

Robinson Veterinary Services

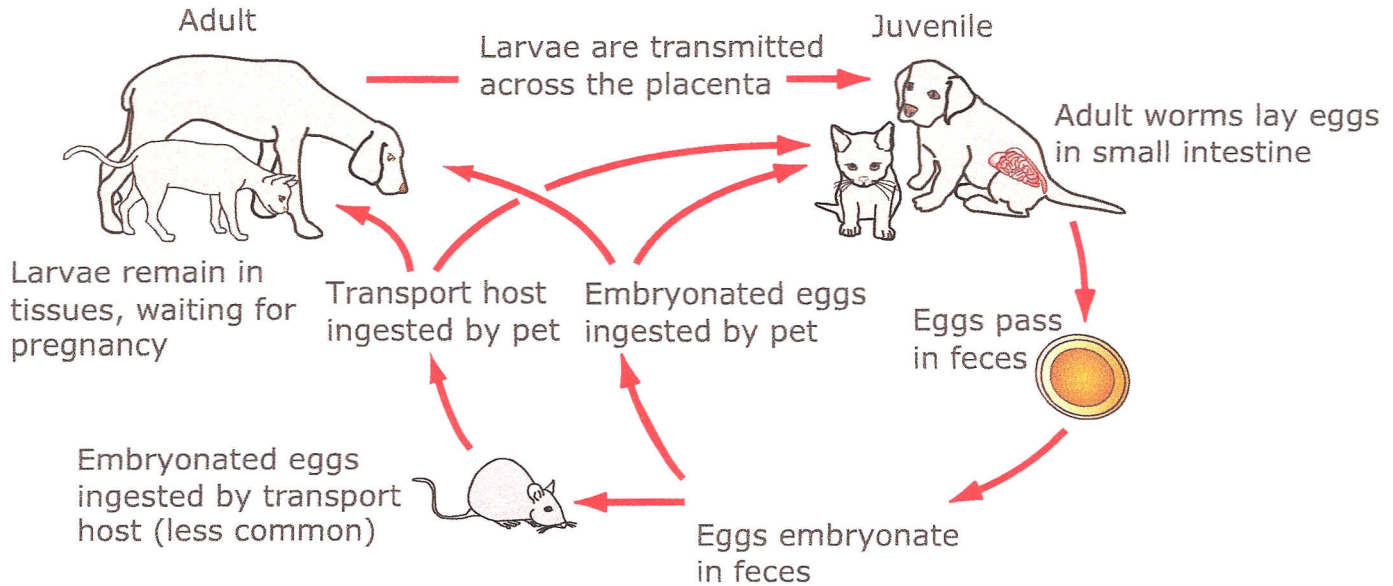
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Roundworm Life Cycle: Life cycle of the roundworm.



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As the illustration shows, the life cycle of the roundworm is complex. It starts when adult roundworms in the intestines lay eggs that pass into the environment via the stool. After a period of time, the eggs become infective. Pets ingest infective eggs via licking or sniffing the ground, or by eating a 'transport' host. The infective eggs hatch in the intestines and follow a complicated migratory route through the body. In healthy adults, migration will be arrested in the tissues, forming dormant larval cysts. In juveniles, the migration is completed and the larvae return to the intestines to complete the cycle as adults. In pregnant or nursing dogs and cats, the dormant larvae will resume development and pass through the placenta into the unborn fetus or through the milk into nursing babies. Humans can act as a 'transport host' if they accidentally ingest infective roundworm eggs. The worms will attempt to complete their migration, but will become encysted in various organs, causing problems if a large number of eggs are eaten.