



Giardia

Giardia is a microscopic protozoan organism that is carried in the intestinal tract of most mammals. It is present in up to 50% of puppies and 11% of kittens. Most often it does not cause problems in our pets, but it has the potential to cause severe diarrhea. We can usually clear a case of giardia quite easily with proper use of antibiotics/antiprotozoal drugs, but on occasion the disease can be very hard to cure.

One of our biggest worries with giardia is that people can contract the disease and develop diarrhea also. People can be exposed via their pets, but also through contaminated water, especially streams and lakes near wildlife areas. People with suppressed immune systems and children are most likely to develop giardia infections.

We recommend testing all puppies and kittens for Giardia on their first visit, even if they are not having any signs of infection. We also recommend testing all pets adopted from shelters or other multi-animal situations. This allows us to find infections that may be dangerous to the people in your family.

If your pet has a positive Giardia test we will start treatment immediately. We will also ask you to clean any of the bedding your pet is using and to wash your pet daily, especially if your pet has any feces on it. This will prevent re-contamination of your pet, and help clear the infection sooner. We will repeat the Giardia test every 3-4 weeks until the test is negative – most cases are gone by the first retest.

If you have any questions or concerns, call us. We are here to help!