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Worms? No Thanks!

You might have noticed on TV recently that Drontal dog wormer has changed to a cute bone-shaped tablet. It's still tasty and the shape is pretty cool, but it also brings it to the forefront of my mind just how important regular worming of your pet is.

Did you know that in the UK there are still 50-100 cases of Ocular Larval Migrans every year in children under 4 years caused by the dog roundworm *Toxocara Canis*? And some of these children will be left with reduced vision for life? Most, if not all, pets will have some burden of worms in their intestines. The worms shed eggs into your pet's faeces and if you don't pick up your pet's poo, the eggs hatch into the soil and become infective to humans. One study showed that in the UK 24% of soil samples taken from public parks contain eggs, and Borders Region was near the top.

Children aged 1-4 years are the most commonly affected mainly due to their play habits. Lots of kids like to play and get dirty, plus putting stuff in your mouth is great at that age, and boring stuff like washing your hands is a tantrum waiting to happen. All of these things make it more likely that young children might ingest infective eggs which can then migrate to any body organ including the eyes and cause potentially serious medical problems.

So what can we do as responsible pet owners to protect all our children? It's easy and it's two-fold:

1. Worm your adult pet every 3 months. This will reduce the shedding of eggs and will also be beneficial to your pet's general health. Puppies and kittens have a higher burden of worms than adult pets so need wormed every month until they are 6 months of age.
2. Pick up your dog's poo when you are out walks especially if you are regularly walking in areas that children play. Also cover sand pits and other areas that cats might think look like a nice toilet.

As with all things make sure that you are worming with a product that will do what you expect it to do. There are a huge number of wormers on the market, and not all of them kill all intestinal parasites, so read the back of the packet and if in doubt pop in to one of the surgeries and we'll check it for you.

To celebrate the re-launch of Drontal bone shaped wormers and to encourage regular worming we have a great offer for you in May; buy three doses of Drontal for cats or dogs and get your fourth dose free. That's 25% off. If you need help to remember when the next dose is due just visit our website www.bordervets.co.uk and register with the easy to use Drontal reminder service for a text or e-mail every 3 months.

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