



SUMMER 2009

PetPal Newsletter



Heartworm: Is your dog at risk?

Does your dog love the outdoors? She's in good company. From visits to off-leash parks, to frenzied splashes in ponds, 90 percent of Canadians take their dogs outside on a regular basis.

Since heartworms are not readily visible the way fleas and ticks are, you may not even know your dog is sick.

So what can you do?

Be sure your dog is healthy. Ask your veterinarian to perform a simple blood test each year to test for heartworm.

Think prevention.

Talk to us about preventative heartworm medications that are easy to administer and will help protect your dog from heartworm disease. These medications are generally given monthly when mosquitoes may be present.

Prevention is easy and will allow you to get outside and enjoy the fresh air with your furry friend, without worrying about heartworms.

Unfortunately, being outside also comes with health risks like heartworm disease. Hundreds of dogs are infected each year. Country dogs, suburban dogs, even city dogs are at risk.

Why? Heartworm is spread by mosquitoes. One bite from an infected mosquito is enough to transmit the disease to your dog. Wild animals can become infected and turn into heartworm reservoirs for mosquitoes, leading to a constant risk of infection for your dog.

And, since heartworms are not readily visible the way fleas and ticks are, you may not even know your dog is sick. Symptoms often don't appear for months or even years - when the parasites arrive in the dog's heart and begin reproducing. Your dog may look fine on the outside but still be infected because you cannot see the worms in the heart. Left untreated, heartworms can persist in your dog for up to seven years, causing severe damage to the heart, lungs, liver, and may eventually cause death.



To keep your home flea-free

Fleas are a nuisance and can threaten your pet's health. However, by following a few simple prevention tips, your cat can enjoy a happy flea-free existence and you can rid your home of these unwanted guests.

1. A clean pet is less likely to be a flea target. Try treating your cat to a weekly grooming session with a flea comb. Fleas can't swim, so for optimum results, rinse the flea comb in warm, soapy water between strokes for a lustrous, shiny and flea-free coat. Another bonus: your cat will enjoy the extra attention.
2. Clean, clean, clean! By vacuuming your home once a week, you can prevent fleas and their larvae from settling into your carpets and furniture. A general rule of thumb is that for every five fleas you find on your pet, another 95 are lurking. They may be on your pet, in your carpet or on your furniture in the form of pupae, larvae, or eggs.
3. Protecting your pet with an easy to use preventative flea and parasite treatment. We can offer you some simple solutions that offer broad spectrum protection against fleas as well as heartworm and internal parasite infections. Regular preventative treatment is a must for ensuring your pet's good health.



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Cats need you too

When your dog needs to get your attention, a sharp bark is usually all that's required. But unfortunately, because cats are more independent creatures, it can be difficult to tell when they aren't feeling well.

Your cat's independent nature is part of his charm but it may also mean that his needs can go unnoticed in a busy household. This is especially true when cats are left alone for long stretches of time while their owners are at work or school. That's why it's extra important to pay attention to your cat and give Leo or Pumpkin the love that he or she deserves.

Research shows that cats visit their veterinarians less often than dogs. Because cats are stoic animals and don't often visibly complain when they feel sick, their ailments may go unnoticed compared to dogs or

humans. Small changes, such as weight loss or increased thirst may indicate underlying problems, which your veterinarian can diagnose and treat before they become emergencies. For this reason, it is extremely important to make sure your cat gets regularly scheduled medical attention; an annual check-up is crucial to her health and well being. Equally important is regular preventative treatment against fleas and parasites. We can help. Give us a call to learn more about safe and easy-to-use broad spectrum preventative options.

Your cat is a member of the family, and deserves the best medical care. The old adage still holds true — an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. And remember, the best gift you can give your cat is the gift of good health.


Time for a W-A-L-K?


At the end of a long day, taking your dog for a walk may be the last thing you want to do. But, it is one of the best things you can do for your dog's health. And, once you get started, it's hard not to get wrapped up in your dog's excitement.


Cats and dogs need different types of exercise, and breeds within each species also have differing activity needs. When starting an exercise regimen, it's a good idea to talk to your veterinarian about what activities are best for your pet and if there are any health indications that may restrict exercise.


Ensuring that your dog exercises every day will help to control behaviour problems associated with boredom. Most dogs should be walked daily, ideally for a minimum of 30 minutes. A consistent pace with occasional stops is ideal. Remember this is also your dog's opportunity to sniff around and discover who has been out and about in the neighbourhood lately.


Fun facts and quotes

 According to Guinness World Records, the smallest known dog in terms of length is a female Chihuahua who measured 15.2 cm (6 in) from the nose to the tip of the tail.

 "Dogs have owners, cats have staff!"
~ Anonymous

 Toto's role in The Wizard of Oz was played by a female Cairn Terrier named Terry.

 Cats don't have a true collarbone. Because of this, cats can generally squeeze their bodies through any space they can get their heads through.

 "To err is human, to forgive, canine"
~ Anonymous



Going for walks also means coming into contact with other animals and even mosquitoes, so don't forget about flea and heartworm protection. Not only can this set your mind at ease as your dog runs through muddy fields and grassy parks, it will increase your dog's comfort.

And, if you find yourself or your dog getting bored with the same route, check out www.places4paws.ca — a website full of information about on and off-leash parks, pet-friendly cafés, restaurants and more right in your neighbourhood.