

SHARING TRACKS



WHAT IS SHARING TRACKS?

Working in animal health and management can be rewarding, but we understand it also has some challenges, especially for those working in rural and remote communities. SharingTracks has been designed to share lived experiences and give you the latest information in companion animal health and management.

Sharing tracks is a network for collaboration and support, where ideas and knowledge can be shared for program planning and service delivery. Although it is developed and distributed by [Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities \(AMRRIC\)](#), we hope that most of the newsletter's content will reflect the voice of our readers and their communities.

We'd love for this newsletter to include stories from you about your community to help others understand more about the different approaches to companion animal health and management.

Do you want to share a question or story in our next issue? Feel free to contact us at sharingtracks@amrric.org.



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NEWSLETTER [HERE](#)**



DISEASE FEATURE: HOOKWORM DISEASE

What are Hookworms?

Hookworms are tiny parasitic worms that live in the gut of dogs, cats and other animals. Adult hookworms attach to the wall of the gut, feeding on the blood of their host using their hook-like mouthparts and teeth. While these worms can make dogs and cats sick, some types of hookworm can also infect people. This is why reducing hookworm infections in cats and dogs is important for protecting the health of families and communities.

How Do Dogs and Cats Get Hookworms?

When an animal has hookworms, the adult worms living in the gut lay eggs that are passed out of the body in the animal's poo. These eggs develop in the environment and hatch into tiny larvae (baby hookworms).

Other animals can become infected with hookworm when they come into contact with sand or soil that is contaminated with poo containing these larvae. The larvae can also burrow into bare skin, for example, if an animal is walking or lying in contaminated soil. Animals can also get hookworm by swallowing hookworm larvae in the contaminated soil or poo.

Once inside the body, the worms travel through the lungs and into the gut, where they grow into adults and start producing more hookworm eggs, continuing the cycle.



What are the Signs a Dog or Cat Has Hookworms?

Many dogs and cats with hookworms don't look sick, so it can be hard to tell if they are infected without testing their poo. Young puppies and kittens are more likely to get sick than older animals, and may lose weight, develop a round "pot belly", cough, or have pale (white) gums from blood loss caused by the worms in their gut feeding on their blood. When puppies and kittens show signs of illness, it often means they have a large number of worms in their gut.

How Do You Treat Hookworms in Cats and Dogs?

Most deworming medicines treat hookworms in cats and dogs. But more than one treatment is often needed to completely get rid of the infection. If you think dogs or cats in your community are infected with hookworm, talk to your veterinary service provider about the best way to treat them. Young kittens and puppies that look pale, weak or unwell often need additional treatments from the vet to help them get better.

How Do You Prevent Hookworms?

It is always better to prevent disease than to try to treat it after the animal is already sick. The best way to protect dogs and cats from hookworms is with regular deworming. The recommended schedule from the [Tropical Council for Companion Animal Parasites \(TroCCAP\)](#) for deworming depends on the age of the animal:

- **Puppies under 8 weeks and kittens under 12 weeks of age:** deworming is recommended every 2 weeks
- **Cats over 12 weeks of age and dogs over 8 weeks of age:** deworming is recommended once a month

It is also possible to reduce the risk of cats and dogs coming into contact with hookworms by regularly cleaning up animal waste (poo) in the community. However, this can be difficult when dogs and cats are not confined to a yard or on leashes.

Can People Get Hookworm?

People can become infected with hookworm in the same way as cats and dogs. In people, infection usually shows up as a red, itchy, winding rash under the skin, often on the feet, caused by the larvae as they burrow through the skin. In rare cases, animal hookworms can also affect the gut, causing stomach pain, diarrhoea, and pale gums.

The best way to protect people from infection with hookworms from cats and dogs is by regularly treating pets for parasites, avoiding walking barefoot in soil or sand that may contain animal poo, and practising good hygiene, including washing hands regularly, especially after touching animals or soil.



FEATURED ARTICLE: HEALTH RISKS FOR ANIMALS AFTER A FLOOD OR CYCLONE



Floods and cyclones can have devastating impacts on communities, causing damage to homes, buildings, roads, essential services, and people's livelihoods. However, their effects can last well beyond the event itself. Stagnant water, mud and damage to the local environment can be a problem for days, weeks or even months, creating ongoing health risks for people and animals. During the event, floodwaters can mix with sewage, animal poo, chemicals, and other debris, increasing the risk of contamination. It can also create conditions that support the growth of germs and the spread of disease-carrying insects such as mosquitoes and ticks.

For animals in particular, flooding can increase the risk of injury and exposure to diseases and parasites. This is due to contact with contaminated water, soil, and debris, as well as interactions with displaced wildlife and other animals that may carry diseases or parasites that people's pets would not normally be exposed to.

Understanding these risks is important for animal health workers, as it helps to guide effective prevention, treatment and community support after natural disasters.

Common Health Risks for Dogs and Cats After Floods

During and after a flood or a cyclone, pets may be exposed to a range of health problems, including:

- Skin infections from contact with debris, mud or dirty water
- Parasites such as fleas and ticks
- Bacterial diseases such as leptospirosis or melioidosis from contaminated soil and floodwater
- Stomach illness from drinking dirty water or swallowing mud
- Injuries or wounds from debris or interactions with other animals

Stress from the event, along with limited access to clean water, food, and shelter, can weaken animals' immune systems and make pets even more likely to become ill if they are exposed to germs or parasites in the environment.



Preparing for Disasters

Planning ahead for floods, cyclones, and other emergencies is an important part of protecting animals and communities. This includes thinking about the needs of animals in your community before, during and after an emergency, including how the animals will be kept safe if the community is evacuated, how they will access food and water, and how basic animal health and management services can continue if normal services are disrupted.

Practical planning can make emergency response more effective and reduce risks to people and animals during disasters. Resources such as AMRRIC's **Companion Animal Emergency Management Resource Library** provide useful guidance and tools to support preparedness and planning.

Animal Management After Floods and Cyclones

After a flood or cyclone, communities can support the health and wellbeing of dogs and cats by taking practical steps that fit local conditions and available resources:

- Encourage community members to check and monitor their animals for injuries, signs of illness or changes in behaviour

- Where possible, provide access to clean drinking water and safe food sources for animals as soon as it is available
- If safe and practical, keep cats and dogs close to home to reduce contact with floodwater, debris and other hazards
- Work with your veterinary service provider to plan parasite control activities for all animals in the community, where possible
- Arrange for animals showing signs of injury or illness to be assessed when visiting veterinary services become available, or talk to your veterinary service provider about options for telemedicine to provide remote assistance for animal owners

These activities can help reduce the spread of disease and support both animal welfare and community health during the recovery period

Clean Environments and Disease Prevention

After floods and cyclones, caring for the local environment is an important part of protecting animal and community health. This can be supported through practical activities such as:

- Removing and disposing of animal waste using PPE, where it is safe and practical to do so

ACCESS AMRRIC'S COMPANION ANIMAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT RESOURCE LIBRARY [HERE](#)



- Avoiding contact with mud, contaminated soil and stagnant water where possible
- Encouraging community members to wash their hands after handling animals, soil or debris
- Keeping food and drinking water covered and protected from animals and insects
- Removing debris where possible to reduce hiding places for pests

Even small, practical steps can help to reduce exposure to germs and parasites in the environment, supporting safer recovery conditions for communities, especially when access to services is limited.

Importance of a Coordinated Response

Floods and cyclones change how people, animals and the environment interact with each other, which can affect health risks during recovery. In these situations,

animal health is an important part of protecting the health of the broader community.

Coordinated approaches that link animal health and management services, local government, and public and environmental health teams help to reduce disease risks and can improve recovery outcomes. This can include:

- Sharing simple shared health messages across health services
- Working with veterinary services providers, public health and environmental health services to plan animal treatments
- Linking animal health activities with environmental clean-up and community health activities, where possible
- Supporting clear communication between the local government, health services and animal management

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

How do I get a copy of the newsletter?

The easiest way to stay up to date with the latest edition of Sharing Tracks is to subscribe to our newsletter by clicking [here](#). This will add you to a mailing list that is only used for the newsletter. You can opt out of receiving the newsletter at any time. You can also keep up to date by following AMRRIC's [Facebook page](#). If you miss an issue, you can also check out our newsletter archive [here](#).

How often is the newsletter published?

Right now, a new edition of Sharing

Tracks will be sent out monthly, but we're always open to suggestions. Don't want to wait for the next newsletter? No problem. Our social media pages will be updated as news, articles and stories become available.

How do I submit an article or ask a question?

If you want to ask a question or include an article in our next newsletter, simply send us an email at sharingtracks@amrric.org, or send us a message on our Facebook page.

