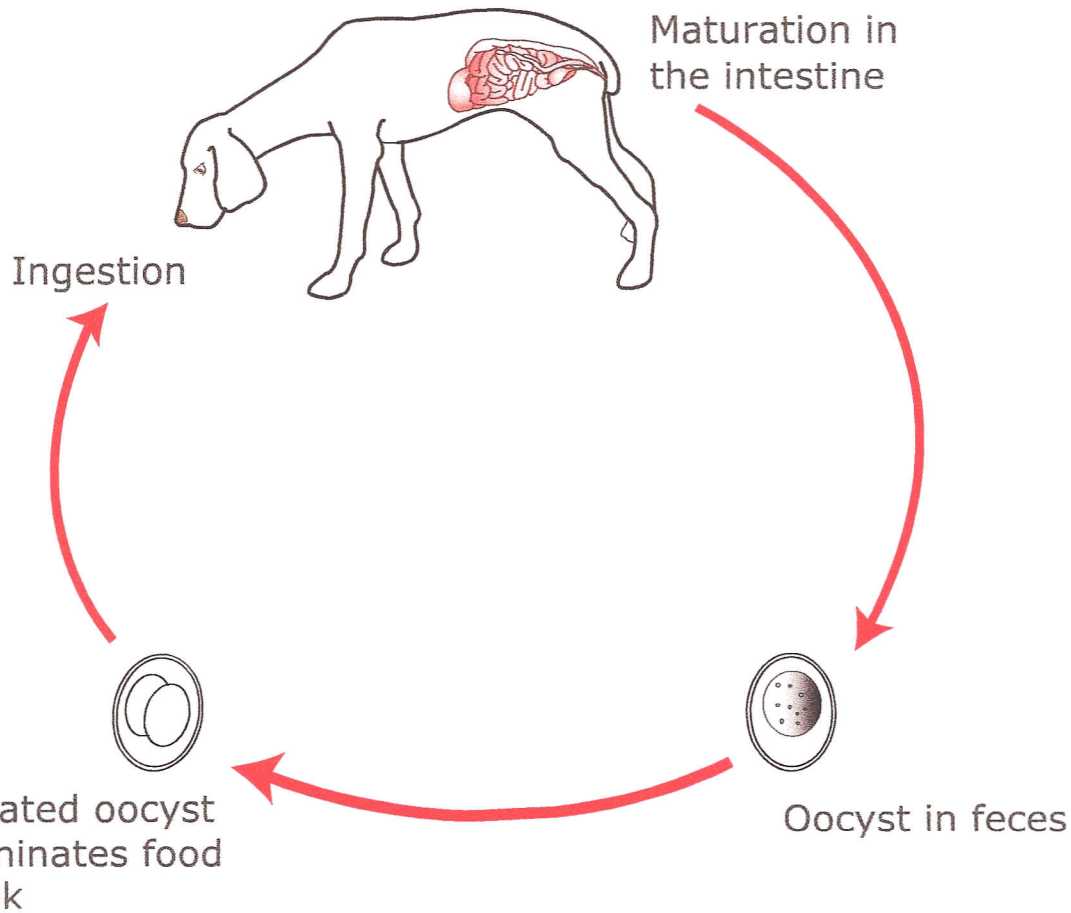


Coccidia Life Cycle - Dog: Coccidiosis in the dog.



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Coccidiosis is an intestinal tract infection caused by the coccidial family of protozoal parasites. These microscopic parasites live within the cells lining the intestinal wall of their host. Oocysts or immature coccidia are passed in the environment in fecal material. The oocysts mature or sporulate to an infective stage. If sporulated oocysts are swallowed, they mature within the intestines and complete their life cycle. Sporulation can occur in less than a day under ideal conditions, but usually takes about a week. In healthy adult dogs, coccidiosis is an insignificant disease; in puppies and sick adult dogs, an infection can cause severe diarrhea and dehydration. Sporulated oocysts from dogs may also infect mice or dogs. Most of the common species of coccidia found in dogs do not infect humans. However, *Cryptosporidium* may pose a health risk to immunosuppressed adult humans. For further details about these parasites, see our Client Education Handout Series.