

Puppy Worms

Worms are parasites that can get inside your puppy's heart, blood stream, and/or digestive system a number of ways, usually through insect bites or eating fecal matter from infested animals, which you should try to keep your pet from doing. Roundworms and Hookworms Vets recommend Heartguard Plus and Interceptor medications to kill common intestinal worms like roundworms and hookworms. By using either of these products, you can eliminate the need for routine fecal examinations and separate worming medications. Tapeworms

Tapeworms, pictured above, are white worms structured in segments. If 1/2 inch long or less, it is probably a tapeworm segment. When the segments dry they look like grains of brown rice and may stick to your dog's hair. If you see anything like this, let your vet know and they will provide medicine. Prescription tapeworm drugs are extremely effective, very safe, and cause no discomfort. Non prescription tapeworm medications don't work very well and often cause intestinal cramps and diarrhea. Before providing a prescription, the vet will need the dog's weight.

Heartworms

Heartworm Disease is caused by a tiny worm carried by mosquitoes called a microfilaria. The microfilaria is injected into the pet's body when the mosquito bites. The blood transports the microfilaria to the heart and through the heart to the lungs. There, the heartworm matures to adulthood and grows to be several inches long. As an adult, the heartworm is able to breed and produce more microfilaria which can be picked up by blood-sucking mosquitoes and carried to other pets. Heartworm Disease has been diagnosed in all 50 states and is most often found in the eastern and southern United States. Pets that live outdoors are at the most risk for heartworm disease.

If discovered in time, heartworms can be eliminated, but treatment is difficult, dangerous, and expensive. And even with treatment, heartworms cause permanent damage. Although the treatment isn't nearly as dangerous as many people seem to believe, regular testing followed by treatment when needed is not a reasonable alternative to prevention. Vets recommend Interceptor Chewable Tablets, because dogs seem to like the taste and they need to be given only once a month. In addition, Interceptor kills hookworms, whipworms and roundworms, eliminating the need for separate worming medications and routine fecal examinations. It is important to use Interceptor every month without fail, especially if you are in a high risk region. Heartworm testing Dogs with heartworm disease ordinarily have adult male and female worms living in the heart, and microscopic baby heartworms throughout the bloodstream. Baby heartworms become adults only after living in a mosquito and then getting into another dog when it is bitten by the mosquito. Because vets cannot detect heartworms until about six months after infection, they never know for sure if puppies already have heartworms when they start them on prevention medication. Although this is a concern, the risk of puppyhood infection is small, and vets can safely wait to perform a heartworm test until about 15 months, when rabies and distemper booster vaccinations are generally given. After that, vets encourage you to test every 2 years to protect against the small possibility that a dose has been missed, or the extremely small possibility that the medicine isn't working.