



Mosquito's Don't Just Bother People

If you Google "Maine State Bird" I'm sure the answer you will get is the Chickadee. However, true Mainers know that we really have three state birds: The Chickadee, The Black Fly and The Dreaded Mosquito. Mosquito's can carry a number of diseases and parasites. There has been lots of talk in the news about Equine Encephalitis and West Nile Virus which mosquito's pass between horses. Some people don't realize these bugs can also transmit parasites called heartworms to your dog.

Heartworms are parasites that take up residence in your dog's heart. As they make themselves at home and grow to maturity, they can slowly cause damage to the pulmonary arteries of your dog's lungs. This can cause symptoms such as coughing, exercise intolerance, lack of appetite and weight loss. In some dogs, the restriction of blood flow through the lungs can cause heart failure.

There is treatment for a dog diagnosed with heartworm disease. It is fairly expensive and not all dogs are cleared after one treatment. It is easier and more cost effective to be proactive and fight heartworm with preventative medicine. Several types heartworm preventatives are available, they range from chewable tablets to topical treatments. Many of these products not only help protect your pet from heartworm, but they also help prevent your pet from contracting intestinal parasites. The three products we carry in our clinic are Heartguard, a chewable that also protects against roundworms and hookworms; Interceptor, a tablet that is effective against roundworm, hookworm, and whipworm; and Revolution, a topical application that also treats for fleas, ear mites, sarcoptic mites, and American dog ticks.

Now that spring is finally here, we are pulling out our Citronella candles for the picnic table and spraying ourselves with Skin So Soft to work in the garden. Don't forget to also protect your pet from Maine's unofficial state bird - The Mosquito. For more information on heartworm disease, please visit The American Heartworm Society's website <http://www.heartwormsociety.org/>.

This information is provided by:

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