



Zoonotic Disease

Diseases Shared by Humans & Pets – How to Protect You, Your Family & Pet

Zoonotic Diseases that Affect People

Cat scratch disease – Also known as “cat scratch fever”, this flea-borne infection is typically transmitted from a cat’s scratch or bite. Signs include pimples at the scratch site and swollen lymph nodes that may persist for six weeks or longer.

Ehrlichiosis – Transmitted by ticks, this bacterial disease can cause fever, muscle aches, vomiting and other, more serious symptoms. As many as half of all patients require hospitalization.

Giardia – People become infected by drinking water containing the parasite *Giardia lamblia*. Also, infection can occur by putting something in the mouth that has come in contact with a pet’s stool. Signs include diarrhea, stomach cramps and nausea.

Leptospirosis – “Lepto” is a bacterial disease spread by contact with urine from an infected animal, including dogs, raccoons, squirrels and skunks. Lepto can cause high fever, severe headache, vomiting and if left untreated, kidney damage or liver failure.

Lyme disease – Spread by ticks, Lyme disease can cause arthritis and kidney damage. The number of Lyme disease cases has nearly tripled since 1990; the disease is now found in every state.

Rabies – This well-known disease is caused by a virus found in the saliva of infected animals and transmitted to people typically by bites. It is invariably fatal if not properly treated.

Ringworm – Ringworm is a fungal infection – not a worm – transmitted by contact with the skin or fur of an infected dog or cat. Signs include a bald patch of scaly skin on the scalp or a ring-shaped, itchy rash on the skin.

Rocky Mountain spotted fever – A very serious, tick-borne disease that causes fever, headache and muscle pain, followed by a rash. May be fatal if left untreated.

Toxoplasmosis – This is a parasitic disease spread by contact with cat feces in soil or litter, although the major route of transmission is contaminated meat. It can cause serious health problems in pregnant women or people with compromised immune systems.

Simple Ways to Protect your Family

- Wash your hands often when touching, petting, playing with or caring for pets.
- Never handle the stool of any animal without wearing disposable gloves or using a plastic barrier.
- Avoid kissing your pet on the mouth or allowing them to lick your face.
- Daily “tick checks” on yourself, your kids, and your pet(s). Use tweezers to SLOWLY pull the tick out then immediately immerse the tick in rubbing alcohol. Wash the tick bite and your hands with soap and water.
- Pregnant women should have someone else in the family clean the cat’s litter box. If unavoidable, wear gloves and immediately wash your hands after changing the litter.
- Wash your hands after gardening or working in soil where pets may have relieved themselves.
- If scratched or bitten, wash the area immediately with soap and water and administer first aid. If you are concerned, contact your health care professional.
- See your veterinarian to make sure your pet is protected against zoonosis and other disease threats in our area.

Proven Ways to Protect your Pet

Many Zoonotic diseases can be prevented by vaccination such as Leptospirosis and Lyme disease. In addition, twice a year wellness exams with our veterinarian can help detect and treat zoonotic infections *before* they become serious or are transmitted to other pets or people in your household.

Take these steps to help protect your pet:

- Ask your veterinarian about flea & tick control
- Brush and inspect your pet for ticks after each outing
- Don’t let your pet drink from standing water outdoors
- Don’t let your pet come in contact with feces or urine of other animals
- Remove food, garbage or nesting materials that attract disease-carrying wildlife

For more information about zoonotic disease protection, contact our veterinarian at: 719-632-6111 or www.WestsideAnimalHospital.com