

# Lake Country Veterinary Care Newsletter



March 2009

## Let's Talk About:

- ◆ Heartworm Disease
- ◆ Ticks

### Heartworm Season is Nearly Here

What we mean by that is heartworm disease can take up to 6 months to fully develop. Any dog that presents with heartworm disease this year was probably exposed last year. That is why we test for heartworm disease **every** year. A mosquito bites an infected dog and takes a blood meal from it. Tiny little microfilaria are present in the blood and they come along for the ride. The microfilaria go through a life cycle change in the mosquito and when the insect bites another dog, they are introduced to a new host via the saliva. The microfilaria travel throughout the bloodstream and end up in the heart where they live and reproduce. This whole process can take about 6 months and the cycle just keeps repeating. When you give your dog heartworm preventative it kills off any circulating microfilaria on a monthly basis. This breaks their life cycle.

We recommend keeping your dog on heartworm preventative year round. You will not run the risk of forgetting his/her medication or the risk of a mosquito infecting your dog after mosquito season is typically over. Heartworm preventative also helps in controlling intestinal parasites that your dog could pick up from another dog or from wildlife.

There are several monthly heartworm preventatives available for cats as well. Cats are not typical hosts for heartworms so it is less likely they will become infected but if it were to happen, the disease causes severe respiratory distress. The immature worms enter blood vessels that carry blood to the lungs where they cause an inflammatory reaction. Occasionally a worm makes it to the heart and lives undetected. When the parasite dies, inflammation can be severe enough to cause death.

### What About Ticks?

Last year ticks were abundant in this area. Spring is when ticks start to get active and cause a lot of problems. We all have heard that the deer tick carries lyme disease but other common ticks carry other diseases as well. We have a relatively new in house test that will check your dog for tick borne diseases as well as heartworm disease. This test is restricted to dogs as many of the tick-borne diseases are rarely seen in cats.

Unlike heartworms, ticks and fleas find cats as good as dogs to invade. Fleas cause a larger problem in our feline pets because they groom themselves. When they lick their fur, fleas can be ingested and adult fleas can harbor tapeworm eggs that will lead to a tapeworm infection. Typically, in our climate, topical products are used for external parasites like fleas and ticks. Every manufacturer makes different sizes of their products based on the weight of the pet being treated therefore; we need to monitor accurate weight history.

### ***We Appreciate Your Referrals!***

*A \$10 Credit will be added to your account for referring others to Lake Country Vet.  
Thank you for your support!*

### **We're Here to Help...**

As always, we are here to answer any specific questions you have. At your next appointment we can go over the different types of products we carry to determine which will work best for your pet's situation!

*“An animal's eyes have the power to speak a great language”  
- Martin Buber*



Dr. Krueger & Ryder