

# Toxoplasmosis in Cats

## Overview

Toxoplasmosis sounds scary... and it can be scary because it is a zoonotic disease, meaning it can be passed from cat to person, and it's especially dangerous for pregnant women. This disease is caused by a parasite called *Toxoplasma gondii*. The parasite is transmitted through cysts which are often ingested. The cysts can be found in contaminated water, soil, feces, blood, or infected animals. Mama cats can also give the parasite to their kittens. Cats with weakened immune systems, kittens, and senior cats are at greatest risk for toxoplasmosis.

## Symptoms

Many cats can be carriers of toxoplasmosis even though they never show symptoms or remain without them for a long time.

When cats are symptomatic, you might observe the following:

- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Lethargy
- Sensitivity to light
- Vomiting
- Runny eyes
- Diarrhea
- Jaundice
- Breathing issues
- Flu-like symptoms
- Seizures (in extreme cases)

## Diagnosis/Treatment

Cats who are symptomatic for toxoplasmosis often present with symptoms that could indicate many things; therefore, your veterinarian may recommend a variety of diagnostic tests to identify the underlying cause.

These may include:

- Chemistry tests to evaluate kidney, liver, and pancreatic function, as well as sugar levels
- Antibody tests to identify if your cat has been exposed to infectious diseases
- A complete blood count (CBC) to rule out blood-related conditions

- For adult and older cats, a thyroid test to determine if the thyroid gland is producing too much thyroid hormone
- Electrolyte tests to evaluate hydration status and electrolyte balance
- Chest x-rays to evaluate the heart and lungs
- An eye exam
- A fecal exam to rule out other intestinal parasites
- Special serologic testing, titers, and PCR testing

## Treatment

The treatment for toxoplasmosis is antibiotics. Cats who are severely ill may be hospitalized and treated with fluid therapy and other appropriate supportive care. It is critical that medications be completed, even though giving a cat a pill can be difficult. To learn more, watch an expert efficiently [give a pill to a cat](#).

## Prevention

Preventing toxoplasmosis includes keeping your cat's living space clean, preventing her from successfully hunting, keeping her away from the trash, and keeping the litter pan clean. Cat owners who are pregnant or have a compromised immune system should take extra care when cleaning litter pans, or ask someone else to do the job. To learn more about toxoplasmosis, visit [the companion animal parasite council's website](#).

*If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian – they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.*