



## PARASITES: RISK AND PREVENTION

Here is a brief listing of some of the parasites and diseases that can affect you and your family, and how they can be prevented.

### INTESTINAL PARASITES:

- Dogs and cats are frequently exposed to intestinal parasite eggs and must be on either a monthly preventative or a routine deworming schedule
  - Going outside
  - Sniffing/eating dirt
  - Licking paws

### INTESTINAL PARASITES CAUSE:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Dull coat and skin
- Failure to thrive

This category of parasites includes:

- Hookworms
- Roundworms
- Whipworms
- Coccidia
- Giardia

Roundworms and hookworms are a public health concern, because they can cause serious diseases in children, including permanent blindness. Decreasing the population of roundworms and hookworms in our pets will also decrease the parasite population in the environment.

### HEARTWORM DISEASE:

- Heartworms are tiny worm-like parasites that are transmitted by mosquitoes, travel through the bloodstream, and lodge themselves in the heart and lungs
- They cause clinical signs in dogs that include coughing, lethargy, breathing problems, and heart failure
- Symptoms in the cat can be very vague and may include vomiting, coughing or even sudden death
- Surprisingly, about 25% of the cats that are diagnosed with heartworm are indoor only!
- There are two ways of preventing heartworm disease in dogs and cats.
- One is to give them a monthly heartworm preventative by mouth.
- The other is to apply a topical liquid to their skin once a month.

### FLEAS:

- Fleas are often found on dogs and cats, even if they are indoors the majority of the day
- Fleas are brought in by a friend's dog, a person's shoes or even left on the doormat by a stray cat in the neighborhood
- Once in your house, fleas must be effectively treated on all of your pets and in the environment, prevention is often easier and more economical than treatment
- One effective preventative measure is to use a routine flea-control treatment
- \*\*\* Never use a dog flea preventative on a cat. Toxicity occurs very quickly, and can cause seizures and death. We strongly recommend discussing any other flea prevention options with us before use \*\*\*

### TICKS:

- Ticks are a common problem here in New England.
- They are known to carry and transmit lyme disease, anaplasma, ehrlichia and other diseases.
- Annual blood tests can detect exposure to some of these parasites, but prevention of tick bites is key.
- Ticks pose a potential health risk to you, if they are being carried into your house by your dog or cat.
- One effective preventative measure is to use a routine tick-control treatment