



April News from Alvin Animal Clinic

Heartworms and Heatstroke

Greetings!

Happy April, Alvin Animal Clinic patron! The weather is finally warming up, and we hope you have all found some time to enjoy it with your human and pet family members. We are certainly excited about the warmer weather. Now that April arrived we would like to make you aware of two common dangers your pets face this time of year: Heartworms and Heat Stroke.

April is national heartworm awareness month. We would like to take this time to remind all of you how prevalent this disease truly is. According to the Heartworm Society, www.heartwormsociety.org, the average veterinary clinic in the Texas gulf coast region reports 50 to 100 cases of canine heartworms each year. We treat an average of 1.5 cases a month at our clinic or about 18 a year, however we see a positive case on average once a week. Some patients are unable to undergo treatment for various reasons. Heartworm disease can be fatal, but is very preventable. Oral monthly heartworm preventative for dogs costs \$96.00 to \$240.00 per year depending on the size of your dog and the type of preventative you choose. All of our preventatives are 98% effective, and we carry several choices which offer protection from various intestinal parasites as well. Heartgard, Interceptor, Iverhart, and Sentinel are the products we carry. We offer monthly preventatives for cats as well, Advantage Multi and feline Revolution, both of which are topical products.

We want to educate you about how this disease actually works inside your pets. Heartworms are carried by mosquitoes to your canine and feline friends. When an infected mosquito bites your pet it passes the larvae of the heartworm onto your pet's skin. The larva burrows through the skin into the capillaries, and then to the lungs. In the cat, the stage of larva that is in the lung tissue is what causes feline heartworm disease. Symptoms are the same as feline asthma and include panting, openmouthed breathing, and exercise intolerance. Some cats show no outward signs of distress, only sudden death. There is currently no proven treatment for heartworm

disease in cats, just prevention. Dogs are very different. In the dog, the heartworm continues its journey and becomes an adult inside of the blood vessel in the heart and lungs. The severity of the damage truly depends on the number of heartworms infecting your pet and the immune system of each. The tests that we use in the clinic detect a protein produced in the uterus of the adult female heartworm. If your dog tests positive in our clinic we would send blood work to an outside lab for some further testing to confirm the positive test and to assess any damage the disease may have caused on your dog's organs. Heartworms can cause changes to the liver and kidneys as well as the heart and lungs. The blood work and overall health condition of your pet will determine how the doctors would set up the treatment. There is only one medication, immiticide, approved for the treatment of heartworm disease. This is the only way to rid your dog of the adult heartworms in its heart and lungs. This medication must be given by injection deep into the muscles of the lower back and can cause some discomfort of your dog. Heartworm treatment plans run anywhere from \$450.00 to \$1200.00 depending on the size of your pet. Therefore, we highly recommend all cats and dogs remain on a monthly prevention all year round.



This time of year is also when we see the most cases of heat stroke because pets are not yet acclimated to the warmer temperatures, and we as pet owners are not as aware of the temperatures. Remember that cats and dogs cannot sweat like we do to cool off. Therefore, they can get hotter quicker than us. If it is too hot for you, it is too

hot for them. Animals kept outside must be provided with water and shelter during the hot weather months. The inside of vehicles can reach temperatures way above 100 degrees Fahrenheit within 5 minutes, and are never safe for your pets to stay in waiting for you. Your pet may have suffered heat stroke if you see any of the following symptoms: increased breathing or panting with shallow and quick breaths, increased drooling, lethargy, sometimes even vomiting. The quickest way to cool your pet and protect their internal organs is with IV fluid therapy. If you suspect your pet may have heat stroke, immediately wet them down with cool water and get them to a clinic as fast as possible. Beware of water hoses because the water in them can be hot enough to burn your pet. Always test the water temperature to ensure that it is cold before wetting your pet.

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As always, we hope this finds you well and provides useful information for the health and safety of your furry friends. We look forward to seeing you all soon. Please remember we are always growing and expanding the clinic with new patients. Our greatest compliment is personal referrals from all of you. We would love to meet your friends' and family members' pets as well.

Sincerely,

Your Friends at Alvin Animal Clinic

Email Marketing by

