

IDENTIFICATION OF NEMATODE EGGS IN DOG AND CAT SAMPLES (1)

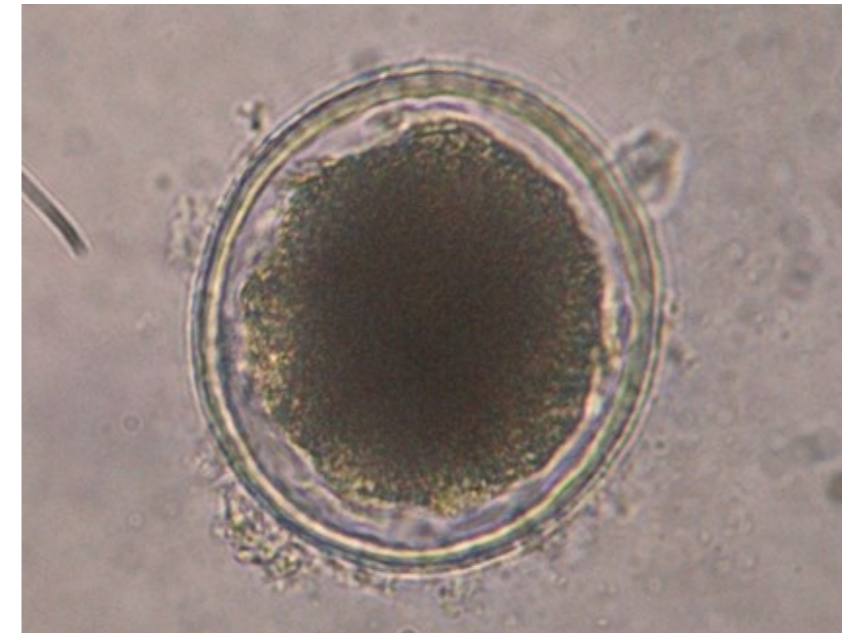
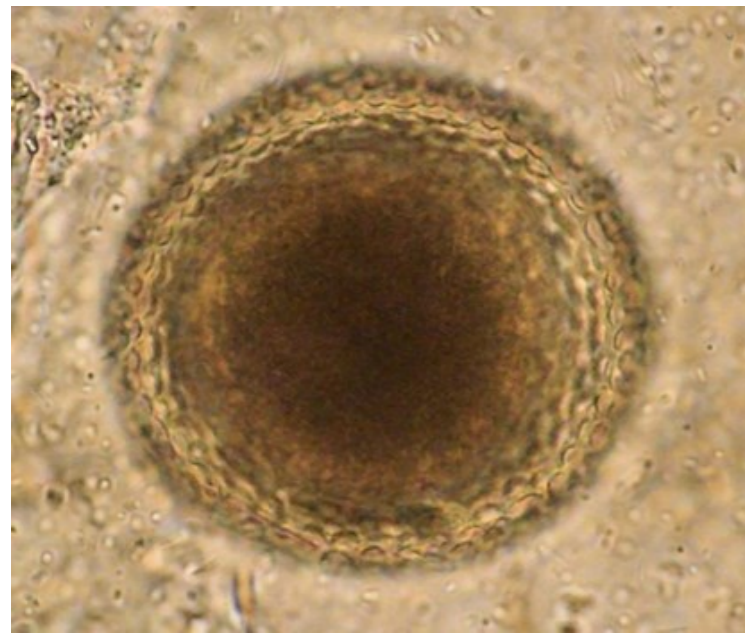
Nematode infections in dogs and cats affect animal health. One worm in particular, the roundworm *Toxocara canis*—is a threat to public health. It is therefore very important to follow best worming practices as advised by your vet. ESCCAP recommends regular faecal testing for cats and dogs to monitor their intestinal worm status.

Toxocara canis and *Toxocara cati* are ascarid worms which live in the small intestine. Freshly passed eggs are brown, almost round in shape (75x90µm) with a thick pitted shell.

Left in the environment, eggs of *Toxocara* in dog poo develop a larva inside, which, if ingested, infects pets and can also cause human disease. The image shows a larva within a *Toxocara* egg.

Toxocara leonina infects both cats and dogs. This egg is very similar to that of *Toxocara* (75x90µm) but is more ovoid, and the shell is thick but smooth and somewhat colourless.

Untreated puppies and kittens can harbour large worm burdens. Ascarids may sometimes be expelled in faecal samples following anthelmintic treatment.



Uncinaria eggs of the dog hookworm found in the small intestine measure 60-80µm in length and 30-50µm in width, they are ovoid with parallel thin walls. The eggs of the hookworm have spherical contents (blastomeres).

Trichuris vulpis is the dog whipworm of the large intestine. The lemon-shaped eggs of these worms are of medium size, 70-90µm in length, 32-40µm in width. There are two clearly protruding, transparent and symmetrically-opposed plugs; the walls are barrel-shaped. The shell is thick and smooth, and contents brown.

Eggs of *Trichuris* may be confused with those of *Capillaria*. A distinguishing feature of *Trichuris* is the presence of circular striations at the base of each plug (arrows) but this feature is sometimes difficult to see.

Ancylostoma eggs of the warmer climate hookworm are smaller than those of *Uncinaria*. *A. caninum* (dogs) *A. tubaeforme* (cats) are approx. 55-65µm in length and have fewer blastomeres than *Uncinaria*.

