

PARKSIDE ANIMAL HOSPITAL e-NEWSLETTER

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WELCOME to the 7th edition of Parkside Animal Hospital's monthly newsletter:

May 2009, Vol. 2, No. 5.

Look forward to health care tips and information, including services available for your pet; product rebates/promotions and much more, coordinating with the Parkside Animal Hospital website: www.parksideanimalhospital.com

Recently seen at Parkside...



Dixie



Charlie



Kona



Maggie



Ratatouille



Bayley



Sheena



Dollywood



Jasmine



Punk



Shiloh



Tirza

Information you **NEED** to know! Included in this edition..

**FLEAS!!! Why We Hate Them
and How To Get Rid Of Them!**

and

HEARTWORM DISEASE... AND YOUR PET

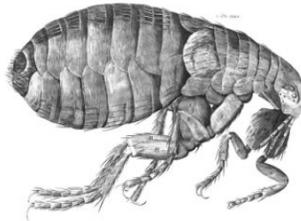
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FLEAS!!!! Why We Hate Them and How to Get Rid of Them



Flea Facts

1. The flea's mission in life is to reproduce.
2. **Life cycle:**
 - **Adults** 5% of the total flea population in your household →
 - **Eggs** 50% of the population.. they hatch in 1-10 days →
 - **Flea Maggots** 35% of the population.. live in your carpet and become pupae in 5-11 days →
 - **Pupae** 10% of population.. they are very hardy and can remain dormant for 175 days and are resistant to most treatments →
 - **Adult Flea**.. and we start over again.
3. Female fleas can lay 1,400 eggs a month and they can live up to 120 days. They start producing eggs within 24 hours of hatching from the pupae stage.
4. Fleas must feed within 24 hours of hatching or they will die. They consume 15 times their weight in blood daily.
5. Fleas stay on their host. They do not typically jump from pet to pet because they need to feed every 15 minutes on your pet's blood to survive and reproduce. Dogs and cats are natural hosts, people are not; however people can be bitten by fleas also.
6. Fleas find their host by light, carbon dioxide, and vibration. After hatching, which is stimulated by vibration, fleas position themselves toward a light source. They will jump on anything that passes between them and the light. Often, people will be gone on vacation only to come home to an infestation. What happens is simultaneous emergence of thousands of fleas from the dormant pupae stage. Their emergence is triggered by footsteps and carbon dioxide re-entering their environment.

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How to Get Rid of Them!!!

Our recommendations for ridding your pet and household of fleas are simple and affordable.

1. Cats should be treated monthly with **Revolution**, which is a combination flea adulticide and heartworm preventative. It is documented as being one of the most effective flea killers available for cats.
2. Dogs should be treated monthly with **Sentinel**, also a combination product as preventative for heartworms and intestinal parasites which also contains a flea growth regulator. The growth regulator keeps 100% of the flea eggs from hatching and makes the larvae unable to survive. By using **Sentinel**, you are effectively stopping the lifecycle. Other products such as the topical or spot ons do not kill 100% of the adult fleas for the full 30 days. Those fleas survive and reproduce causing an infestation. Also, those products are made less effective by water and sunlight.
3. For households with flea infestations, thoroughly vacuum all floors, especially under furniture and the furniture itself. Vacuum 3 to 4 times weekly. This will stimulate flea emergence and suck up eggs, pupae and fleas. Throw the bag away or clean vacuum waste container after each use.
4. Wash or replace all pet bedding or human bedding where your pet sleeps. Clean around pet sleeping areas. Yes, the **flea maggots are IN your bed** if your dog sleeps with you!
5. Use Sentinel monthly and **Capstar**, a fast killing adult flea killer every other day until problem is resolved.
6. Spray outside, shaded areas that your pet frequents with Bayer Advanced Garden Multi Insect Killer Spray.
7. Once the flea problem is eradicated, continue using **Sentinel** monthly and **Capstar** only if you see adult fleas. Use **Sentinel** year round to prevent any future problems as a heartworm preventative for your pet.



Photo: adult flea

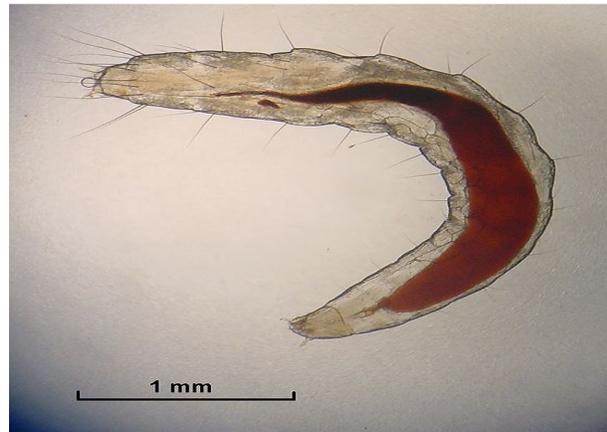


Photo: flea maggot/larva

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FLEAS!!!! ..continued

Common Questions:

1. **I use heartworm prevention with a topical flea control. Why is Sentinel better?**

Answer: Because **Sentinel** is a systemic product, it can't be washed off or degraded by sunlight, so its effectiveness does not decrease towards the end of the month. Studies have shown that some topicals do not kill fleas starting around day 21 after application. Those fleas can reproduce causing an infestation. Also, you do not have to worry about when you can or can't wash your dog, or keeping children or other pets away while a topical product drives. **Sentinel** only affects fleas, not people or pets.

2. **Since it is a combination product, does it cost more?**

Answer: Yes AND no. Initially, yes, because it is a multipurpose medication. You are purchasing heartworm preventative, flea control and intestinal parasite prevention.. all in one. If you are using heartworm prevention AND a separate product for fleas, **Sentinel** alone is much less expensive. You are not buying 2 products. Yearly savings for a large (51-100 pound) dog is approximately \$100.00!!!

3. **What about ticks?**

Answer: **Sentinel** does not kill or prevent ticks. They are a completely different bug than fleas; however, **Sentinel** can help you decrease overall costs by controlling the year round flea problem so you only have to use other products during tick season or when you think your pet may be at risk of getting ticks. Most pets will never need a tick preventative medication and others may only use it 2-3 months out of the years. That saves lots of money!

4. **Is it safe and easy to use?**

Answer: YES! **Sentinel** is safe! It is not an insecticide or pesticide which most topical products are. It is approved by the FDA and has undergone rigorous testing. Topical products are only approved by the EPA because they are concentrated insecticides/pesticides and if used improperly can be harmful to people, other pets and the environment. **Sentinel** comes as a small, flavored chew tablet. It must be given with food and can be fed as a treat before or after a meal.. Dogs love them!

If used as directed, we are so confident **Sentinel** will prevent flea infestations; we will give you **Capstar** free, if you see adult fleas! **

**while supplies last

Fleas aren't just irritating to your pet; they can cause allergies, give your pet tapeworms and cost you substantial dollars eradicating them from your home.

Please call Parkside Animal Hospital today, before flea season begins in earnest.

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HEARTWORM DISEASE .. and YOUR PET

Heartworm disease is one of the major health problems for dogs in the United States and throughout temperate and tropical areas of the world. Found in dogs and other species, it is now being found in cats in ever increasing numbers.

Heartworm disease is decidedly on the increase in North Texas!

The disease develops when a pet becomes infected with parasites called *Dirofilaria immitis*, transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito. Dogs may be infected by a few or up to several hundred heartworms. Cats are similarly infected although usually with fewer worms. Heartworm infection often leads to severe lung disease and heart failure and can damage other organs in the body as well.

Outdoor pets are at greatest risk for infection, especially in regions of the world with high mosquito populations (like the Dallas/Fort Worth area!), however, even indoor pets become infected by heartworms, as infected mosquitoes can get into homes. In addition, heartworm disease has been found throughout the country.

If your pet is not protected... it IS vulnerable!



Questions? We have answers!

- **How big is my pet's risk for heartworm infection?**

Answer: The North Texas area has a high mosquito population. Mosquitoes are currently mature and active. Animals are vulnerable to heartworm disease **right now**. Also, owners may travel with their pets into heartworm-endemic areas, even if they currently live in an area with low heartworm incidence. Heartworm disease is spreading to new regions of the country every year. Uncared-for dogs and cats, and certain wildlife species can be carriers of heartworms. Mosquitoes blown great distances by the wind, and the movement of infected pets to different geographic locations all contribute to the increase and spread of heartworm disease to areas that may have previously been considered heartworm-free.

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The best way for safe prevention of heartworm infection is to administer a year-round heartworm preventative as directed by your veterinarian.

- **How is heartworm disease transmitted from one pet to another?**

Answer: Adult female heartworms living in an infected dog, cat or other host release their young called microfilaria, into the bloodstream of the host animal. Mosquitoes become infected by the microfilaria while taking a blood meal from these infected animals. During the next 10 to 14 days, microfilaria mature to the infective larval stage within the mosquito. When the mosquito then bites another dog, cat or susceptible animal, the infective larvae exit the mosquito's mouth parts and are deposited into the animal's skin through the fresh bite wound. Inside the new host, it takes a little more than six months for the infective larvae to mature into adult heartworms. Once mature, heartworms may live up to five to seven years, and because of their longevity, each mosquito season can lead to an increasing number of worms in our pets.

- **What physical signs could my pet have?**

Answer: Heartworms may accumulate over years, or quickly when conditions allow exposure to high numbers of mosquitoes carrying infective heartworm larvae. Clinical signs of disease may not be easily recognized in pets recently infected or those with low numbers of heartworms, but damage is being done! Dogs heavily infected or those with chronic disease often show prominent clinical signs including: mild persistent cough, reluctance to exercise, fatigue after moderate activity, decreased appetite and weight loss. In cats, symptoms include vomiting, coughing and unexplained sudden death. As the disease progresses, pets may develop heart failure. Pets infected with large numbers of heartworms can develop a sudden blockage of blood flow within the heart, leading to a life threatening form of cardiovascular collapse called "caval syndrome." Signs include sudden onset of labored breathing, pale gums and dark bloody or "coffee-colored urine. Without prompt surgical removal of the heartworm blockage, few pets survive.

- **Cats get heartworms too??**

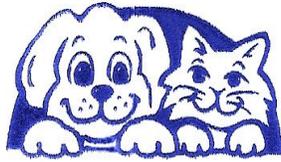
Answer: YES, cats get heartworm infection also. While often overlooked in cats, heartworm disease is increasing in our pet population, including cats. See clinical symptoms in question above. **Remember, since there is no approved treatment for heartworm infection in cats, prevention is critical.** Your cat should be tested prior to starting a preventative, and be tested annually thereafter.

- **My vet suggested a Heartworm Test... how does this test work?**

Answer: Two common types of test exist for diagnosing heartworm infection in dogs. Because adult heartworms release their young (microfilaria) directly into a dog's bloodstream, a relatively simple blood filter test can identify them. A positive test tells us adult worms are present. Positive means positive. Unfortunately, 15-20% of heartworm-positive dogs will not have microfilaria circulating in their bloodstream and a negative test will sometimes be falsely negative. The most accurate test for detecting HW infection in dogs is the antigen test. This test looks for the presence of small proteins released by adult female heartworms into the dogs bloodstream. A positive test tells us mature female worms are present. While false negative results are uncommon, they can occur if a pet has a "male-only" infection (since the test detects antigen from females), if one or two worms are present, or if the

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female worms are immature. It takes 5-7 months from the time a dog is bitten by infected mosquitoes until a blood test can accurately detect the presence of adult worms.

- **My dog tested positive for heartworms.. what does this mean?**

Answer: A positive microfilaria or antigen test indicates that your dog has adult heartworms in the heart and arteries of the lungs. Even if your dog is not showing any symptoms, there may already be damage to the heart, blood vessels and lungs. If not treated, this can lead to serious, even life-threatening disease. If treatment is started before symptoms are obvious, the chances are very good that your dog will not have any significant complications following treatment.

- **How do heartworm preventatives work?**

Answer: There are several very effective once-a-month heartworm preventatives available, some are chewable tablets and others are topically applied solutions. An important note to keep in mind is that monthly medications are quickly eliminated from a pet's system and do not continue to work for 30 days. Instead, they work "backwards" to eliminate the larvae the pet acquired the previous 30 days, in essence, "de-worming" our pets each month. This is important to understanding that preventative MUST be given monthly, as heartworms must be killed at a critical stage of their development toward adulthood. If too much time passes between doses of preventative, the heartworms mature to a stage not vulnerable to the preventative.

GIVE YOUR PETS HEARTWORM PREVENTATIVE MONTHLY!

- **My cat/dog never goes outside... do I need to give preventative?**

Answer: YES!! How many times have you been bitten by mosquitoes inside your home? Mosquitoes come inside, so inside only pets are also vulnerable. Heartworm preventative should be given year-round to all your pets.

- **I have missed two months of heartworm prevention.. should I worry?** Answer: YES, you should worry, but more importantly, you need to consult your veterinarian and immediately start your pet back on monthly preventative and re-test in 6 months. The reason for testing in seven months is that heartworms must be approximately 6 months old before the infection can be diagnosed. Don't beat yourself up.. but let your "worry" spur you to action in safeguarding your pet.

Other questions on HEARTWORM DISEASE including preventatives, heartworm tests, treatment and other concerns? ..please see our website and look for the HEARTWORM DISEASE tab, and call Parkside Animal Hospital, 817-281-1111. Any of our friendly staff can answer your questions and will be happy to schedule your pet for a heartworm test .

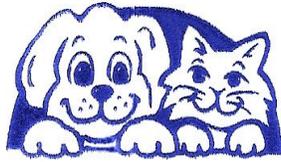
Heartworm disease.... treatment available for dogs.. but prevention is BEST!

For cats.. no current treatment available, so prevention is IMPERATIVE!

Remember to always consult your veterinarian for prescriptions, products and testing information regarding your pet's health. Also, products purchased through your veterinary office may have special guarantees, purchase promotions or monetary rebates that are only available when purchased from a licensed veterinarian.

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More pets seen recently at Parkside..



Chopper



JJ



Russell



Spencer Tracy



Cassie



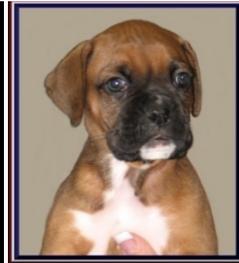
Sadie



Calvin



Spike



Porter



Elsie



Wyatt



Ella

HOME AGAIN Microchip

Did you know?? In addition to helping return your lost pet to you, there are additional benefits.

- A \$3,000 insurance policy is available, complimentary the 1st year, should your pet be injured when they are lost. The insurance policy is renewable succeeding years for a small fee. While Parkside Animal Hospital staff registers your pet with Home Again, you must respond to follow-up communication and register your pet to activate the policy.
- Through Home Again's 24/7 hotline number, the **ASPCA Poison Control** is available at **NO CHARGE**. You must call Home Again and have your pet's microchip number available; but this is a \$60.00 savings and a wonderful benefit!

Contact Parkside Animal Hospital to have your pet micro-chipped today.

It can be done during a simple office visit.