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## **Spring is Here - Protect your Pet**

Spring has sprung early this year. Now is the time to make sure your furry friend is ready for warm weather fun. Preventing common diseases does not need to be complicated. Contact your veterinarian to develop an easy prevention plan for your pet.

### **Ticks**

With the warmer days ticks have started to emerge. Ticks are not picky about what warm blooded creature they feed from. One tick bite can lead to lyme disease or other tick borne diseases called anaplasmosis. Signs can vary from vomiting and diarrhea to limping and joint pain. Pets need to have a topical tick prevention applied now, such as Frontline Plus. Topical prevention should be applied monthly. Now is also the time to booster your pets lyme vaccination or start the vaccine if your pet has not been vaccinated in the past.

### **Flea & Tick Prevention – Not all products are created equal.**

There are a lot of products available for flea and tick prevention in pets, but make sure you are getting the best value by purchasing quality products. Products may not last as long, it may not be waterproof, and chemicals may be harsher leading to skin or other reactions, in cheaper made products. Though they may cost less initially, they could cost you and your pet extra money because of sickness from products that don't perform.

Products can be misleading and sometimes pet owners think they are getting full coverage and the product only covers for fleas and does not include ticks. Common mistakes with flea and tick products:

- Not waterproof
- Does not last for a full month
- Does not cover for ticks
- Only kills adult fleas, does not affect other life stages
- Harsh chemicals-cause topical and systemic illness

Cats are especially sensitive to chemicals. Many common dog products sold over the counter, if accidentally applied to a cat, will kill the cat. Your veterinarian can discuss different flea and tick products and determine what is best for your pet.

### **Heartworm**

All dogs and cats should start their monthly heartworm prevention now, if they aren't on a already on a yearly program. Minnesota is known for its mosquitoes, which can carry deadly heartworm disease. Heartworm disease causes severe damage to the heart and lungs and can even cause sudden death in cats. Treatment of heartworm disease can easily reach \$1000 or more. Over the lifetime of most pets, testing for heartworm disease and monthly prevention is less expensive then treatment of the disease. Most heartworm medications also include dewormers to kill common internal parasites. Internal parasites can be transmitted to people, especially young children who are at higher risk.

Now is the time to make an appointment with your veterinarian to make sure your pet is covered for the diseases that warm weather can bring. It is never too late to start using monthly products to protect your pet no matter how old or young.

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