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Spring has Sprung - Mosquitoes and Ticks!

The weather is getting warmer. The plants are getting greener. However, with Spring also comes ticks, which are emerging from their winter hiding places and the mosquitoes are not far behind.

Ticks-Prevention is Key

Minnesota is one of the worse states in the US for ticks. These disease-carrying ticks can host dangerous bacteria that cause Lyme disease and Anaplasmosis. The tick transmits these infections while feeding on the pet. Common signs from Lyme or Anaplasma infections are: limping, vomiting, diarrhea and not acting normally. Severe infections can cause damage to the pet's kidneys and can even lead to death. It may be several months after the tick bite before your pet starts showing signs.

We have multiple tools to help prevent tick diseases. No prevention is 100%, but the more prevention we use the less likely that the pet will contract diseases from ticks.

1. Lyme vaccination. All it takes is one tick to bite for the pet to get Lyme Disease. Most pets in the Zimmerman area need to be up-to-date on this vaccination.
2. Frontline Plus. This is a topical flea and tick prevention that will kill the tick within 24 hours. This product should be applied every 30 days and can even be applied every 21 days, if your pet is swimming frequently.
3. Scalibor. This is a flea and tick collar sold through veterinarians and is a brand new product. This collar lasts for 6 months. This collar is designed to be used along with Frontline for pets that need even more tick control.
4. Removing ticks. Check your pet frequently, and remove any ticks as soon as you find them.

If your pet has tested positive for tick diseases in the past and it was treated, they can be re-infected when a tick bites, again. Do not get frustrated and stop protecting your pet. If you stop prevention, it may result in a sick pet and higher veterinary bills from treating a sick pet.

Be Prepared for Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes transmit heartworm disease by biting your pet. This is a parasite that migrates to the pet's heart and causes severe heart and lung damage. Treating a heartworm infection can cost \$400-\$1000 for a dog. Cats cannot be cured from heartworm disease. The best defense against heartworm disease is giving a monthly prevention such as Heartgard® Plus (for dogs) or Advantage Multi (for cats) every 30 days. This prevention kills immature heartworms that the pet contracted the previous month and also deworms for intestinal parasites such as roundworms and hookworms. A blood test must be done to make sure your pet does not have heartworm disease. This blood test is done yearly. A common carrier of heartworm disease in MN is coyotes. Mosquitoes that feed on the coyote transfer the heartworm to dogs and cats.

Disclaimer: This written content is meant to be educational and is not medical advice. Always consult a veterinarian about medical advice for your pet.