



## Facts about Feline Lungworm

### *What is feline lungworm?*

Two species of parasitic worms can infect a cat's lungs:

- *Aelurostrongylus abstrusus* is a cat-specific parasite found around the world.
- *Eucoleus aerophilus* is primarily a parasite of foxes, but cats can become infected with it as well.

### *What are the signs and symptoms of lungworms?*

There may be no signs of infection in cats carrying a low number of worms. Cats who do become sick mostly develop symptoms related to the presence and reproduction of these worms in their lungs, throat, sinus passages, and intestines. Common signs may include:

- Coughing
- Discharge from the nose
- Sneezing
- Increased breathing effort
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Weakness

### *How is lungworm transmitted?*

- *A. abstrusus* is transmitted to cats when they eat invertebrates, small mammals, reptiles, or amphibians that are infected with lungworms.
- *E. aerophilus* is transmitted when a cat ingests the mucus, saliva, or feces of an infected animal. *E. aerophilus* can be transmitted between cats and between cats and dogs.
- Feline lungworms are rarely transmitted to people.

### *Diagnosis*

- Microscopic examination of feces and/or lung secretions can aid in diagnosis of lungworms.
  - **Feline Rescue cats may be treated without a confirmed diagnosis of lungworms** if their symptoms and history suggest that they were likely to have been exposed.
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### ***Treatment and Management***

- In general, cats can be cured of lungworm using appropriate deworming medications.
- If a cat has had lungworm for a prolonged period of time before treatment, lung scarring may result and may lead to ongoing symptoms even though the infection is no longer present.
- Lungworm infection can be prevented by keeping cats indoors. This limits their ability to hunt and eat animals that may be hosts to lungworm and prevents them from socializing with infected cats they may encounter outdoors.

*Adapted by Dr. Lisa Mekka from website publications from the Companion Animal Parasite Council*

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