

PRESS RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Confusing World of Pet Parasite Prevention

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Spring is almost here (really!) and with it comes parasites of all sorts that can infect your pet. Most dog and cat owners understand the importance of keeping their pets safe from parasites such as heartworms, intestinal worms, fleas, and ticks. However, pet owners are now being flooded with ads for generic products and these new brands are creating confusion. In addition, some of the other, better known products have disappeared leaving everyone even more confused. Exactly what parasite control products should you be using for your pets?

Uncertainty among pet owners about which product to use and economic factors are fueling the confusion. Generic heartworm preventives can now be found in many human pharmacies and online pet pharmacies are offering six to ten different medications to the public. Frankly, it is hard for a pet owner to know which is best for their pet! Some of these medications are also effective against intestinal parasites, such as roundworms, hookworms, and whipworms. A few of these preventives are also now using compounds to treat tapeworms in addition to the other parasites. It's even possible to get heartworm preventive that also includes means to help control fleas!! There are collars, topical, oral medications, and powders available online for flea and tick prevention, too.

Products on the internet may be less expensive, but it so important for you not to fall for advice in online forums that recommend odd-ball alternative methods of protecting your pets against any parasite. These sites often misinterpret data or are actively promoting products that have not gone through proper testing and safety research. Remember, the internet is not policed for accuracy: anyone can make a claim, whether it is true or not. Some of these parasites can be fatal to your pet and you don't want to trust an unproven or possibly fraudulent preventative. There have been instances of fraudulent products sold online under brand names that you trust, and for this reason the drug companies will not stand by their guarantees of efficacy if their product has been purchased online. In addition some products for dogs can be fatal to cats.

Veterinarians follow these trends every year. They couple this information with their understanding of the parasites' life cycles, knowledge of your pet's specific medical

conditions, the reputation of the drug manufacturers and your region of the country. Certain parasites are less common in some areas of the country and your pet's risk factors vary quite a bit. These risk factors also include exposure to parasites through trips to dog parks, hiking or camping, interstate travel or even the presence of other animals in the household. Veterinarians are best equipped to help you understand exactly which product provides the best parasite protection for your pet and your family.

This is an area of pet care where we have made great advances, but bad advice and a confusing market have created unnecessary risks and vulnerabilities. Trust your pet's healthcare advice to your family veterinarian and team. They know your pets' health status, lifestyle, and risk of various parasites and are in the best position to give accurate advice.

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The Vermont Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA), founded in 1898, is a professional organization of more than 330 veterinarians dedicated to compassionate animal care and quality medicine. For more information, visit www.vtvets.org or call (802) 878-6888.