



## **TOXOPLASMOSIS**

Toxoplasmosis is a widely distributed illness caused by a parasite whose only definitive host is a cat. It is very common to have acquired this infection during childhood or young adulthood. However, if you have not acquired this infection in the past, you may acquire it by:

- Eating raw or undercooked meat of infected animals.
- Contact with the feces of an infected cat.

It is important to understand cats can only become infected if they have eaten an infected animal.

Prevention is the best treatment for this infection. You can:

- Avoid undercooked meat.
- Wash your hands after handling a cat, especially before eating.
- Have someone else change the litter box.
- Do not permit indoor cats to go outside.
- Do not allow stray cats in the house.
- Do not feed raw meat to cats.

General screening for this infection is not recommended at this time. However, if you feel you are at risk for this infection, we can obtain blood tests which could tell us of a recent exposure. There is no medical treatment for this infection which is considered safe for pregnant women.

### **POINTS TO REMEMBER:**

- ✓ Most of us have been exposed previously.
- ✓ Most housecats do not have the opportunity to become infected.
- ✓ There is no safe medical treatment for the infection.
- ✓ Prevention is the best treatment.