

UK Routine Canine Parasite Risk Assessment Tool

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This tool is aimed to help vets assess the risk of common parasites in domestic dogs within the UK for the purpose of responsible use of parasiticides. The risk categories and managements are a suggestion based on the authors' assessment of current evidence and clinical opinion which may evolve over time. Final treatment decisions remain the responsibility of the prescribing vet.



TOXOCARA/LUNGWORM RISK?

How old is the dog?

Less than 6 months

Over 6 months

- Do they live in or do they regularly travel to known lungworm endemic areas? If so,
 - Do they eat slugs, snails or frogs frequently?
 - Do they drink from puddles or outdoor water bowls?
- Do they eat faeces or wildlife carcasses frequently?
- Are they fed an unprocessed (non frozen) raw diet?
- Are any members in the household considered immunocompromised?
- Are there children under 5 in the household?

YES

NO

HIGHER RISK for roundworm and/or lungworm and/or zoonosis in household

Frequent (monthly) treatment is warranted for animals <6 months old. In adults consider frequent treatment or testing.

- Do they regularly go outside with significant off lead access to public areas?
- Do they spend significant time with dogs from other households (e.g. doggy daycare or kennels)?
- Do they scavenge outside or eat slugs, snails or frogs occasionally?
- Do they drink from puddles or outdoor water bowls?

YES

NO

MEDIUM RISK for roundworm and/or lungworm:

Consider intermittent testing or treatment.

LOWER RISK for roundworm and/or lungworm:

Regular assessment for patent infections to guide need for treatment could be considered.

TAPEWORM RISK?

- Is the dog fed an unprocessed (non frozen) raw diet or raw offal frequently?
- Do they participate in hunt activities?
- Do they eat fallen livestock frequently?
- Do they live within or often visit and free roam in an area known to be endemic for hydatid disease?

YES

NO

HIGHER TAPEWORM RISK with higher zoonotic risk

Frequent prophylactic treatment is warranted.

- Do they experience flea infestations often?
- Do they occasionally eat wildlife, offal or raw meat?

YES

NO

MEDIUM RISK for tapeworm

Treatment or testing at a regular interval may be warranted.

LOWER RISK for tapeworm

No routine tapeworm treatment may be required. Treatment could be given ad hoc on clinical sign of infection or if travel/lifestyle events increased risk.



ECTOPARASITE RISK?

- Does the dog frequently walk in forested areas or through long vegetation or heathland with ticks noted all year round?
- Do they suffer from flea allergic dermatitis?
- Has the household had regular flea infestations/tick attachments in the past at all times of year?

YES

NO

HIGHER RISK for flea/tick infestation or clinical signs associated with fleas

Year round treatment may be warranted.

- Are they a working dog?
- Do they have regular outdoor access?
- Do they have contact with other animals in the household who frequently go outside e.g. cats?
- Do they have contact with wildlife eg.visiting the garden?
- Do they occasionally travel to high risk tick areas?

YES

NO

MEDIUM RISK for flea/tick infestation:

Consider treatment during higher risk seasons (Spring- Autumn).

LOWER RISK for flea/tick infestation:

Consider regular monitoring and ad hoc treatment if infestation noted or lifestyle event increases risk.

NB. If patient is imported or travelling consult country specific guidelines especially if concerns re: heartworm, leishmaniasis or tick borne disease. Advice may also differ in pregnancy.