

Monthly Parasite Prevention

The Importance of Parasite Prevention

The old concept of "heartworm season" is a thing of the past. "Heartworm" medication can now prevent many other parasites from developing in your dog.

Monthly parasite preventative is now recommended for year-round application because these parasites can develop during any season of the year. Parasite control includes heartworms, intestinal worms, fleas and ticks.

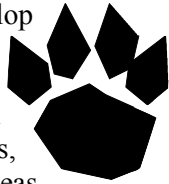
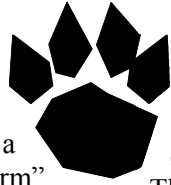
Heartworms

Heartworm disease is a serious and potentially fatal disease of dogs (and cats) which can be prevented.

The heartworm, *Dirofilaria immitis*, is a parasite that lives in the heart and major arteries of the lungs.

Mosquitoes carry immature forms of the heartworm from an infected animal (a dog, cat or wild animal) to a new host by taking a blood meal from both animals. As the mosquito feeds from the first animal, usually a dog, it picks up microfilariae (the offspring of adult heartworms) as it engorges with blood. These microfilariae mature in the mosquito, developing into the infective larval stage of the heartworm.

When the mosquito bites another animal, the larvae are introduced to the new host through the bite wound. The larvae eventually make their way to the heart and associated



blood vessels by migrating through the body. Inside the heart they mature and begin producing microfilariae, completing the lifecycle. These new microfilariae are then ready to be passed on to another dog or cat.

Is My Dog (or Cat) At Risk?

Heartworm infections are possible anywhere in the country (including Wisconsin) and are most prevalent in areas of heavy mosquito populations. Heartworm disease is a health consideration no matter where you live or how much your pet stays inside. As we all know, mosquitoes follow us indoors and can gain access to our pets inside our house too.

How do I know if my pet has Heartworms?

Most dogs and cats do not have any outward signs of disease during the early stages of heartworm disease. A simple blood test is run in our clinic to determine if your pet has adult heartworms. Early detection and prevention programs are vital to managing your pet's health.

The severity and onset of clinical signs of heartworm disease vary with the number of worms, the length of the infection, and the animal's response. Signs that eventually appear include a cough and difficulty breathing. They may also have a decreased tolerance to exercise, have fainting episodes, or show severe weight loss.

The clinical signs are typical of heart failure or pneumonia since the heart and lungs are where the worms live and create havoc.

Heartworm Disease can be prevented!!

Medical prevention is much easier and safer than trying to treat an already existing infection.

Intestinal Worms

These worms are abundant in the environment. Pets acquire these worms from infected soil or feces. Intestinal worms can cause vomiting, bloody diarrhea, anemia and stunted growth. Hookworms and Ascarid roundworms also pose a threat to human health if your family members are exposed.

Fleas

Fleas not only make your dog or cat uncomfortable, but also start a flea infestation in your home. Parasite prevention includes stopping flea infestations before they start. If fleas bite your pet they can be stopped from reproducing so that an infestation cannot begin. Flea control is also important since fleas can transmit some types of intestinal tapeworms to your pet.

Ticks

Tick control is very important in Wisconsin. Ticks can attach to your dog or cat under their haircoat where you may not notice them for days. Some ticks are also responsible for transmitting Lyme's disease.

Prevention

Preventative medicine is the foundation to helping our pets live happier and healthier lives. Countrycare Animal Complex is committed to offering you the best products available to meet your individual animal's needs. We offer Sentinel, Interceptor and Frontline once-a-month parasite prevention products to suit your animal's lifestyle.

P.S. to cat owners: Heartworms, intestinal worms, fleas and ticks aren't just going to the dogs!!