



Spring 2017

Dr. Burmeister and the Staff of **Livingston Animal Hospital** want you to know that it's "that time of year" again! Spring has finally arrived, and with it comes those nasty parasites! This informative article contains links to some "disturbing" video to better help illustrate the information outlined below - BUT - ***Be warned - if you have a bug phobia, these links may NOT be for you!***

Unfortunately, as the climate becomes warmer every year, we see a higher incidence of parasitic infections, heartworm, and Lyme disease in our area. Parasites can transmit serious diseases and cause severe long term damage to those affected. Annual parasite prevention measures are critical to the health of your pet and should be included on every Pet owner's Spring "TO DO" List.

Here is some additional information on various diseases and parasites in this area:

- **Heartworm** - This dangerous condition is spread by mosquitos. It only takes one bite from an infected mosquito to transmit the heartworm larva to your cat or dog. The worms make their way to the heart and lungs where they can grow 15-30 cm in length. This infestation causes permanent damage to the heart, lungs, liver and kidneys. If left untreated, the disease is fatal.
- **Lyme Disease** - This serious condition is on the rise in Canada, especially in our Niagara region. Lyme Disease is a tick-borne bacterial disease which can affect both humans and animals. In dogs, it causes kidney damage and a painful form of arthritis. Did you know that there is a Lyme vaccine for dogs but not yet for people? Make it a habit to do a quick check of ALL Family Members after walking through densely wooded areas and undergrowth, it only takes a moment.
- **Ticks** - Not only can these nasty critters transmit Lyme Disease, but even a single tick bite can cause local pain/infection. In large numbers they can cause anemia.
- **Fleas** - A single flea needs to feed 300-400 times per day. That's a lot of bites on your pet! If your pet is allergic to fleas, even 1 or 2 fleas can send them into a frenzy of scratching and chewing resulting in a skin infection.
- **Stomach Worms (Roundworms, Hookworms, Tapeworms, Whipworms)** - These parasites spend their entire adult life inside your pets intestines. Pets can get these worms just by walking through feces in your back yard/park or eating infected small wild animals eg. rodents or fleas. Indoor cats are at risk as well, as parasite eggs can be tracked into your house on your shoes, or other pets who go outside. Because pets are constantly exposed to reinfection, multiple routine deworming is recommended every year. Left untreated, intestinal worms lay eggs that are shed in your pet's stool. These eggs pose a potential risk for you and your

family. Roundworms in particular are a serious public health issue as they can also be spread to **children** causing life changing illness.



What can Livingston Animal Hospital do to protect your pet?

It is much easier, safer and more cost effective to prevent parasites than it is to treat the diseases they cause. For example, **Heartworm prevention for a small dog** can cost as little as \$40 for 6 months protection but if your pet becomes infected with heartworm, the treatment costs upward of \$1,500 and involves multiple hospital trips.

Prevention is easy! There are now several options available that are **safe and effective** for preventing heartworm, fleas, ticks and stomach worms. Protection can be as simple as giving a tasty, chewable pill or applying a small vial of topical medication once per month.

How is my pet tested for Heartworm/Lyme Disease?

All it takes is a few drops of blood to screen your pet for Heartworm and Lyme disease. The test Dr. Burmeister recommends alerts us if your pet has been exposed to Heartworm Disease, Lyme Disease as well as Ehrlichiosis and Anaplasmosis (tick transmitted diseases). The same sample of blood can also be used to provide an **internal wellness check** of organ functions. This test allows us to anticipate problems before your pet becomes clinically sick and attempt to modify the disease process to improve your pet's quality of life.

The following links to videos on YouTube while informative, MAY (*) be disturbing to some:

[The Facts about Heartworm](#)

[Learn more about Intestinal Parasites \(Worms\) *](#)

[Flea Lifecycle](#)

[Severe Flea Infestation! *](#)

[Tick Lifecycle](#)

[Extreme Tick Infestations *](#)

[Facts about Ticks](#) *

Please ensure that your pet is protected and that you are well informed! Call Livingston Animal Hospital at (905) 309-9600 for more information - any of our team will be happy to answer your questions or to book an appointment for your pet.

Feel free to print and/or share this informative flier with friends and family!

Livingston Animal Hospital is not endorsing nor affiliated with any of the aforementioned video, links are provided for informative purposes only.