

Zoonotic Diseases of Cats FACT SHEET

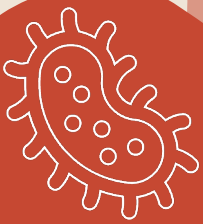


A zoonosis is a disease that can spread between animals and people.

In Australia there are at least 89 zoonotic diseases. Zoonoses are caused by tiny living things called pathogens that can make people and/or animals sick. Zoonotic diseases can be spread between humans and animals in two ways:

1. **Directly** – between animals and people
2. **Indirectly** – diseases that spread between animals and people by an inanimate object, food, water, soil, or an insect vector.

Potential Zoonotic Pathogens of Cats in Indigenous Communities



Bacteria

Bacteria are tiny organisms or living things that are too small to be seen with the naked eye. Bacteria are all around us, living in the water, soil and even the human body. There are many types of bacteria, but only a few of them can cause disease, such as diarrhoea, skin sores, kidney infections and blood diseases.

Examples:

- Cat Scratch Disease (*Bartonella henselae*)
- Campylobacteriosis (*Campylobacter* spp.)
- Leptospirosis (*Leptospira* spp.)
- Plague (*Yersinia pestis*)
- Q Fever (*Coxiella burnetii*)
- Salmonellosis (*Salmonella* spp.)
- *Streptococcus* spp.
- *Staphylococcus* spp.

Protozoa are another family of tiny living things that are bigger than bacteria but cannot be seen without a microscope. Some protozoa are parasites which means the need to live on or in another animal or plant to survive. Many of the protozoa cause diarrhoea.

Examples:

- Cryptosporidiosis (*Cryptosporidium* spp.)
- Giardiasis (*Giardia duodenalis*)
- Toxoplasmosis (*Toxoplasma gondii*)



Protozoa



Fungi

Fungi are group of plant-like organisms, which includes mushrooms and mould. Zoonotic fungi are bigger than bacteria but still too small to be seen and usually cause skin disease. People with weak immune systems are more likely to get fungal infections.

Examples:

- Ringworm
- *Microsporium canis*
- *Trichophyton mentagrophytes*
- Sporotrichosis (*Sporothrix* spp.)

Parasitic worms are usually “endoparasites” meaning that they live inside the body of another animal (like a cat or a human). While the adult worms can sometimes be seen in the feces, the eggs and baby worms (larvae) are too small to see. Most parasitic worms cause upset stomach or diarrhea, but they can also cause skin rashes.

Examples:

- Flea tapeworm (*Dipylidium caninum*)
- Heartworm (*Dirofilaria immitis*)
- Hookworms
- *Ancylostoma* spp.
- *Unicnaria stenocephala*
- Roundworms
- *Strongyloides stercoralis*
- *Toxocara cati*
- Sparganosis (*Spirometra* spp.)



**Parasitic
Worms**



**Ecto-
parasites**

Ectoparasites are small insects that live on animals like cats and people and depend on them for their food. While mites are usually too small to see, ticks and fleas are bigger and can be seen with the naked eye. Most ectoparasites cause skin disease, including hair loss and itching. Some ectoparasites can also spread other diseases.

Examples:

- Cat flea (*Ctenocephalides felis*)
- Notoedric mange (*Notoedres cati*)
- Paralysis tick (*Ixodes holocyclus*)

For more information on zoonotic diseases contact us at:



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