



May Newsletter

May, 2010

Dear friends of Alvin Animal Clinic,

We hope everyone is getting some time to enjoy the spring weather. We are doing a little "spring" cleaning at the clinic with the continuation of the remodeling project. The renovations are well under way now, though there is still work to be done before everything is complete. If you haven't had a chance to come by and see the changes to the clinic, please stop in and let us know what you think. Your opinion matters to us as we are making the changes to give our clients a better clinic environment.

Alvin Animal Clinic
2202 N. Gordon St.
Alvin, Texas 77511

281-585-5183

www.alvinanimalclinic.com

During the month of May we would like to take some time to educate you about some very pesky parasites that we are all familiar with to some degree, fleas and ticks. Hopefully not everyone has had to battle the fleas at your homes, and we would like to make sure you know how to keep that battle from happening. Fleas have a life cycle, just like any other parasite, and it is important to recognize the stages so that you know how to adequately treat for them. The adults lay the eggs in the hair coat of their host and are designed to fall off and land somewhere where they can grow, usually your carpet or animal's bed. The eggs can hatch anywhere from 5 days to a few weeks later depending on the environmental conditions. Fleas are very adaptive and will wait for a warm temperature and the right host, your cat or dog, to come along before moving from stage to stage. The next stage, the larvae hatch out of the eggs and begin looking for food from the adult fleas. The larvae feed on flea dirt or flea feces. They are very small, a pale white color, and may not be noticed by human eyes. Larvae develop into a few stages of their own before spinning themselves a cocoon for the pupation stage. Pupation can last anywhere from a few weeks to a year or more. This is the most protective stage of the entire life cycle of the flea which is why they can choose to remain in it until the conditions are right for them to

emerge. Most of the time the fleas are hanging in your carpet fibers during this pupation stage. Once the weather is warm and a host is available, the pupae will open up and the adult flea will hop out looking for its first meal. The adult fleas do not last very long after feeding and especially if knocked off of their host. Most healthy animals that are capable of grooming themselves will take care of some of the adults, and the rest will die in a few days after beginning their feeding. However, they will also begin to lay eggs after their first meal and begin the entire cycle again.

Ticks are another external parasite that can cause problems for your pets. There are varying species of ticks, but all have some time spent in 4 different life stages, the egg, larvae, nymph, and then adult stage. An adult tick will lay eggs on the ground which the larvae hatch out of during the spring. The larvae then look for a host, feed, and fall off onto the ground again to molt into a nymph. The nymph then looks for a host, feeds enough for a full meal, falls off onto the ground and molts into an adult. Then, the adult ticks look for yet another host to feed off of for a good full meal so they can mate, fall off and lay more eggs. The entire life cycle for one tick can take about a year to process, depending on when or if it finds adequate hosts to complete every step. They generally do not carry out their life cycle indoors as fleas do and most people only see problems with ticks when they take their animals to wooded or tall grassy areas. Ticks do seem to be coming out a lot this year and some of our clients are experiencing problems with them for the first time.

Now, that you know the life cycle of the flea and tick, you may wonder how do you prevent them from using your pets as part of their food chain. We can help with that through the use of several safe products. We offer Program, Sentinel, Advantix, Revolution for cats, Advantage Multi for cats, Comforis, and Capstar for the treatment and prevention of fleas. Program and Sentinel are both chewable tablets that are given once a month and contain a flea birth control. They do not attack the adult fleas, but they stop the cycle from perpetuating. Sentinel also contains a heartworm preventative. Advatix is the only topical flea treatment for dogs we now offer at our clinic. It protects your dog from all stages of fleas except the pupation stage and is applied monthly. Advatix also provides protection against ticks and has a mosquito repellent ingredient. Advantix, Program, and Sentinel all have a 96-98% effectiveness rate. Capstar is a chewable pill that acts very quickly to kill any adult fleas on your pet and is labeled for cats and dogs. It can be given daily if needed because it has no lasting effects a few hours

after your pet digests it. Comfortis is a monthly chewable pill for dogs that attacks the adult fleas and is the only prevention we carry that has a 100% effectiveness rate within 4 hours of giving the pill. Revolution and Advantage Multi are our two topical choices of flea prevention for cats. Both of these products are applied monthly and protect your cat against various other parasites such as ear mites and heartworms. Revolution and Advantage Multi are labeled at a 96-98% effectiveness rate against fleas for your cats. We recommend either Advantix or a Preventic collar for tick prevention. Both of these products are designed to keep ticks from burrowing into your pets' skin and hanging on to get a complete meal. You may still find ticks on your animal while using these products, but they should not be able to keep themselves attached.

It is very important to understand how fleas reproduce and what products are needed for your situation in order to win the battle over fleas. The important thing to remember about ticks is they are second only to mosquitoes in the number of diseases they can carry and be vectors of to your pets. Remember that there are no current products available over the counter, from pest treatment companies, or from veterinarians that can attack the pupation stage of fleas. Therefore all of the parasite control manufacturers recommend at least three months of treatment for your pets and your home if you are having a flea outbreak. It may take that long to catch all the fleas that have been hiding in your carpet, and sometimes it may take longer. The best treatment for fleas is prevention. In the gulf coast region, we recommend that all of your cats and dogs stay on flea prevention year round. This will keep the pupation down and hopefully keep you from ever experiencing a flea infestation. If you only have indoor animals that never have contact with any outdoor animals, you may be safe. However, all it takes is one breeding pair of breeding fleas and you could have thousands of adults after the eggs have hatched and grown. Some pets can even have flea allergies meaning they are allergic to the flea saliva, and they may require various combinations of products to keep them safe and healthy. If you ever walk your pets in tall grasses, take them hunting or camping, have a good tick preventative applied before you leave is highly recommended. If you are confused as to which treatment would be best for your pets, just ask. We will be more than happy to help you create the best parasite treatment plan for your situation.

Please remember that the highest compliment we can be paid is when you refer us to your friends and family. We would love to meet them and their furry companions as well. Ask about our referral program that rewards you and your guests that visit Alvin Animal Clinic. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Email Marketing by

