

Robinson Veterinary Services

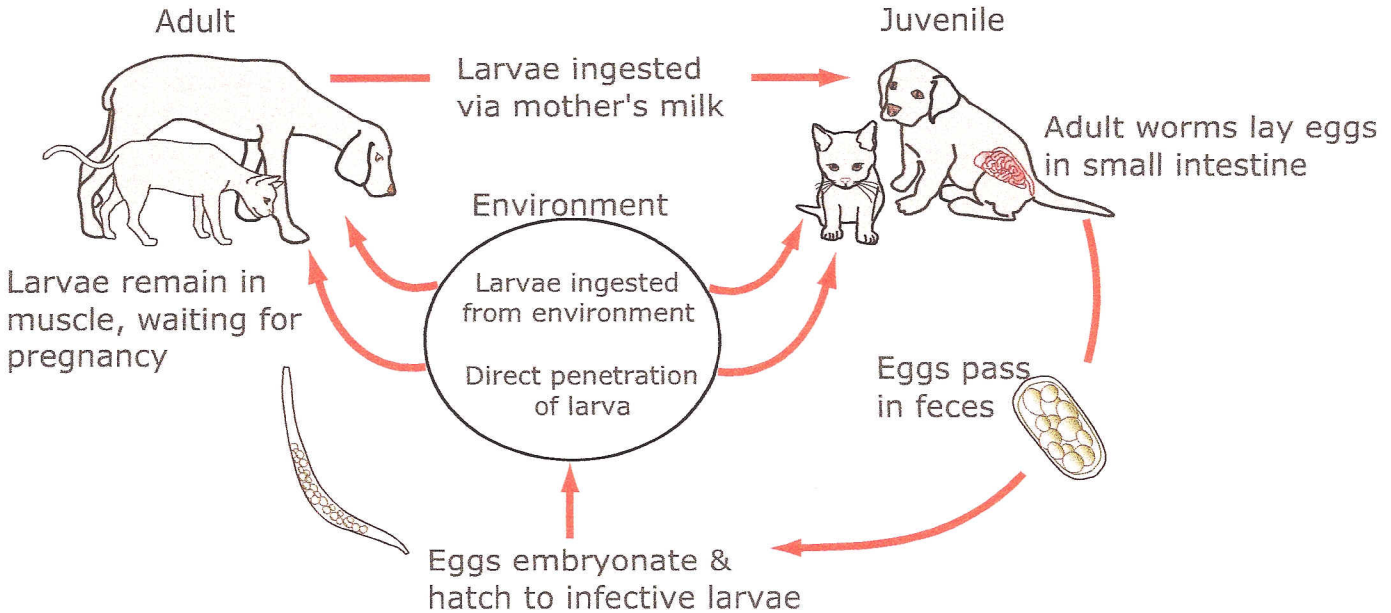
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Hookworm Life Cycle: Stages of hookworm life cycle and routes of infection.



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Hookworms are an intestinal worm that infects dogs and rarely cats. Adult hookworms pass hundreds of microscopic eggs in the host's stool. Larvae or immature hookworms will hatch from the eggs and may persist in the soil for months. Most often, a dog inadvertently infects itself by swallowing larvae while grooming. The larvae can mature to adults in the intestinal tract, or can pass into the muscles where they become dormant. Hookworm larvae may also burrow through the skin and migrate through the body to the intestine. Puppies can be infected across the placenta before birth, or through an infected mother's milk while nursing. Prenatal infection does not appear to occur in kittens. Hookworms are prolific egg layers, so an infection can readily be found by finding eggs in a fecal sample that is processed and examined under the microscope. For further information about this parasite, refer to the illustration "Hookworm" and to our Client Education Handout Series.