Good pet owner hygiene

A recent study by Elanco Animal Health Australia has revealed 72% of dog owners consider their dog to be part of the family, 16% as their mate or friend, and just 12% as a “pet”. It also found that more dogs are sleeping in their owners’ bed at night (27%) than are sleeping outside the home (21%). The survey also described 1 in 3 cook their dog it’s own meals, and 42% ‘only buy the best food and products’ for their pets.

How awesome is it that the majority of Australian pets are so pampered, loved and truly thought of as part of the family? Almost all of us go above and beyond to ensure our pets are happy, enriched and healthy, and we try to provide our pets with what we believe is best for them. While this is wonderful news, because our dogs like to put their snouts in things they shouldn't and like to lick basically everything, we must also be mindful that our pets can be exposing us to parasites including tapeworms and other intestinal worms, which can be detrimental to our health and in some instances can cause death. So how healthy is it having our pets sleep in our beds?

The survey revealed 62% of pet owners aren’t concerned about intestinal parasites spreading from pets to people.

As a veterinarian, this is alarming! We should be concerned!!

Even the most handsomely groomed, manicured and well-kept pooches can be carrying nasty parasites. So, how can we keep our dogs spoilt while protecting our health? Here are some tips:
Wash your hands thoroughly with warm, soapy water after touching your pet, and especially after picking up dog poo. Intestinal worms can be spread to people through contact with dog poo, as well as worm eggs being carried on their hair/coat.
Keep your pet up-to-date with all-wormer prevention. Ensure the wormer you use covers for the four most common worms: tapeworm, roundworm, whipworm and hookworm. Take note some wormers do not protect against tapeworm. At Vet HQ we recommend either Drontal chews or Milbemax tablets which should be given monthly until 6 months of age, then every 3 months for the lifetime of your pet.
Avoiding raw meat diets. While a raw-meat based diet alone does not provide an appropriately balanced diet, and can be deficient in nutrients such as calcium, phosphorus, vitamin A and E, it can also be a carrier for parasites and bacterial pathogens. I recommend feeding a scientifically proven balanced diet, such as Hills Science Diet or Royal Canin for our furry friends.

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