

Amherst Animal Hospital

Modern Medicine. Traditional Values.

Flea and Tick Prevention

External Parasites in Dogs and Cats:

In southern New Hampshire, our patients face a large number of external parasites in their outdoor environments. These include several varieties of ticks, fleas, mosquitoes and black flies. Up to 50% of deer ticks in Hillsborough County carry *Borrelia*, the bacteria that causes Lyme disease in dogs, horses and people. Deer ticks are not carried exclusively by deer. They also live on mice, chipmunks, squirrels and other wildlife in our area. In our region, there are numerous other tick-borne infections, such as Rocky Mountain Spotted fever, Ehrlichiosis, and Anaplasmosis, that can infect dogs and humans. Many ticks carry and can transmit more than one infection. Fleas can carry *Bartonella*, a bacteria that causes lymph node and internal infections in pets and people. Once brought indoors on your pet's hair coat, fleas will continue to reproduce indoors year-round. Mosquitoes transmit larval heartworms to dogs and cats and black flies can create skin irritation and allergic reactions in dogs and cats.

Goal of External Parasite Control:

We will recommend parasite control measures based on your pet's health and lifestyle (i.e. active, outdoor, indoor, geriatric). Our goal is to reduce the incidence of parasites and preventable disease in your pet and to reduce parasite exposure to your family. Because of the severity of illness and incidence in southern New Hampshire, we recommend both topical and systemic preventatives for Lyme Disease and heartworm infections.

Recommendations for Canine External Parasite Control:

We advocate the use of topical or oral tick and flea preventatives. Products containing Permethrin are highly effective in killing ticks and also repel fleas, mosquitoes, black flies and other biting insects. After proper application of topicals and allowing the liquid to dry fully, these products can withstand rain and swimming. Other active ingredients provide rapid and lasting efficacy in killing all stages of fleas and an insect growth regulator (IGR) inhibits development of flea eggs and larval fleas in your pet's bedding and carpets. Over 20% of our canine patients have been exposed to *Borrelia* bacteria from ticks, which causes Lyme Disease. To further reduce the risk of infection, we advise that your dog be vaccinated against *Borrelia*.

- **Vectra 3D** (for dogs and puppies over 7 weeks) contains Permethrin, Dinotefuran, an advanced 3rd generation neonicotinoid, which kills all fleas within 6 hours, and Pyriproxyfen, a 2nd generation IGR. Our veterinarians will advise you if Vectra 3D is the optimal external parasite preventative for your dog. **(Do not use on cats.)**
- **Bravecto** for dogs is a chewable tablet that protects against fleas and ticks for up to 12 weeks.
- **Nexgard** is a chewable tablet that protects against fleas and ticks for 4 weeks.
- **Seresto** collars protect against fleas and ticks for up to 8 months.
- Heartworm disease is prevented by monthly oral heartworm preventative administration, such as **Iverhart Max, Heartgard or Interceptor.**, combined with a repellent to reduce the number of mosquito bites.
- **Revolution** is a once-monthly topical product that provides heartworm, flea and ear mite prevention and also reduces internal parasites (intestinal worms). Revolution offers limited tick control for dogs. Do not use other heartworm preventatives if you are using Revolution for your dog.

Recommendations for Feline External Parasite Control:

Cats generally have a lower incidence of tick bites as they readily remove ticks by grooming. The areas where ticks may still be found on cats are around the head and neck. Cats are also more resistant to tick-borne infections than dogs. Permethrin can be toxic to cats, therefore this compound is **NOT** used for flea and tick control in cats. Fleas are common on outdoor cats and fleas can infest even strictly indoor cat, being brought inside on clothing or other pets.

- **Vectra for Cats & Kittens** (over 8 weeks) contains Dinotefuran and Pyriproxyfen for flea control and does not contain Permethrin. Vectra for cats does not prevent or kills ticks on cats.
- **Bravecto** for cats is a topical that protects against fleas and ticks for up to 12 weeks.
- **Revolution** is a once-monthly topical product that provides heartworm, flea and ear mite prevention and also reduces internal parasites (intestinal worms). Revolution offers limited tick control for cats.
- **Seresto** collars protect against fleas and ticks for up to 8 months.

Our hospital values strong relationships with our clients and patients and we are here to help you make the best choice for the health care of your pet. Please ask our staff members if you have questions about the optimal flea and tick prevention for pet.

Our external parasite prevention program is provided as part of an ongoing effort to improve our services and support the bond between you and your pet.