

Health, nutrition and a regular vaccine maintenance program should be employed for every pet, if we expect a healthy, loving companion. The best way to get the information so necessary for a happy pet, is to ask your veterinarian. Knowledge, training and responsibility can not be stressed enough when you own a pet or are involved in raising animals.

Balanced Diet for Dogs
Your dog should be fed a diet that contains the necessary nutrients that it needs to maintain good health and insure a long life. The type of diet that you choose should be one that is convenient for you to use on a regular basis. Most name-brand commercial ready-made dog foods are well balanced for dogs. These diets are usually economical and the most convenient to use. It is important to make any changes in diet gradually.

Balanced Diet Cats
Cats require a diet that differs greatly from a dog. This is

why it is not acceptable to feed a cat your dog's commercial food. Cats also have a tendency to over eat which is why self-feeding won't work with many cats. Making sure that your cat always has water available can help prevent feline urinary disorders. A cat's appetite is affected not only by habit and the type of food offered, but also by environment (noise, lighting, the presence of strangers) and health status. Unlike dogs, a cat may not eat if unhappy with any of the above factors. A cat also has a higher protein requirement than a dog.

Pet Health Care Week

It's that time of the year again...

Now the weather's improving your pets will be spending more and more time outside, coming into contact with infectious animals or parasites. As well as basic nutrition and habitat needs, you should be aware of other health care matters concerning your pets. Here, sponsored by these caring animal lovers, we have put together some health care information for you, and the following is one of the most serious problems in dogs, and also cats, **HEARTWORM...**

Heartworm (Dirofilaria immitis) is now recognized as a major, global pest affecting dogs, wolves, coyotes, foxes and also cats. Although there are tests, preventives and treatments, the disease still spreads. Heartworm infestation is dangerous; untreated dogs die and treated dogs go through weeks of discomfort while worms are killed and expelled from their bodies.

The heartworm parasite is spread by mosquitos, which host the heartworm larva (microfilariae) after biting an infected dog. The microfilariae make their way to the right side of the heart through a vein and

wait to reproduce. The worms grow and multiply, infesting the chambers on the right side of the heart and the arteries in the lungs. They can also lodge in the veins of the liver and the veins entering the heart. Adult heartworms can reach 12 inches in length and can remain in the dog's heart for several years.


The first sign of heartworm infestation may not appear for a year after infection, and even then, the mild cough, which increases with exercise, may be dismissed as unimportant by the owner. As the cough worsens the dog may actually faint from exertion; he tires easily, is weak and

listless, loses weight and condition, and may cough up blood. Breathing becomes more difficult as the disease progresses. The progression is traumatic: the dog's quality of life diminishes and can no longer be active without respiratory distress. Congestive heart failure ensues, and the once-active, outgoing pet is in grave danger.

Heartworm prevention is simple. It involves a blood test to determine whether the parasite is present and regular dosing with preventive medication. Treatment is successful if the disease has not progressed too far. However, exertion during treatment causes dead worms to

dislodge and travel to the lungs, resulting in death. Surgical removal of the adult heartworms is possible and may be indicated in advanced cases with heart involvement.

Preventive medication is only available from a veterinarian, who may recommend a year-round program. Some drugs used to prevent heartworm also kill other parasitic worms, or even act against fleas, ticks, and mites. If your dog has already had his yearly check-up, call your veterinarian to schedule a heartworm check. If he's due for yearly vaccination, be sure to include a heartworm check in the visit.



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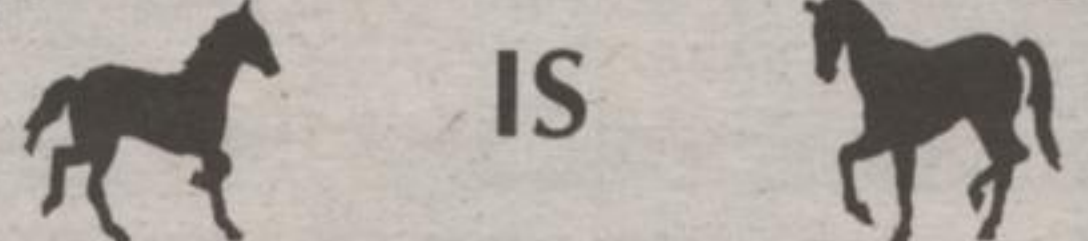
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Heartworm in Cats

When it comes to heartworm disease, dogs and cats have a lot in common. But new research shows that in cats there is the potential for more severe reactions and even sudden death. Indoor cats are also at risk from heartworm disease.

Cases of heartworm disease in cats have been reported in many countries, but is most common in areas where dogs are also at risk.

What are the signs?

The most common signs of heartworm disease in cats - coughing, vomiting, breathing difficulties, weight loss, and lethargy - are often mistaken for other conditions such as asthma, pneumonia and digestive problems. In fact, most common clinical signs of heartworm disease in cats resemble bronchial asthma.

Prevention

Once a cat is diagnosed with heartworm disease it can become a difficult situation. Treatment, as well as non-treatment, is very risky, because there's currently no approved product for treating adult heartworms, and the onset of clinical signs is impossible to predict in cats that are left untreated. Even if the disease is treated, your cat may experience severe complications or even death when the worms die. Prevention is the best medicine. Ask your veterinarian about heartworm disease prevention for your cat. It may give your feline friend the best shot at living nine long and healthy lives.

Ask Your Veterinarian About Heartworm Disease in Cats



It's Animal Health Week

"Please take care of us and we'll take care of you"

Preventative Health Care is important for our well being!

Remember Heart Worm and Flea Season have started!

From Dr. Hess and Staff of

ACTON VET CLINIC

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A Happy Pet is a Healthy Pet



Fleas and Ticks

A major health threat to pets is 'flea anemia' which occurs when fleabites cause an animal to lose too much blood. This is especially worrying in young or infirm pets and can become life threatening. Tapeworm, an internal parasite, can be contracted from ingesting infected fleas. Cats or dogs may develop the disease "Plague" from exposure to rodent fleas but it is rare.

Ticks can cause a condition known as "Tick Paralysis." Although reversible, it can be very disturbing to the owner and unpleasant for the pet. Ticks can carry Lyme disease. The signs can be vague and mild, to incapacitating. This disease can be a serious threat to people as well as pets.

It is now easier and safer than ever to control fleas and ticks. How can you control these pests? See your veterinarian because it is your pet's health that matters.