution if handling urine from sick dogs.

#### How can I protect myself and my family?

- Have an annual exam of your pet to discuss your pet's parasite control program
- Have an annual fecal and heartworm test
- Give pets a monthly broad spectrum parasite medication such as Revolution or Interceptor
- Use flea and tick products
- Feed pets a commercial pet food. Do not feed pets raw meat.
- Remove pets feces in a timely manner
- Do not allow your pets to roam freely
- Wash hands thoroughly after contact with animals