

ANIMAL HOSPITAL OF LANESVILLE

1849 Highway 11 Lanesville, IN 47136 (812) 952-3643

Toxoplasmosis and Your Cat

By Dr. Rene Wingerter

Toxoplasmosis is an infectious disease that can be carried by horses, dogs, pigs, goats and cats. People can become infected with toxo, by eating under-cooked meat (especially pork), or by handling feces from infected cats, or soil contaminated with infected stool.

Often the primary concern is the fact that an unborn human baby can become infected with this disease if the mother is exposed causing spontaneous abortion, stillbirth, premature birth or birth defects.

When it was found that cats can become infected with this parasite and pass it in the stool, many people became alarmed. The truth is, if your cat does become infected, he will only shed the eggs in the stool for a few days once in his entire life. Then his immune system prevents that from happening again. It is also a fact that the only way you could even get it then is by eating the infected stool or the cat!

If you are planning to have children, it is not necessary to get rid of your cats, but it is recommended that women who can become pregnant take certain precautions.

There are no blood or fecal tests at this time to determine if your cat is absolutely free of the disease, however it may be possible to do a blood test to see if the woman has ever been exposed to toxo.

If you have been exposed to toxo before, you will have antibodies to it. Now if you are exposed when pregnant you will be able to protect your unborn child through these antibodies that pass through the placenta into the fetus.

Generally it is considered best if you follow these simple guidelines whether you have been previously exposed or not:

1. Wash your hands before eating.
2. Do not feed raw or poorly cooked meat to your pets or eat it yourself and wash your hands after handling raw meat.

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3. Have someone who cannot get pregnant dispose of the cat litter daily or wear gloves when cleaning the litter box yourself.
4. Wear gloves when working in the garden and wash all vegetables well.

Common sense and cleanliness can help you avoid any problems with Toxoplasmosis. You do not need to fear your cat or ruin your happy friendship with him.

If you have any questions please call the Animal Hospital of Lanesville at 952-3643. 🐾