



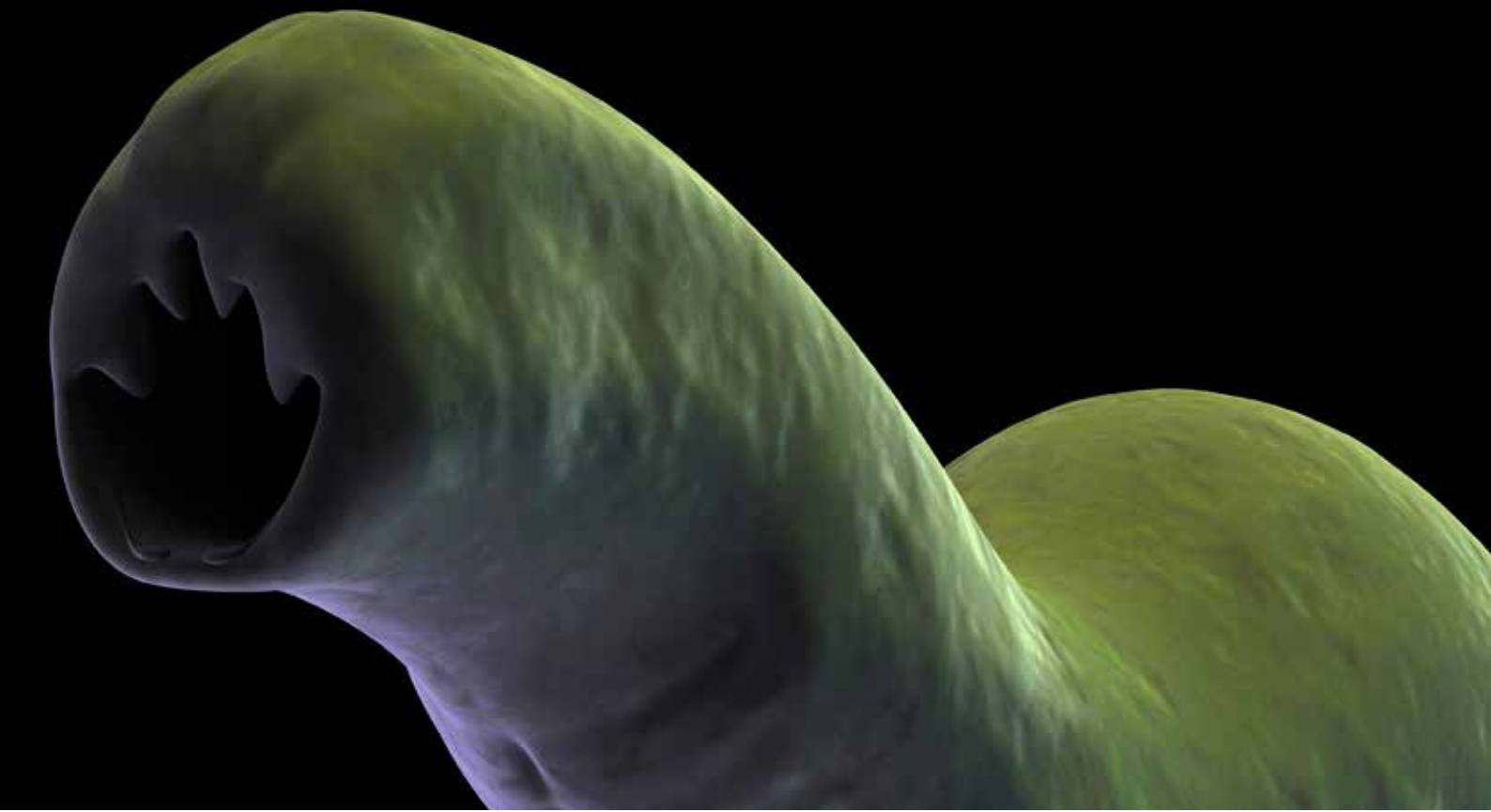
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Polar bears

- Latin name *Ursus maritimus*.
- Have a double hair coat, thick layers of body fat and furry feet to keep warm. Suffer more from heat exposure than cold.
- Live in Arctic countries (Alaska-USA, Canada, Russia, Greenland, and Norway)
- Live for 15-18 years in the wild and up to 40 years in captivity
- Weigh 300-600kg as an adult.
- Eat mainly seal blubber, usually leaving the rest of the carcass for other scavengers.
- The major threat to Polar bears is climate change decreasing their habitat and food sources (seals).
- Are at the top of the food chain so are also at risk from accumulated toxins, such as DDT (some of these chemicals become more concentrated the further up the food chain you go as they can't be eliminated from the body easily)
- Thought to have evolved from brown bears 300,000-6 million years ago



Less than one in 10 pets are carrying intestinal worms at any given moment in time in most parts of Australia.

Intestinal parasites can cause disease, and rarely even death, in dogs and cats. Some of these parasites are also zoonotic (can spread between people and animals), where they can cause a range of disease, including intestinal disease and blindness.

History of pet worming

For decades we have known pets get internal parasites that can affect their health, and that of the people around them. For this reason, over the last 40 years or so we have advocated regular worming of pets to minimize these risks. These treatments do not prevent internal parasites, but kill all the worms that are present when the treatment is given.

So how often should we do it

And that's a good question. The simple answer is every 3 months, because that's what the Australian Veterinary Association recommends.

However when we look into this more closely this advice seems to be based on what was happening half a century ago, when every 3 months most animals would have acquired some worms. This is not necessarily true today, with less pets roaming, and better preventative care.

So is it still sensible to give our pets a worming tablet every 3 months regardless. We don't think so. **Some pets definitely need it but many don't.**

Why not just worm them every 3 months?

Another good question. Modern worming preparations are very safe with a low risk of side effects.

However if your pet doesn't need it why take any risk of side effect. Also parasites can develop resistance to these treatments just like bacteria can to antibiotics. The more we use these drugs, the more likely they are to stop working.

And we can probably save you money.

In rare cases (for example farm dogs that eat raw offal) regular

How does it work?

- when your pet is due for worming collect a collection kit from the clinic.
- Collect a small sample (about the size of a dice) with the tool provided and place in the container in the kit.
- Seal the bag and drop it in to the clinic within 24 hours, and we will do the rest.

Heartworm and external parasites such as fleas are not covered by a faecal testing program.

worming is still the best option

What should we do instead?

What we really need to know is which pets have what parasites and what's the best way to treat them. All the animals that are free of worms then avoid treatment, and those infected with parasites get the best targeted treatment. But how do we know which group your pet is in?

Faecal parasite testing

This we believe is the way of the future.

We collect a small amount of faeces from your pet, usually collected by you at home.

We send that to the lab who tell us if your pet has parasites, and if so which one(s). We can then tailor a treatment plan individually suited to your pet.

How often do we need to do the test?

That will depend on your pet's age, life style, diet and the results of previous tests.

After a few negative tests your pet will generally only need a test once or twice a year.

In most instances the testing program costs less than regular worming tablets.

Is this the only parasite control I need?

No. This deals with all the intestinal parasites.

Heartworm still needs to be prevented separately, and external parasites such as fleas are also not covered.





Letting the cat out of the bag: and pet pigs.

This expression appears to have first appeared in England in the mid 1750's.

The most likely origin is as follows. Farmers on market day would take piglets to town in a hessian sack and proceed to sell them.

Some times they would try to place cats in the bag in lieu of piglets. If the trick was foiled and one of the cats escaped they would have revealed their secret and 'the cat had been let out of the bag'.

Cats have been an important animal, often of mythical proportions for thousands of years.

The emergence of pigs as pets, however, is a relatively recent phenomena.

Tea cup pigs, and Vietnamese pot bellied pigs are both kept as pets. However the tea cup or juliana pig is really just a baby pig of a smaller breed, which will grow to be quite large (30-50kg). The Vietnamese pot bellied pig weighs about 60kg as an adult, so is not a small pet either.

Pigs have been a useful domesticated animal, for purposes other than food. Trained pigs are used to locate truffles up to 3 feet underground. It is thought the truffle smells like a pig pheromone.

Pigs are also important in literature including, Miss Piggy, Babe, Piglet (Winnie the Pooh), and Wilbur (Charlotte's web): to name but a few.



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