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# Common Equine Parasites

— Roundworms, Strongyles (Large & Small), Tapeworms, & Bots —

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# Importance

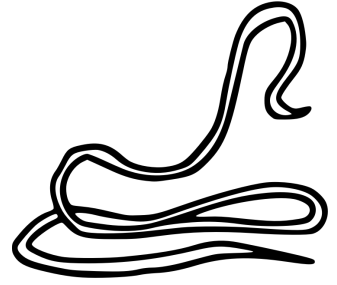
It is no secret that internal parasites can be closely linked to the risk of colic (severe stomach pain) in horses. This has generated a need for advancements in the knowledge and understanding of how these intestinal parasites work, how they damage the GI system of our equine patients, and how this makes the clinical signs we see with colic.

Because of the prevalence of colic in the equine industry and its ability to lead to death in horses, it is important that we control parasitic infections. With knowledge of the different parasites horses are susceptible to and the patterns of each parasite's life cycle, we can strategically develop and utilize anthelmintics (deworming agents) to decrease the risk of infections and also the colic cases caused by these parasitic infections.

# Roundworms



# Roundworms

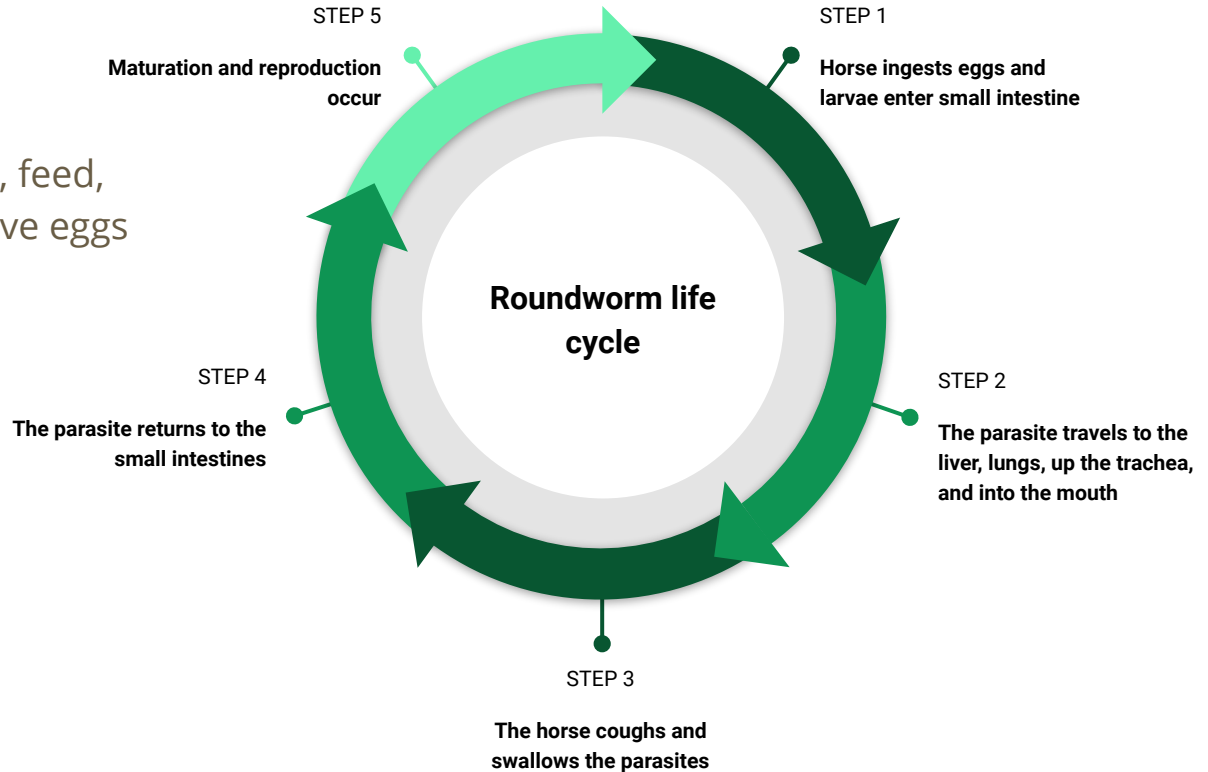


## Fun Facts:

- Female roundworms can grow to be 15 inches long-
- Exposure to roundworms comes from contaminated feed, grass, and water-
- Roundworms are visible in the feces-
- Equine roundworm eggs can survive in pastures for up to 10 years-
- Foals under 18 months old are most susceptible to infection-

# Roundworms

**Origin:** The horse consumes grass, feed, or water contaminated with infective eggs

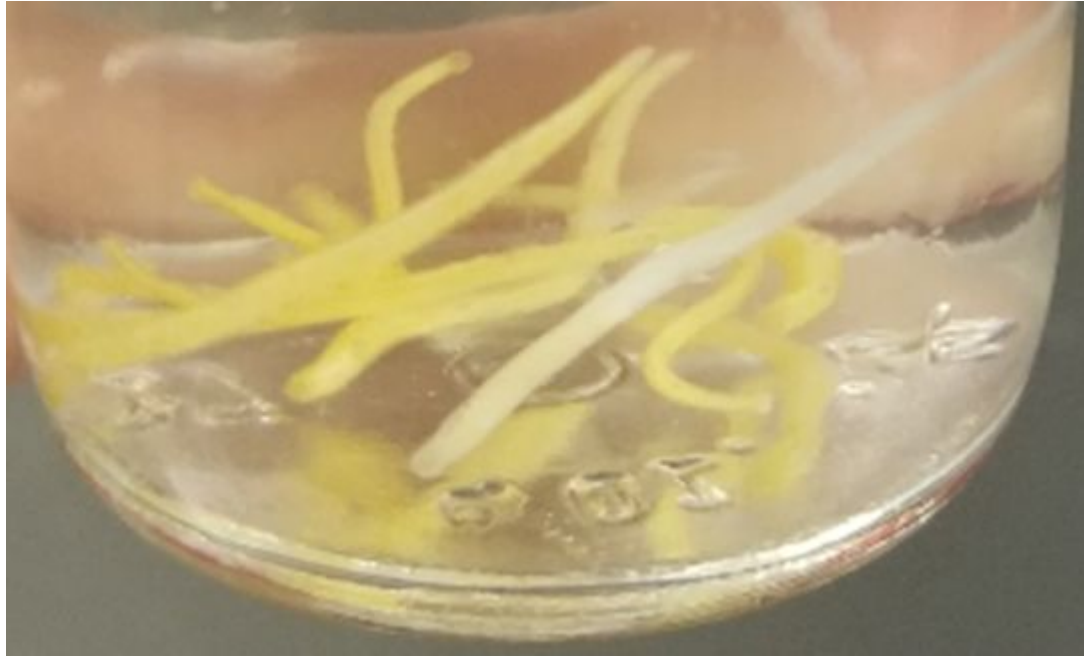


# Roundworm Treatment

**Dewormers commonly used:** fenbendazole, benzimidazole, or pyrantel



# Strongyles

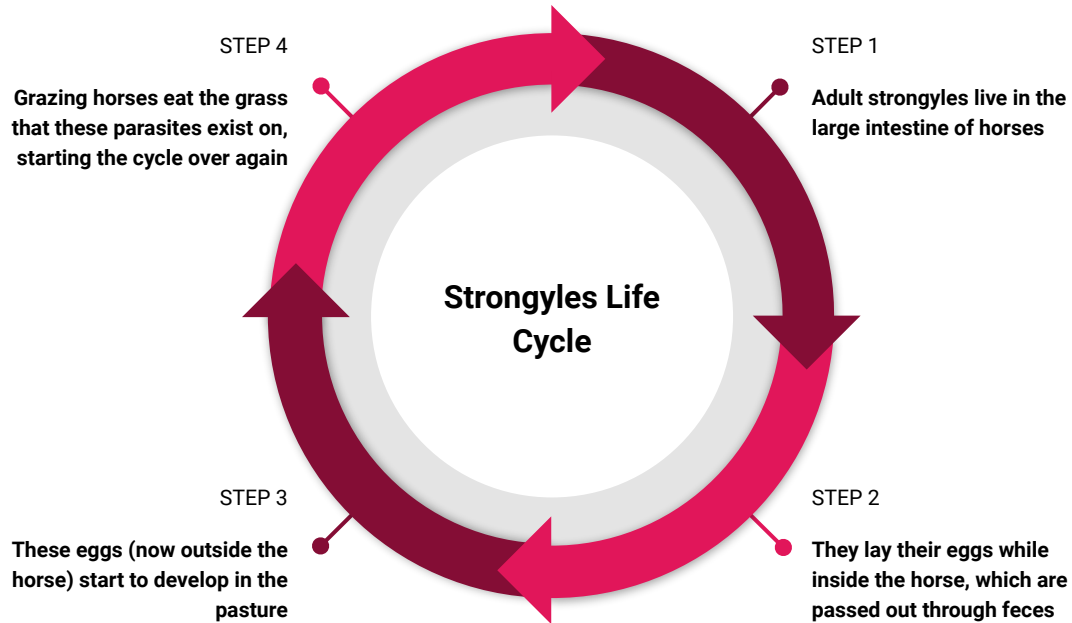




# Strongyles Fun Facts!

- The small strongyle is considered to be the most common internal parasite of horses.
- There are many different types of strongyles, but the three primary species are *Strongylus vulgaris*, *Strongylus endentatus*, and *Strongylus equinus*.
- Strongylus vulgaris is also known as the “bloodworm” because it causes blood clots in the horse.**
- Strongyles prefers the cold. Larvae can survive for as long as 31 weeks during the winter, but only about 7 weeks in summer temperatures.
- Strongyles can cause colitis - inflammation of the lining of the large intestine - which can be dangerous for horses if the condition is severe enough.

# Strongyles Life Cycle



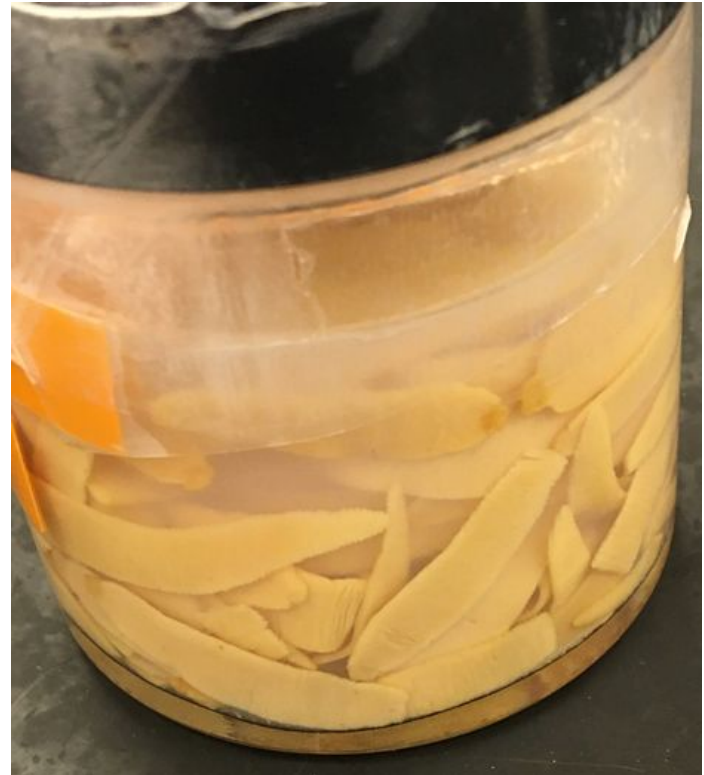
# Strongyles Treatment

-A larvicidal anthelmintic is recommended, such as avermectin/milbemycins (Ivermectin and Moxidectin), pyrimidines, or benzimidazoles.

**-For preventative measures:** Good pasture management and keeping the number of horses on each pasture low will reduce parasite contamination of the fields.



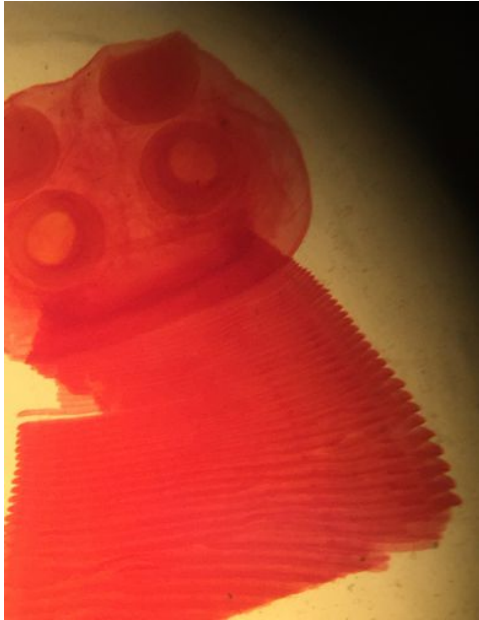
# Tapeworms



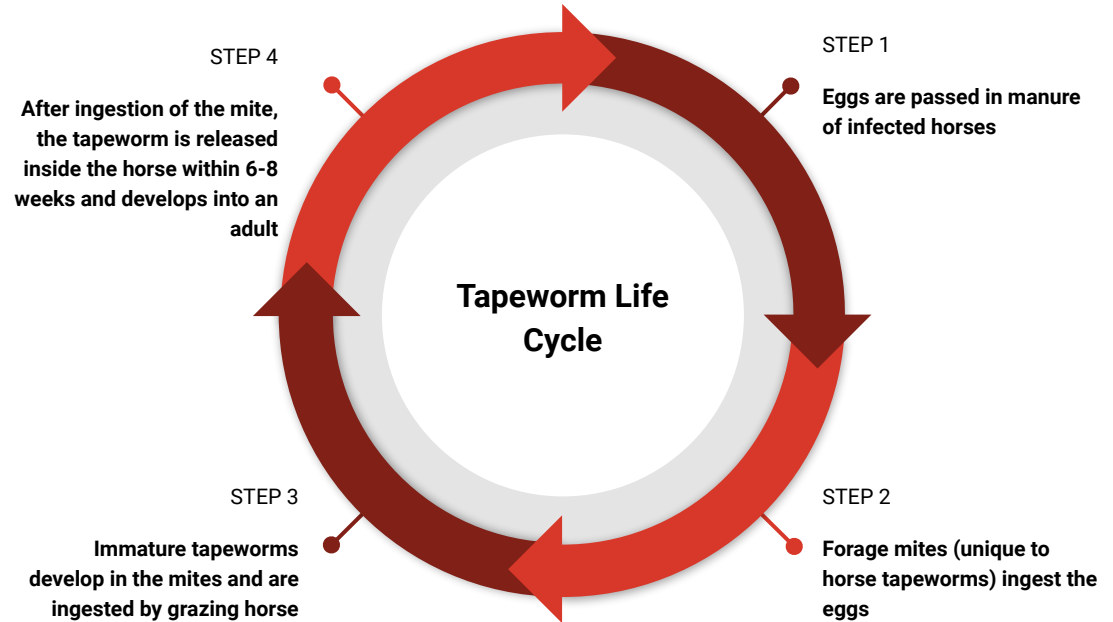
# Tapeworm Fun Facts

- There are three types of equine tapeworms; *Anaplocephala perfoliata* is the most common in the US
- Pumpkin-seed-shaped**, 1 inch long and ½ inch wide; unlike other types of tapeworms that are long chained segments.
- Young horses, 6 months - 2 years, have a higher level of infection
- cause 22% of spasmodic (gas) colics, 80% of ileocecal impactions (a location between the small and large intestine), and up to 100% of ileocecal intussusceptions

# Tapeworm Life Cycle



Microscopic view of the head of a tapeworm



# Bots





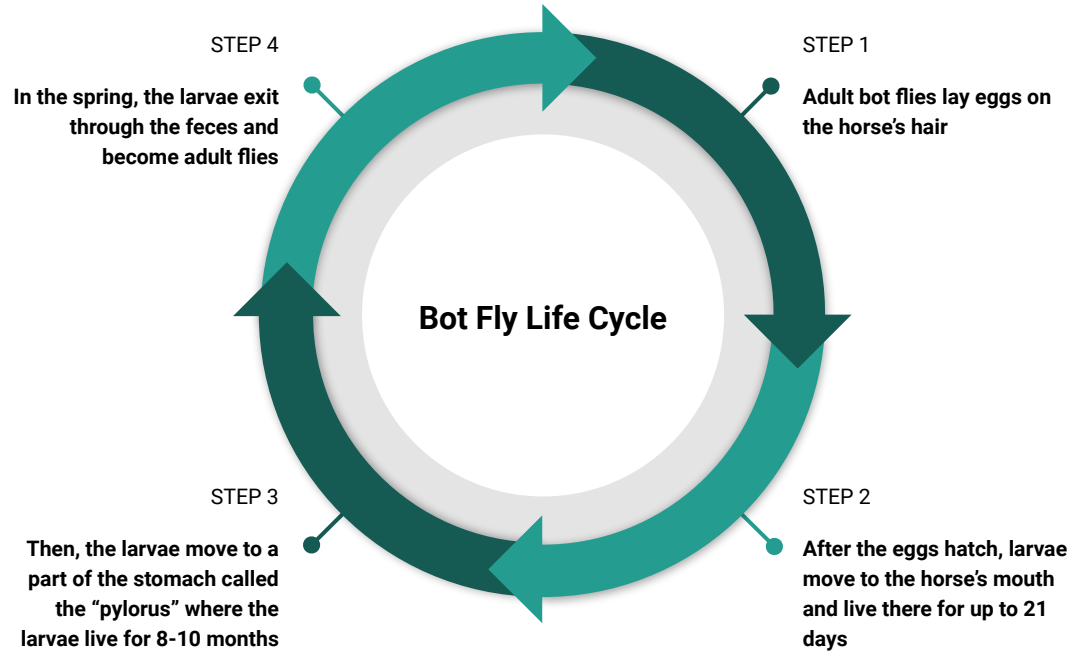
# Bot Fly Fun Facts

- 2 common bot fly species: *Gasterophilus intestinalis* and *G. nasalis*
- **G. intestinalis bot fly egg hatching is stimulating by licking and grooming**
- The symptoms of a bot fly infection are very mild or not present at all, and may include irritation of the mouth, excessive salivation, and head shaking.
- **Botflies can also infect humans! Don't worry, though, the species that infects humans is different from the species that infects horses.**
- Adult flies lay their eggs during the summer





# Bot Fly Life Cycle



# Bot Fly Prevention & Treatment

- Owners can remove bot fly eggs from the horse's hair with a special tool to prevent them from hatching
- Treat with ivermectin
  - Once in the fall: reduces larvae going into the winter
  - Once in the spring: kills any remaining larvae in the stomach
  - Give after the first frost in the fall once adult flies are dead

**We highly recommend talking to your veterinarian  
before treating your horses!**

