

ANIMAL HEALTH ALERT

Veterinary Public Health | (213) 288-7060 | vet@ph.lacounty.gov | <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/>



Animal Health Advisory: *Baylisascaris* Eggs in a Los Angeles County Dog

1.15.2026

Key Points

- **First Reported Canine Case (LA County):** A healthy domestic dog in Los Angeles County has tested positive for *Baylisascaris* spp. (raccoon roundworm). While this is the first formal report in a dog in the County, it is likely not the first occurrence.
- **Diagnostic Method:** The infection was identified during a routine wellness screening via standard fecal ova and parasite (O&P) test using zinc sulfate centrifugation, with visualization of *Baylisascaris* eggs.
- **Zoonotic Risk & Rarity:** *Baylisascaris* is zoonotic; however human cases remain **extremely rare**. Fewer than 10 cases have been reported in California since 1993. Most reported cases occurred in children or individuals with pica or developmental disabilities and were likely associated with the ingestion of large amounts of infectious eggs.
- **Comparative Shedding:** While dogs can shed *Baylisascaris* eggs, they typically shed **far fewer eggs** than raccoons, the definitive host.
- **Egg Infectivity Window:** *Baylisascaris* eggs shed in feces are not immediately infectious. They require 2–4 weeks in the environment to embryonate. Prompt removal of animal feces significantly reduces risk.

Current Situation

Veterinary Public Health received a report last week of *Baylisascaris* eggs in a healthy dog. The infection was detected during a routine wellness examination using standard

flotation/centrifugation. The dog is currently undergoing treatment and will be retested to confirm the cessation of shedding. While the exact species of *Baylisascaris* could not be determined, *Baylisascaris procyonis* (raccoon roundworm) is common in local raccoons and is the most likely cause. There are no reports of other infected domestic animals or associated human cases related to this detection. This finding underscores the presence of the parasite in local suburban environments, though the risk of infection from pets remains extremely low.

Baylisascariasis in Dogs and Cats

- **Dogs:** May serve as **alternative definitive hosts** to raccoons (shedding eggs), **transport hosts** (ingesting eggs that pass through the gut without infecting the dog), or **aberrant hosts** (developing larval migrans and severe neurologic disease).
- **Cats:** Considered **aberrant hosts** only; they do not shed eggs in their feces and may develop larval migrans and neurologic signs. Cases are rare, however.
- **Testing:** Fecal flotation with centrifugation or PCR can identify eggs in dogs. Diagnosis of aberrant (paratenic) infections, where no eggs are shed, is more difficult and may require imaging or tissue biopsy.

Past Reports of Baylisascariasis in LA County

- **Human Cases:** [Two cases were reported in LA County in 2024](#), and one in 2000.
- **Pet birds:** 34 cockatiels died in 2010 after a raccoon latrine formed on an aviary roof.
- **Wildlife Impact:** Small, localized ground squirrel die-offs were reported in 2025 and 2011.

Recommendations for Veterinarians

1. Screening and Treatment

- **Routine Testing:** Include fecal flotation (zinc sulfate centrifugation) in annual exams for dogs with raccoon access.
- **Treatment:** While no drug is specifically labeled for Baylisascariasis in pets, protocols effective against *Toxocara canis* are considered effective.

2. Prevention and Environmental Management

- **Coprophagy:** Discourage dogs from eating feces. Recommend year-round, broad-spectrum parasite control.
- **Reduce raccoon attractants:** Do not leave pet food/water outside. Keep trash sealed and remove fallen fruit.
- **Reduce raccoon harborage & access:** Seal crawl spaces, trim shrubs, and trim tree branches away from rooftops to prevent the formation of roof-top latrines.
- **Immediate cleanup of feces:** Remove all feces immediately. If cleaning a known raccoon latrine, use PPE (gloves, washable boots, and an N95 respirator if cleaning in an enclosed space).

Educational Materials for Pet Owners

Please share these resources with your clients:

- [Los Angeles County Raccoon Roundworm Homepage](#)
- FAQ (PDF): [Raccoon Roundworm FAQ](#)
- Prevention Tips (PDF): [Tips to Prevent Infection](#)
- CDC Guide - Latrine Cleanup: [CDC Latrine Resources](#)
- CDC Guide - Swimming Pools: [Raccoons and Swimming Pools](#)

Reporting

Veterinarians in LA County should report any case of animal *Baylisascaris* to assist with local surveillance. **Reporting Form:** [Animal Disease/Death Report](#) | **Phone:** 213-288-7060 | **Email:** vet@ph.lacounty.gov | **Web:** <http://ph.lacounty.gov/vet/>

Resources

- [Baylisascariasis – Companion Animal Parasite Council](#)
- [Animal Health Advisory: Raccoon Roundworm in Los Angeles County 9.17.2024.](#)
- Jones, H. et al (2025). [Distribution and prevalence of Baylisascaris in domestic dogs in the United States and Canada, 2017–2023.](#) One Health, 101095.
- Animal Disease Surveillance Report 2015, Los Angeles County. 2010- 2011 – [Two clusters of brain infections of Baylisascaris in animals](#) (page 60).

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