

## TOXOPLASMOSIS By Dr. John Fudens HMC DVM PH

Toxoplasmosis is a disease that is greatly misunderstood. The disease is spread by contacting the eggs, called oocysts, from cat feces, eating raw or poorly cooked meat and soil contaminated by infected feces. When the eggs reach the intestinal tract, they release sporozoites that spread to the brain, heart, liver and muscles. The signs of infection are flu-like in nature as sore throat, headache, muscle pain, loss of appetite, lymph node swelling. Most pets show no signs of this disease.

Humans are the greater victims, pregnant women in particular. Owning a cat does not make one susceptible to this disease. A common sense approach can lessen the risk considerably. Eat well cooked meat, change your cat's litter box every day, and wear gloves when working in the yard or garden. The reason for the largest number of human toxoplasmosis cases in the United States is from eating raw or undercooked meat not from cats.

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