



HOLY FAMILY  
PARISH

## PARISH NURSE MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

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### What You Can Catch From Your Pet:

Patron Saint of Animals – St. Francis of Assisi

**W**hile pets bring their owners much joy, they can also pass on diseases called Zoonoses with some symptoms that might not be noticeable at first. More than 100 infections can be transmitted to humans from domestic pets. Taking precautions, like hand washing after petting, can help prevent many of those infections, including the three of the most common diseases below. While animals can carry germs, it is important to know that you are more likely to get some of these germs from contaminated food or water than from your pet or another animal you encounter.

#### Three of the most Common diseases Found in Pets:

**Roundworm:** About 14% of Americans are infected with Toxocara, or internal roundworms, which are transmitted by the feces of cats and dogs. See your veterinarian if you see worms in your pet's stool or if your cat or dog develops a potbelly.

**Your Symptoms:** Roundworm larvae that travel through your body can trigger fever, coughing, or pneumonia.

**Pet Prevention:** Follow your veterinarian's instructions for deworming kittens and puppies, since many are infected at birth or while nursing. Pick up dog droppings around your yard to keep worm eggs from accumulating in the soil, and wear gloves when gardening. Protect others from infection when walking your dog, by using gloves to pick up feces and place them in a plastic sealable bag to dispose of in your trash.

**Ringworm:** Don't let the name fool you. "It's caused by a fungus; it's the most common condition people contract from cats," says Bernadine Cruz, D.V.M., a spokeswoman for the American Veterinarian Medical association and an associate veterinarian at Laguna Hills Animal Hospital in California. It can also affect dogs. The fungus looks like dandruff on your pet's fur.

**Your Symptoms:** An itchy circular rash with a reddish border will usually appear within a week or two of exposure, often on your hands or face. If the infection is on your scalp, you might lose some hair. Treatment calls for an oral or topical antifungal medication. Consult your physician for advice and treatment if you suspect you have this infection.

**Pet Prevention:** If your cat or dog develops a bald spot or crusty skin, see your veterinarian for treatment.

**Salmonella:** Reptiles and amphibians are the riskiest pets to own because they naturally carry Salmonella in their digestive tract.

**Your Symptoms:** Abdominal cramps, diarrhea, and fever. A Salmonella infection can be life-threatening to children, the very old, and those with weakened immune systems.

**Pet Prevention:** Use gloves when using bleach to disinfect the tub or sink after cleaning aquariums and supplies, and always wash your hands after touching those pets.

**Note:** Because wild animals can carry diseases that are dangerous to people, the CDC discourages direct contact with wildlife. You should never adopt wild animals as pets or bring them home. Teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if the animals appear friendly.

*References for this article: Consumer Reports on Health, July 2011 and The National center for Infectious Diseases in Animals: Healthy Pets, Healthy People online. To contact Holy Family Parish Nurse Ministry call 330-688- 6412 ext. 462 or view at [www.holyfamilystow.org](http://www.holyfamilystow.org).*



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