

**Client
Information**

Series **Tapeworms (*Taenia*)**

What You Should Know About Tapeworms (*Taenia*)

Adult *Taenia* (te' ne-ah) tapeworms live in the small intestine of dogs and cats where they produce eggs that are passed in the stool. The eggs are contained in segments called proglottids that detach from the rest of the tapeworm.

These eggs contaminate the food supply of rodents, wild rabbits, sheep, cattle, and pigs. Once ingested by a suitable host, the tapeworm egg hatches and develops in the host's tissues. Dogs and cats acquire *Taenia* tapeworm infections when they eat contaminated meat from one of these sources.

Signs

Normally, infections with *Taenia* tapeworms are not especially harmful to adult dogs and cats. Severe infections in

young animals may cause nonspecific signs such as an unhealthy appearance and diarrhea.

Occasionally, proglottids

may crawl out of a dog's anus and irritate the surrounding tissues. A dog affected in this manner may drag its bottom

(scoot) on the ground or floor.

Tapeworms (*Taenia*)

Your pet has *Taenia* tapeworms. These tapeworms are parasites found in the small intestines of dogs and

cats. Deworming and restricting access to wild animals and contaminated meat will eliminate *Taenia* infections

from pets. This client education sheet will help you learn more about these tapeworms and will review your

veterinarian's instructions for your pet's care at home, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

Tapeworms (*Taenia*)

Diagnostic Plan

History

Physical examination

Detection of tapeworm

segments in the stool

Therapeutic Plan

Dewormers

Control of patient's hunting

and eating habits

Nutritional Plan

Nutrition based on individual

patient evaluation

including body condition

and other organ system

involvement or disease

The host becomes infected by eating an infected intermediate host.

The oncosphere hatches

in the intermediate host

and differentiates

into a metacestode.

Proglottids shed

in the feces.

Adult tapeworm in the

small intestine**Diagnosis**

Taenia infections are diagnosed when your veterinarian identifies proglottids or eggs. *Taenia* proglottids are white and rectangular or bell-shaped and may be found in the stool, on furniture, or on the animal's coat near the anus. Fresh proglottids may be seen crawling about in these locations.

Pets with *Taenia* infections usually have had access to rodents or rabbits, or these pets have been fed raw meat from slaughtered animals.

Treatment and Home Care

Dewormers designed to eliminate *Taenia* infections are highly effective. However, reinfection may occur unless

measures are taken to control the animal's hunting habits. Rabbits, mice, rats, and raw meat from sheep, goats, cattle, and pigs should not be fed to dogs and cats.

Nutritional Plan

After your pet has been treated for *Taenia* infection, your veterinarian may suggest a dietary change based on your pet's age and body condition, and on the presence or absence of disease in other organs and body systems. Optimal nutrition should provide for a pet's needs during each stage of its life. Optimal nutrition should also reduce the health risks associated with feeding excess sodium, calcium, phosphorus, protein, and fat. Foods that avoid these harmful excesses and provide proper nutrition for each life stage include the Hill's® Science Diet® brand of pet foods for dogs and cats.

Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). However, do not add water to your cat's food. Feed only the recommended food. Be patient but firm with your pet.

Presented as an educational service by

Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: _____

Patient's Name: _____

Medication(s): _____

Nutritional Recommendation: _____

Follow-Up Appointment: _____ (Hospital Stamp Area Above)

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