

Germes are never far behind in any setting where a lot of living things are in close proximity to one another. Just as the common cold, lice, and chicken pox cycle through an elementary school class, shelter animals can be exposed to certain ailments, too.

Here are some of the common ones:

Upper respiratory Infections (known as URI or kennel cough)

- What it is: *Upper respiratory infections are generally common colds that are only contagious between species. For instance, dogs can catch it from another dog, cats can spread it to cats, but neither can spread it to each other or us.*
- What to look for: *Generally symptoms can include running nose and eyes, coughing, lethargy and sometimes vomiting after much coughing. In immune compromised animals, pneumonia is possible*
- Treatment: *Similar to when we catch a cold, sometimes URI clears up on its own. Sometimes it requires antibiotics. A visit to your veterinarian is a must at the first sign of anything that's not normal. The Bordetella vaccine is available for dogs, and protects against some strains of URI*
- What was done at WARL: *More than likely, the pet you've adopted acquired URI at some point. Just like when one kid in the class gets sick, they all get sick. After a dose of antibiotics, vet visits, and some good ol' TLC your pet was cleared for adoption.*

Ringworm

- What it is: *A fungal infection of the skin, hair and nails and is transmitted by direct contact. Some strains of this fungus are contagious between different species, including humans. Athletes' foot is a type of ringworm.*
- What to look for: *In cats and dogs, ringworm generally appears as areas of hair loss that are roughly circular.*
- Treatment: *A veterinarian can diagnose your pet. A visit to your veterinarian is a must at the first sign of anything that's not normal. Your vet will come up with the best treatment plan, but generally it's a mix of baths, topical ointment, and medications*
- What was done at WARL: *The staff monitors the health of the pets every day. In addition your pet was seen by a veterinarian numerous times prior to being cleared for adoption. If there was an issue, it would have been addressed before you met your new pet.*

Internal parasites

- What it is: *Parasites can live in puddles, fields, dirt... anywhere (eek!). Some need to be ingested to infect your pet; others just need to be stepped in. Most are not contagious to people, but some are.*
- What to look for: *Loose stool, bloated bellies, "things" in their stool. Sometimes pets can have internal parasites and not show any symptoms. Bringing a stool sample to your veterinarian is a great way to find out if your pet has acquired any internal parasites.*
- Treatment: *Generally, parasites are easy to treat. Left untreated though, your pet could become very sick. A veterinarian can diagnose your pet. A visit to your veterinarian is a must at the first sign of anything that's not normal. Your vet will come up with the best treatment plan, but generally most parasites are treated with medications.*
- What was done at WARL: *A fecal sample was taken from your pet at least once during their stay at WARL. If parasites were found, they were treated. If none were found, a general de-wormer was given, just for good measure.*

Prior to adoption, all of the animals have been medically cleared by a veterinarian. If an animal is showing symptoms of anything that is not normal or healthy, the pet is immediately taken off of the adoption floor and treated by a veterinarian. At the time of adoption, you'll receive a copy of the pet's medical record, and a complimentary physical exam certificate valid at any VCA Animal Hospital in the area.

Use this exam as you'd like – whether to establish a relationship with a veterinarian, address an ailment that has popped up after adoption, receive additional vaccines or tests for your new pet, or more! We'll be happy to answer any questions, too, just call!

