

that is on the pet. Pets can be re-infected in a just a few weeks after deworming. Treating all pets for fleas and discouraging them from eating prey are ways to prevent them from getting tapeworms. Those that are prone to contracting tapeworms should be dewormed regularly. Tapeworms can also be transmitted to humans.

It is crucial to keep your dogs and cats free of these parasites since they are a potential health hazard for humans, too. Hookworm larvae can penetrate human skin, causing cutaneous larval migrans, in which inflammation and scarring result. If the microscopic egg of a roundworm is ingested, the tiny worm larva migrates through the human's intestinal wall and into the body tissues. They can then grow to a larger size anywhere in the body, commonly affecting the eye, which can cause blindness. It is important to take the veterinarian's worming advice seriously and adhere to strict sanitation principles whenever children and pets are in close contact. Also, be conscious of where children play when pet or wild animal feces could be present.

Kittens and puppies should be dewormed by the veterinarian at an early age and then kept on a preventive program that treats and controls intestinal worms. Monthly heartworm medications will generally prevent a majority of worms. Also, a yearly fecal sample check should be done to detect intestinal parasites. Even a healthy-looking pet can be harboring worms.

Indoor pets can get internal parasites, too. You can actually bring parasites into your home on your clothing or shoes. If a mouse were to get into your home, and your cat (or dog) gets it into his mouth, he can easily contract intestinal parasites. Therefore, parasite control is just as important if your pet never leaves your house.

Remember, intestinal worms pose serious health risks to both your pet and your family. Keeping your pet free of these parasites will not only make your pet healthier and happier, but it will also protect you and your family.

Take steps to prevent roundworm and hookworm infections

- An estimated 10,000 cases of roundworm occur annually in humans. More than 700 experience permanent or partial loss of vision.
- Have puppies and kittens dewormed by the veterinarian at an early age.
- Keep your pets on a preventive drug program that treats and controls these worms
- Learn to recognize and avoid possibly contaminated soil, sand, plants, and other objects. Teach children to do the same.
- Keep play areas, lawns, and gardens around your home free of animal waste.
- Obey leash laws.



Other Intestinal "Bugs"

Giardia and Coccidia are two microscopic parasites of dogs and cats that can cause problems. Both organisms live in the intestines and can cause diarrhea, weight loss, and poor weight gain. Coccidia is also often characterized by a yellow, runny stool. Dogs and cats contract these diseases from another animal or from the environment where an infected animal has been. Your pet can be infected with Giardia by coming in contact with contaminated water simply by drinking it or by licking its paws after walking in an infected area.

Giardia and Coccidia are not limited to pets, they can also affect humans. Pet-to-human transmission is possible. Humans with Giardia can experience severe diarrhea, abdominal pain and cramping, and weight loss. As with intestinal worms, pets can carry these parasites for some time without showing any signs. Your pet's yearly fecal check can detect if your pet is carrying Giardia or Coccidia, both of which are treatable with medication. There is also a vaccine available to prevent Giardia.

At Flanary Veterinary Clinic, we are committed to the health and happiness of your family - two- and four-legged. Therefore, we place a large amount of emphasis on preventative care. It is ten times more effective to prevent parasitic infections than to have to treat them. We test for these parasites with all our wellness visits. However, if you suspect a parasitic infection, please do not hesitate to call and ask what needs to be done for your family.



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PET NEWS

Pet Parasites!

What Is Bugging Your Pet

Having a dog or cat means always having a friend by your side. Unfortunately, it could also mean having fleas, ticks, worms, and more to deal with. Parasites can affect pets year-round, but some may be more prevalent in the warmer months. Fleas and ticks carry serious, sometimes life-threatening diseases while internal parasites, such as intestinal worms and heartworms, cause major illness and also death. Safeguarding your dog or cat from these threats can be difficult, so it is imperative that you and your veterinarian discuss a prevention program. Some parasites and diseases can also be transmitted to humans, so it is important to remember that parasite prevention and control not only keeps your pet healthy, it also protects you and your family.

Fleas and Your Pet's Health

Fleas are not only very annoying for you and your pet, they can also pose serious problems and illness for cats and dogs. Just one flea can bite a pet more than 400 times per day, causing severe itching and, in many cases, Flea Allergy Dermatitis (FAD). FAD is a reaction to the flea's saliva in which itchy scabs and bumps develop, usually around the tail, groin, backside, and neck. This can cause considerable discomfort and the scratching can cause secondary bacterial infections.

Since fleas are blood-sucking parasites they can cause anemia in pets, especially the young, small or ill. Anemia means a low number of red blood cells, and symptoms include pale gums, weakness, and lethargy. This can cause death in a tiny kitten or puppy.

Swallowing one flea can infect a dog or cat with tapeworms. Pets may have no noticeable symptoms of tapeworms for awhile, but signs include anal itching and weight loss. You may also notice tapeworm segments in your pet's stool or on his fur in the anal area (has the appearance of a grain of rice).

Fleas are small in size, but their large numbers make up for it and they can get out of control very quickly. Prevention is the key in controlling fleas on your pet before problems occur.

Health Risks of Ticks

Ticks live off of the blood of pets, biting into the skin and attaching as long as it can. Tick bites are commonly just as irritating as flea bites, and can cause excessive scratching, which often leads to more serious infections. More importantly, they carry and transmit diseases, such as Lyme Disease and Ehrlichia, which can cause serious health problems for your pet.

Dogs can be infected with Lyme Disease if bitten by a deer tick that is carrying the Lyme bacteria. Lyme Disease results in severe muscle and joint pain that intensifies as time goes on. This can ultimately lead to crippling arthritis and even lameness. Other complications include kidney failure and heart problems, and in some cases it can be fatal. These symptoms may be hidden in the early stages and routine annual testing can detect if your dog has contracted Lyme Disease. Tick prevention and vaccination is the best protection against Lyme Disease.

Ehrlichiosis is the second most common infectious disease in the United States and is also spread by ticks. It is far more common in our area than Lyme Disease. Ehrlichiosis is a potentially life-threatening disease and, if left untreated, your dog can suffer symptoms of appetite loss, runny nose or eyes, and depression. It can result in permanent blindness, autoimmune diseases, bleeding complications and death. There is no vaccine available, but tick prevention and annual testing is your dog's best protection.

Both Lyme Disease and Ehrlichiosis are treatable if caught and treated early, with a good prognosis for full recovery. Remember, tick control is the best prevention of these tick-borne diseases.

Cytauxzoonosis is a serious, often fatal, disease affecting domestic cats in the south central and southeastern portions of the United States. This disease is spread by ticks and signs include anemia, lethargy, and depression. Tick prevention is key in avoiding Cytauxzoonosis in cats.





The adult fleas and ticks you see on your pet may only represent the thousands and millions that may be in and around your home, living in your furniture, bedding, and carpet. In fact, 95% of flea life stages are present off the pet and they can reproduce in a house year round. Usually once fleas and ticks are noticed, an infestation is already occurring, which is why consistent prevention is so important. Once an infestation occurs, it can seem like the battle is never ending. With the right products and a little work, fleas and ticks don't have to be a problem for you or your pets.

The first step in flea and tick control is to treat all dogs and cats, indoor and outdoor. Even if your pet never goes out, it still needs to be treated because we can bring fleas into the home just by walking through the door. Several products are available at Flanary Veterinary Clinic that will safely treat dogs and cats. Be aware that many over-the-counter flea products are not guaranteed and contain ingredients that can make your pet very sick. Frontline Plus is a topical application that treats both fleas and ticks on dogs and cats. It is applied once a month and is waterproof. Frontline is safe to use around kids and on puppies and kittens 8 weeks and older. It kills all the life stages of ticks which will quickly help end a tick problem.

Fleas go through 3 stages before becoming adults: eggs, larvae, and pupae. The pupae are protected by their cocoons, and they have to hatch out to be killed as adults. Depending on the environment, it can take several weeks or months for all the pupae to hatch out in an infestation, and then be killed by the Frontline. Don't be discouraged if you are using Frontline and are still seeing fleas. These newly emerging adult fleas will be killed within hours, before they lay eggs, and you may see them briefly before they die. Remember it can take three to six months to bring the population under control. Treated pets can still pick up fleas, but any new fleas will be killed before they can reproduce.

Other products available to treat pets for fleas are Capstar and Comfortis. Capstar is a pill that is usually just a one time treatment that will begin to kill adult fleas with 30 minutes and 90% of fleas within 4 hours. Capstar is safe and can be given daily as needed to both cats and dogs. It has no protecting effects, but it can be used to "jumpstart" treatment for a highly infested pet. Comfortis is a new chewable tablet for dogs that is given once a month for flea protection. It quickly kills adult fleas before they can lay eggs, putting a stop to the flea cycle and helping to control an infestation.

Treating the pets is the most important step in flea control, but the environment should also be treated to help bring an infestation under control. Wash all pet's bedding, and any washable blankets, pillows, or rugs that the pet has access to. Remember, flea eggs, larvae, and pupae are hiding in anything fibrous, in cracks in the floor and around baseboards. Also, vacuum regularly

and throw out the bag immediately after use, or the fleas can find their way back out into your house. Using a flea fogger can also cut down on the flea population in the home.

The yard is a hot spot for fleas and ticks. Neighbors' pets and other animals can bring ticks, fleas, and flea eggs into your yard, which will soon find your pet. Outside rugs, patio cushions, doghouses and shady areas under the porch or house are great places for fleas to thrive. Wash what is possible and use a residual spray to spot treat the yard for a long-lasting effect. (Do not use lawn product on the pet and keep pets away from the treated areas until completely dry.)

To help prevent a re-infestation of fleas or ticks, continue to use a monthly treatment on your pets, such as Frontline Plus for fleas and ticks or Comfortis for fleas. Consistency is the key in controlling and putting a stop to ticks and fleas.



Flea and Tick Facts

- An adult flea can lay up to 50 eggs per day.
- Some tick species can live up to 365 days without feeding.
- During winter months, the interior of homes can provide ideal conditions for fleas to reproduce.
- Fleas become hyper-excited after coming in contact with Frontline before they die.
- 42% of pet owners have had a problem with fleas.
- A single female deer tick can lay up to 3000 eggs.
- In just 30 days, 25 adult female fleas can multiply to 250,000 fleas.



Heartworm Disease

Heartworm disease is a serious condition in dogs and cats that will become fatal if left untreated. Heartworms are parasitic nematodes that can grow up to a foot in length and live in the arteries of the lungs and the right side of the heart of dogs and cats. Heartworms are transmitted when a mosquito that is carrying the infective larvae stage of the parasite bites your pet. It takes 6 months from the time a dog or cat is bitten by an infected mosquito for the larvae to become an adult heartworm. The larvae travel throughout the pet's body, affecting the lungs and other tissue, before making their home in the heart and nearby arteries.

A dog that has been infected with heartworms won't show signs of the disease for months or even a few years. As the disease begins to develop, the dog will possibly begin with a cough, and then eventually have exercise intolerance. As it becomes more severe, signs will include difficulty breathing, liver enlargement, abnormal heart and lung sounds, and fluid accumulation in the abdominal cavity. The heartworms interfere with the blood flow and cause inflammation in and around the heart's blood vessels and eventually weaken the heart.

Heartworm disease used to be thought of as just a dog's disease, but it is now known that heartworms cause significant disease in cats as well. Although heartworms affect cats differently than dogs, it is just as serious and just as deadly. Cats are mostly affected by the larvae that migrate to and die in the lungs, causing severe irritation. If they do make it to adulthood in the heart, they usually die there, which causes severe heart inflammation and can be fatal. Heartworm disease can be called the silent killer of cats because often times the first sign is death. Coughing, vomiting, difficulty breathing, panting, and weight loss are all signs of heartworms in cats. These signs could also be other respiratory problems in cats, so it is very difficult to detect and diagnose. Even cats that are 100% indoors are still at risk because mosquitoes can get into the house and, remember, it only takes one mosquito bite to give your pet heartworms.

Heartworm Testing and Prevention

As part of your dog's annual or biannual checkup, he will also be tested for heartworms. If your dog has been infected with heartworms, early detection is the ideal so that treatment can be started before too much damage is done to the heart, arteries, and lungs. It only takes a few drops of blood and less than ten minutes to do the test. Also, at Flanary Veterinary Clinic, the same SNAP test also tests for the tick-borne diseases Ehrlichiosis and Lyme Disease. Cats can also be tested if requested or if the cat is exhibiting signs of heartworm disease.

Prevention is crucial in protecting dogs and cats against heartworm disease. There are several options available that are given by mouth once a month to protect your pet against heartworms. Preventives are highly effective, safe, easy to use, and relatively inexpensive. Heartgard Plus is a chewable, beef flavored "treat" that dogs and cats love and it is so easy to give. Heartgard is guaranteed when given as directed and also protects against roundworms and hookworms in dogs and hookworms in cats. Iverhart Max for dogs is similar to Heartgard. It protects against heartworms as well as roundworms, hookworms, and tapeworms. Interceptor is a small pill that is also given once a month to protect dogs and cats against heartworms. It is best given to those dogs that are prone to getting whipworms or to those few dogs and cats that refuse to eat the treat-type

preventive. The veterinarian can tell you which heartworm prevention is the best choice for your pet.

Don't wait until signs of heartworm disease manifest to think about prevention for your pet, because damage may have already taken place. Prevention is always more safe and affordable than treating pets with adult heartworm infections.



Heartworm Facts

- Nationwide, only 55% of dog-owning households administer heartworm preventives; however, 100% are at risk.
- Of cats testing positive for heartworm infection, 55% lived "strictly" or "mostly" indoors.
- All adult dogs should be tested for heartworms before starting prevention.
- Heartworms can grow up to 12 inches.
- Heartworms are 100% deadly and 100% preventable.



Squirmy Intestinal Wormies

One of the most widespread health problems in dogs and cats are intestinal parasites. Most puppies and kittens are born with worms and adult dogs and cats can easily acquire them. The most common worms are roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, and tapeworms.

Roundworms and hookworms live in the intestines of pets and are transmitted easily from one pet to another and from mother to baby. Signs include vomiting, diarrhea, or weight loss. Heavy infections can actually be fatal to young puppies and kittens.

Whipworms are the leading cause of bloody diarrhea in dogs. They can sometimes be difficult to control as their eggs can remain hidden in the soil for up to 7 years.

Tapeworms are segmented worms that can be easily recognized by pet owners. The small rice-like segments are usually noticed in the stool or in the hair around the pet's anus. They can also cause intense itching around the anus. Most heartworm preventives will not treat or prevent tapeworms. A specific dewormer is needed if a dog or cat contracts tapeworms. There are two ways pets get tapeworms: by ingesting a wild animal, such as a mouse or rabbit, or by ingesting a flea