

UK Routine Feline Parasite Risk Assessment Tool

Authors: Nicole Dyer and Claire Cieluch

This tool is aimed to help vets assess the risk of common parasites in domestic cats 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.



ROUNDWORM RISK?

How old is the cat?

Less than 6 months

Over 6 months

- Do they have free access to the outdoors and roam significantly?
- Are they fed an unprocessed (not frozen) raw diet?
- Do they hunt regularly and ingest wildlife prey?
- Are any members of the household considered immune-compromised or aged under 5?

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 have access to the outdoors?
- Do they occasionally hunt or could they occasionally ingest wildlife prey?

YES

NO

MEDIUM RISK for roundworm:

Consider intermittent testing or treatment.

LOWER RISK for roundworm:

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

TAPEWORM RISK?

- Does the cat hunt and regularly ingest wildlife prey?
- Are they fed an unprocessed (not frozen) raw diet or raw offal frequently?

YES

NO

HIGHER RISK for tapeworm

Consider frequent prophylactic treatment.

- Do they occasionally hunt and eat wildlife or offal?
- Do they experience flea infestations?

YES

NO

MEDIUM RISK for tapeworm

Treatment or testing (*D. caninum*) 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 lifestyle events increased risk.

ECTOPARASITE RISK?

- Does the cat frequently have access to rural, forested areas, areas with long vegetation or heathland with ticks noted all year round?
- Does the patient 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.

- Do they have regular outdoor access in suburban or rural areas?
- Do they have contact with other animals in the household who frequently go outside e.g. dogs?
- Do they have contact with wildlife eg. visiting the garden?

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, leishmaniosis or tick borne disease. Advice may also differ in pregnancy.

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