

CHOOSING THE RIGHT HEARTWORM, FLEA AND TICK PREVENTION FOR YOUR DOG

Background information:

There is a large selection of heartworm, intestinal parasite, flea, and tick prevention products on the market. No one product is perfect for all dogs because each dog – and its companion family – has a different lifestyle and needs.

The *Companion Animal Parasite Council* (www.capcvet.org) has been recommending **year-round heartworm prevention** for a few years now. This recommendation is based not necessarily on a year-round need for heartworm prevention, but because modern heartworm preventive medications provide additional benefits to control intestinal parasites in our animal companions. The incidence of companion animal intestinal parasite infection has increased because:

1. Dogs travel with their families to warm weather during the winter months. The burden of intestinal parasites is higher in warmer climates.
2. Working or traveling families often use day care/ boarding facilities to offer their dogs exercise and environmental enrichment. Although these facilities diligently disinfect their environments, no disinfectant will kill all parasite eggs. Many of these facilities require year-round prevention for their clients as a means of additional protection for your dog (and your children, who are susceptible to intestinal parasite infection.)

Increased intestinal parasite burdens in our companion dogs are a danger to young children, and to adults who are immunosuppressed (HIV, autoimmune diseases, chemotherapy patients, pregnant women.) None of us wants to risk the health of those we love when we can easily protect our dogs from intestinal parasites with year-round treatment.

Latest developments:

A newly identified resistant strain of heartworm found in Georgia, now being used in FDA studies, has prompted the FDA to institute tougher standards for heartworm preventives on the market. We do not know the prevalence of this strain yet, but we do know that we have a higher incidence of heartworm in our part of the country since Hurricane Katrina. Many heartworm-infected homeless dogs were brought to Chicago for adoptions, and therefore our Chicago mosquitoes (the transmitters of heartworm) became infected. Since the institution of these more stringent FDA standards, new products will need to be administered for 3 months after a pet's final seasonal exposure to mosquitoes (instead of the current one month post exposure), which means giving preventive for 9 months instead of 7. With this in mind, as well as the intestinal parasite issue, it is prudent to stay on prevention year round.

Below is a list of the brands of heartworm / flea / intestinal parasite preventives recommended by the doctors at Family Pet. Please speak with your veterinarian about which products are the best choice for your dog and your family.

Oral heartworm / parasite products:

Heartgard - heartworm, roundworm, 2 types of hookworm prevention

Interceptor - heartworm, roundworm, one type of hookworm, whipworm prevention

Comfortis - flea control only

Trifexis - heartworm, roundworm, one type of hookworm, whipworm, and flea control

Topical heartworm / parasite products:

Revolution - heartworm, flea, ear mites and Sarcoptic mange

Advantage Multi - heartworm, flea, roundworm, one type of hookworm, whipworms

Topical Flea / Tick Products (no heartworm preventive):

Frontline – this is the safest topical flea/tick product to use if you also have cats

K9 Advantix - this is the product of choice for flea/tick control in dogs

Advantage - flea control only