



By Dr. Maria Krenz, DVM – The Zimmerman Veterinary Clinic 763-856-4848

Pets Welcome Back Spring - Stop Unwelcome Guests

With the warmer weather come additional risks to pets from fleas, ticks, mosquitoes and internal parasites. Here are a few tips to make sure your furry friends are safe and happy this year.

1. **Heartworm/Lyme test.** Spring time is when most dogs should be tested for Heartworm and Lyme disease. Blood tests are recommended by the American Heartworm Society once a year for all dogs.
2. **Vaccinations.** Spring is the best time to booster vaccinations such as Lyme and Leptospirosis. Outdoor cats should be current on Feline Leukemia vaccination. This provides the pet with the highest immunity during the time of year when the risk is highest. If you are not sure if your pet needs these vaccinations or has had them in the past, speak with your Veterinarian.
3. **Heartworm protection.** If your dog or cat has not been on heartworm protection such as Heartgard®, Iverheart®, Interceptor®, or Advantage Multi® now is the time to start monthly prevention. These products should be used monthly at least through November, but can be used in winter as well for maximal coverage.
4. **Flea/Tick prevention.** Make sure your pet is receiving monthly prevention such as Frontline®. Most products take about 24 hours to kill ticks, so if you see ticks be sure to pull them off the pet with a tweezers.
5. **Grooming.** Pets are loosing their thick winter undercoat. This is when pets may develop mats. Brush your pets regularly during the springtime. If you pet does not allow grooming, bring it to a pet groomer.
6. **Training.** Are you tired of your pet's unruly behavior? Pets are never too old to learn. Enroll your pet in an obedience class this spring.

If your pet was not protected last year, it is never too late to start. Young and old pets should not be forgotten because their risk is just as high as other age groups. The Zimmerman area has a higher incidence of heartworm disease. This is because it is a rural environment where foxes and coyotes can carry the disease and spread it to domestic dogs.

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