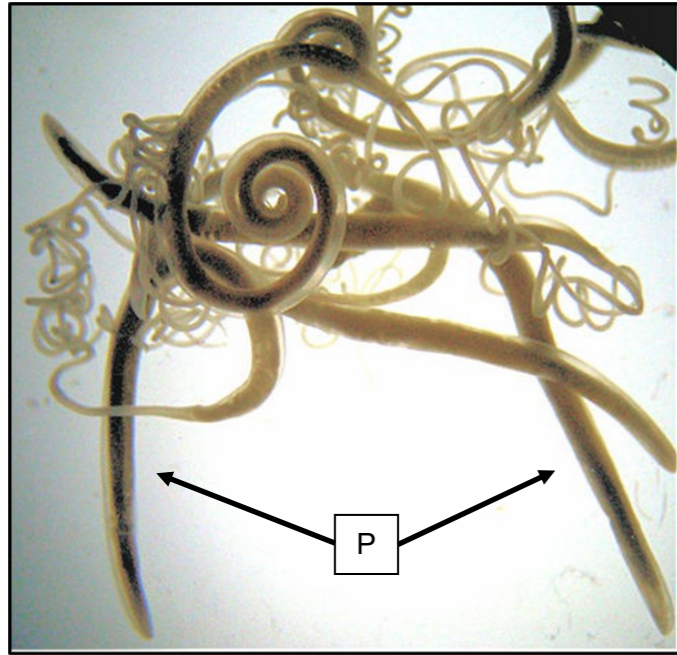
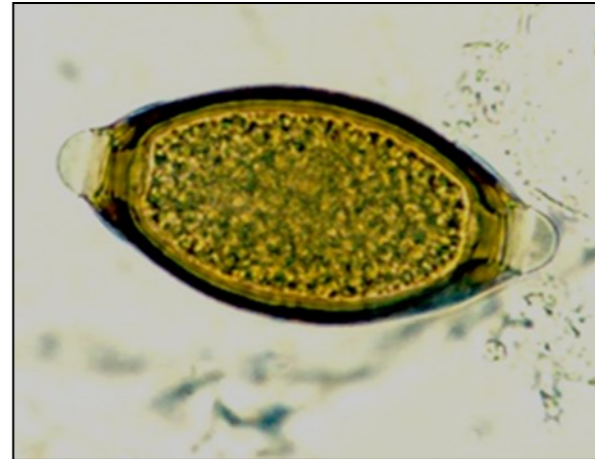


# Life cycle of the dog whipworm, *Trichuris vulpis*

*Trichuris spp.*, or whipworms, reside in the caecum and colon of animals. Most infections of *T. vulpis* in dogs are light and asymptomatic but in cases of heavy infection, inflammation of the caecal mucosa and bloody diarrhoea can occur. Eggs can survive and accumulate for many years in dogs' kennels, and thus serve as an enduring reservoir of infection.



**1. Adult *Trichuris vulpis*** are 4.0-6.0cm long with a thick posterior end (P) which tapers rapidly to a long thin anterior end which is typically embedded in the mucosa. The above image shows several tangled worms.



**2. The eggs of this worm** are characteristically lemon-shaped, yellowish-brown in colour and with an obvious plug symmetrically positioned at each end. Eggs have a smooth shell, measure 70-90 x 32-41µm and undeveloped, the contents are granular.



**3. Larval development** inside the egg is temperature-dependent and may take one to two months after being passed in faeces. This image shows the first stage larva folded within the egg. Developed eggs are directly infective to dogs when swallowed.

## THE PREPARENT PERIOD IS 10-12 WEEKS

**4. After ingestion**, the two plugs on the eggs are digested, releasing the first stage larva which penetrates the caecal mucosal glands – subsequent moults to L2, L3, L4 and L5 (adults) occur within these glands. The adult worm then emerges and stays on the mucosa.



Under optimal conditions it has been shown that infective eggs can survive for 12 years in soil.