

## Fact Sheet

### Become a Creature of Habit

#### Pick a date – and stick with it

Timing is everything...when it comes to heartworm prevention, that is. If you give your cat or dog a monthly heartworm preventive, make it a habit to give the medication on the same day every single month. (If you use a six-month injectable, don't leave your veterinarian's clinic without making your pet's next appointment, and ask for a reminder call.)



Why give your pet's preventive on the same day every month? Keeping a consistent schedule helps make heartworm prevention a habit, so you will be less likely to accidentally miss a month. Choose a day that makes sense to you, such as the first of the month or the first Sunday or Monday. Or tie it to another monthly activity, like paying the rent. And to help you out, most manufacturers provide reminder services.

#### The value of remembering

Missing a dose of preventive can put your pet at risk of getting heartworm disease. If you miss giving a monthly dose, give it as soon as you remember. Heartworm medication is very safe, so giving doses closer than 30 days apart should not cause any problems. However, it's best to talk to your veterinarian if you get off schedule.

#### Prevent rather than treat

Preventing canine heartworm disease is much less expensive and safer than treating it. And since there is no treatment for cats, prevention is even more important.

The American Heartworm Society recommends year-round prevention, even in areas that experience freezing temperatures. Unpredictable weather – such as a warm week in the middle of winter – makes it difficult to know exactly when mosquitoes may be active. And depending on what preventive you use, it may take at least three doses after the last mosquito exposure for the product to be fully effective.

In addition to protecting pets against heartworms, most monthly preventives are active against intestinal parasites that can also infect people. Because it's estimated that parasitic infections affect millions of people every year, this added benefit of monthly deworming makes great sense.

So become a creature of habit for your creatures, and prevent a serious disease in the process.