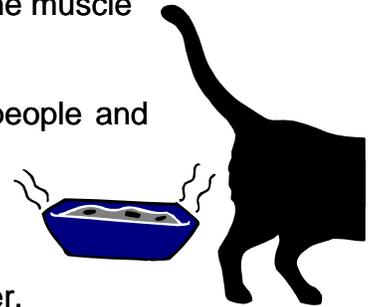




What Is *Toxoplasma*?

- ▶ *Toxoplasma* is a parasite that lives in the intestine of cats, and in the muscle and other parts of the body of lots of other animals and people.
- ▶ It's so small you need a microscope to see it!
- ▶ *Toxoplasma* usually doesn't make people or pets sick. Lots of people and pets have it and don't even know it! But:
 - if a woman is going to have a baby and gets *Toxoplasma*, it can make the baby very sick.
 - if a person is already sick from something else, their body can't fight off the *Toxoplasma*, and it can make them even sicker.



Where Does *Toxoplasma* Come From?

- ✔ *Toxoplasma* sometimes comes from the poop of cats.
- ✔ The *Toxoplasma* from the poop can live in dirt or in your house for a long time, but your parents can clean things like your cat's litter box with hot water to kill the *Toxoplasma*.
- ✔ *Toxoplasma* can also come from meat. Cooking the meat well makes it safe to eat.
- ✔ Sometimes *Toxoplasma* from dirt can get on other foods like fruits and vegetables.

How Do People Get *Toxoplasma*?

- ▶ People can get *Toxoplasma* from eating meat that isn't cooked well enough, or eating or drinking other food that hasn't been cleaned properly.
- ▶ It takes only a very tiny amount of poop from a cat with *Toxoplasma* to spread the infection. Luckily, a lot of cats become immune to *Toxoplasma* when they are kittens, and that keeps it from getting in their poop again.
- ▶ Sometimes people get *Toxoplasma* because a tiny bit of cat poop gets on their hands and then in their mouth. This can happen when a person has been working in the garden or playing in a sandbox where a cat pooped.



How Do I Know If My Pet Has *Toxoplasma*?

- ▶ Most animals don't get sick from *Toxoplasma*, so you can't tell if they have it.
- ▶ If they do get sick, they may act like they have the flu. Sometimes cats get eye problems.
- ▶ If a girl cat gets *Toxoplasma* before she has kittens, the kittens may die or be very sick.
- ▶ If you think your pet is sick, tell an adult. Your pet might need to go to the vet. Your vet will run some tests and check your pet to see what is making him or her sick. If your pet has *Toxoplasma*, he or she might get some medicine, but sometimes it's not needed.

How Can I Stay Safe From *Toxoplasma*?

- ✗ Don't touch cat poop or your cat's litter box.
- ✔ Always wash your hands really well if you've been playing outside and before you eat.
- ✗ Don't eat meat that's not well cooked.
- ✔ Always wash fruits and vegetables well before eating them.