



Arrowhead Ranch Animal Hospital, PLC

Dr. Tom Pfafman • Dr. Tom Ardelt • Dr. Melissa Penwell • Dr. Marty Glanzberg

Parasite Prevention for you and your pet

Internal parasites in dogs and cats cause disease in your pets and *in rare cases can be transmitted to humans*, and cause serious medical problems. Common parasites we see in dogs and cats are roundworm, hookworm, tapeworm, whipworm, heartworm, coccidia, and giardia. We recommend you test your pet for parasites. This involves bringing in a stool sample that is within a few hours old. If you put in a zip lock bag and refrigerate the stool sample it is good for a few days. These tests are helpful in determining the type of parasite your pet may have, but they are *not full proof and can miss the eggs* and give you a false reading. We also recommend your pet is de-wormed with a medication to kill these intestinal parasites. The worming medications are usually repeated because they do not work on the eggs, just on the worms, so you have to give multiple doses of the wormer to kill all of the new weenie that hatch from eggs. Your pet can pick up worms again from the soil after they are wormed so it is best to check stool samples on a yearly basis.

The easiest way to prevent worms on a regular basis is to use a monthly preventative such as the Interceptor or the Heartguard. These medications are given monthly to kill worms in your pet in the early stages before they can become more serious. These drugs also can help prevent you from getting disease from the intestinal parasites in your pet. The Interceptor is the most common product we sell and this medication rarely has side effects. Interceptor will kill heartworm, hookworm, roundworm, and whipworm larvae. Heartguard plus kills all of the same worms except whipworm. Heartworm is not a common disease in local dogs and cats in Arizona but it is best to prevent it because it is potentially deadly and your pet can get very sick before you know the pet has heartworm.

Commonly asked questions by owners

Do you have to use the Interceptor or the Heartguard life long? Yes, as long as you want to kill the worms that are put in your dog or cats body since the last worming. Your last dose just killed what was in the body at that time. It does not have a residual effect.

Is the medication safe? These are some of the safest medications we have. There are very rarely any side effects to these medications.

Why do you do the test for parasites if you are just going to recommend de-worming anyway? The wormers do not kill giardia and coccidia, which are protozoan type parasites and not worms. These parasites take a different kind of medication to remove them from your pet's body.

How do our pets pick up these worms? The *intestinal worms* are usually contracted by oral ingestion of the eggs of the worms. The worm eggs are passed in the stool and get in the soil. *Heartworm* is put into your pet's body by a mosquito bite. The mosquito bites a dog and the larvae are transferred to your dog's blood from the saliva of the mosquito.