

Creature Comforts ~ Spring Time Preventative Care

By Michal Smith

The arrival of spring not only reminds us of the opportunity for extra cleaning – as in “spring cleaning” but also for worming our pets! There are 3 main types of worms that infest our pets both small and large, Hookworms, Roundworms and Tapeworms. A preventative program will consist of a good flea killer along with a good worming regimen. A large percentage of puppies and kittens are born with microscopically small roundworm larvae in their tissues. The larvae are introduced to the developing pup or kitten right in the mother’s uterus -- via migration through the mother’s tissues! In the later stages of pregnancy they activate and infest the soon-to-be-born puppies and kittens.

Pets with intestinal worms experience a range of symptoms from anemia, malnutrition, and death to no symptoms at all. Intestinal worms compete with the pet for nutrients so that a pet with a heavy worm burden looks malnourished and has a swollen belly. The hair is often dry, dull, and coarse. There can be mucoid discharge from the eyes. Pets can have diarrhea and abdominal pain. Over time, they lose weight.

Pets with parasites that suck blood (hookworms) or cause blood loss because they damage the intestinal wall (whipworms) experience anemia. Anemic

mic pets have pale mucous membranes and a rapid heartbeat. Roundworm larvae can be transferred to the nursing pup or kitten from the mother’s milk. The larvae make their way to the intestinal tract where they can grow up to five inches in length. They start shedding eggs and try desperately to keep house in the small intestine of the pup (or kitten). The eggs that the adult worms pass in the stool can now re-infest the animal or other dogs and cats if somehow the egg-bearing stool is eaten. When the worm eggs hatch, larvae are released internally to migrate to the animal’s lungs where the larvae (remember, the larvae are microscopic in size) are finally coughed up, swallowed, and finally grow up to adults in the small intestine.

Female roundworms can produce 200,000 eggs in just one day. These eggs are protected by a hard shell, which enables them to exist in soil for up to years. Puppies and kittens with active roundworms in the intestines often have a pot-bellied appearance and poor growth. The worms may be seen in vomit or stool. If not treated in time, a severe infestation can cause death by intestinal blockage. Roundworms don’t just affect young pups (or kittens), though. They can infest adult dogs and cats, too.

However, as mentioned above, the larvae can encyst in body tissue of adult dogs and cats, remain dormant for periods of time, and can activate during the

last stages of pregnancy to infest the puppies and kittens. Worming the mother has no effect on the encysted larvae in the body tissues and cannot prevent the worms from infecting the newborn. Almost all wormers work only on the adult parasites in the intestinal tract.

Hookworms are more common in dogs than in cats. They are very small, thin worms that fasten to the wall of the small intestine and suck blood. Dogs get hookworms from larval migration in the uterus, from contact with the larvae in stool-contaminated soil, or from ingesting the eggs after birth. As with roundworms, the hookworm larvae can also be transferred to the nursing pup from the mother’s milk. A severe hookworm infestation can kill puppies, often making them severely anemic from the loss of blood to the hookworms’ vampire-like activities! Chronic hookworm infestation is a common cause of illness in older dogs, often demonstrated as poor stamina, feed efficiency and weight maintenance. Other signs include bloody diarrhea, weight loss, anemia, and progressive weakness. Diagnosis is made by examining the feces for eggs under a microscope.


The tapeworm is transmitted to dogs and cats that ingest fleas -- as apparently fleas think tapeworm eggs are real tasty -- or hunt and eat wildlife or rodents infested with tapeworms or fleas. If you were to see an entire tapeworm you would notice that they are arranged

with a small head at one end and many tiny brick-like repeating segments making up the rest of the worm.

Tapeworms can reach 4 to 6 inches in length within the intestine. Each tapeworm may have as many as 90 segments! Although it is the last segments in the chain that are released from the worm that can be seen in the stool or attached to the fur under the pet’s tail. Many cases are diagnosed simply by seeing these tiny terminal segments attached to the pet’s fur around the anus or under the tail; they even move around a bit shortly after they are passed and before they dry up and look like little grains of rice or confetti. It is also these segments of the tapeworm which contain the eggs.

The most successful treatment for dog and cat worms involves a dual approach of eliminating both fleas and worms at the same time. Consider beginning with a good grooming using a flea killing shampoo followed by a topical flea killer such as Fiproguard which also kills flea larvae and ticks plus a dose of a worm killer such as Far D Wormer. (HINT: the coupon for 10% off grooming at Creatures Pet Store from the February 14 issue of *Vernonia’s Voice* is still good through 3/31) It is always wise to visit the vet if your pet is displaying severe symptoms. Call us or come by at 503-429-PETS (7387). Open Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-5.

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The Water Rate Decision

By Dale Webb

With limited space for this article, I will cut straight to the chase. One camp on the Public Works Committee feels that the lower end users are getting “hosed” and the opposing group feels that shifting the existing split between fixed costs (base charge) and variable costs (consumption charge) will be unfair to the higher users.

Personally, I do not understand why anybody would feel a low end user using 2,000 gallons of water or less is getting gouged. These customers don’t pay a dime for the water that they use; the users that use more than 2,000 gallons pick it up. The low end users pay the base rate, but should we be dividing their 2,000

gallons into the base amount and then declaring they are paying more than higher end users per gallon? The answer is no.

We have to remember what the base rate is supposed to be for. The base rate covers the fixed costs, which basically are all the costs excluding the actual cost to produce and pump the water to our homes.

So what are these fixed costs? Meter reading, data center activities, 40% of the billing clerk wages and benefits, actual bill mailing, bonded debt, infrastructure maintenance, vehicle costs, fixed electricity costs, diesel-gasoline-natural gas, insurance, a third of the city administrators wages and benefits, a third of the finance officers wages and benefits, free water used by city buildings and

parks, free water used by our fire department and most likely a myriad of other activities we take for granted performed by our public works crews.

Any person who pays the base rate benefits from a far bigger infrastructure than they could afford as an individual and one of the biggest benefits is the fire protection that our water system provides. With our existing fire fighting rating also comes lower house hold insurance cost, this only is occurring because we have all shouldered the burden of the cost as a community.

We need to stop acting as individuals in our community when it comes to supporting it, or we will simply cease to exist as a community.

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