



Coccidia and Giardia

Coccidia and Giardia are protozoans, single cell organisms like amoebas. They are parasites of the small intestine in both dogs and cats. Humans can get Giardia, but usually not from their dog or cat. Our pets have a different type than the one that typically infects humans.

Giardia



Giardia lives in the small intestine and produces cysts that pass into the stool. Pets become infected when they eat the cysts in the environment.

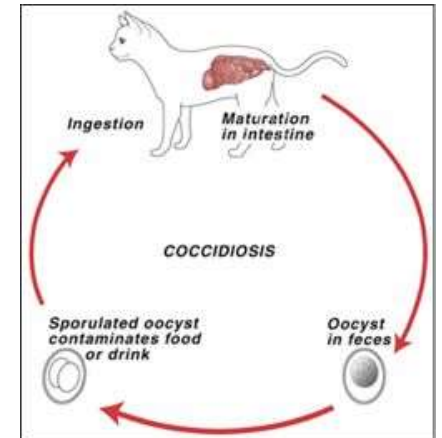
Giardia causes stools to be soft, smelly, and often with mucous but

usually not blood. Your pet can have diarrhea for an extended time or it can be intermittent. There can be weight loss and a poor appetite. Occasionally your pet will vomit.

The cysts are shed intermittently making diagnosis difficult. For this reason, the doctor will often treat your pet for Giardia along with other parasites when diarrhea is a problem.

Coccidia

Coccidia also live in the small intestine and pass eggs, called oocysts, in the stool. Pets are infected when they eat the oocysts in the environment. Several species of coccidia infect dogs and cats.



The most common symptom is diarrhea that can be bloody. Often times there are no signs. The treatment is an antibiotic for one week, though some cases may clear up without treatment.

Rodents and rabbits have their own species of coccidia that do not infect our pets. However, if your pet eats a rodent, rabbit, or its droppings, the oocysts are seen on a stool exam. They are just passing through your pet so your pet won't need treatment.