

## There's No Worming Your Way Out Of This One

By Karen L. Radano, DVM

Deworming kittens and puppies is an essential step to ensure their healthy development. Gastrointestinal parasites are so common that the CDC currently recommends deworming all kittens and puppies three times. Not only does this protect our furry friends, but it also protects us from certain parasites that can also be transmitted to humans. Humans can have gastrointestinal disease, skin lesions and ocular lesions that can lead to blindness and internal organ damage all from gastrointestinal parasites. Most parasites have a fecal-oral transmission, meaning the eggs that are shed in the stool are ingested. Risks are greatly decreased if you deworm young animals and routinely check fecal samples once a year in older pets. Hygiene is also important, washing hands after handling our pets, especially before eating or touching your face. External parasites are also common in young animals. Flea prevention and early exams can help to detect and treat external parasites as well.

Nani was an adorable 6 month old female maine coon cat that presented to our practice because she was crying, vomiting, and not eating for 24 hours. She had vomited so much that she began to vomit blood. On exam, she was severely dehydrated and weak, barely able to lift her head. She had ear mites and fleas, which despite causing her discomfort, could not explain her condition. Abdominal radiographs revealed dilated gas filled stomach with ingesta that was suspicious for an obstruction. She was admitted to the hospital and IV fluids were immediately given to help her become stronger for surgery.



Nani improved with IV fluids. Revolution was applied to treat the fleas, ear mites and GI parasites. Surgery revealed roundworms in the stomach and a large hairball that was entangled with several roundworms and a tapeworm segment, causing an obstruction. The obstruction was removed.



Nani was kept in the hospital on IV fluids and she improved very quickly. After another day of supportive care, she was walking around and playful again. Nani was able to go home with her family.



Nani's condition was caused by parasites, both internal gastrointestinal and external. Preventative medications can be given to healthy kittens and puppies to avoid illness from parasites. Keeping our pets healthy prevents transmission of these parasites to humans, which keeps us safer as well.