



Get the Right Parasite Protection

Parasites come in many different species and forms and can live both inside and outside your pet. Some of the more common types of internal and external parasites include:

Internal parasites	External parasites
Intestinal (GI) worms Roundworms Hookworms Tapeworms Whipworms Heartworms Protozoa Toxoplasma Giardia	Fleas Ticks Deer tick American dog tick Brown dog tick Mites Sarcoptes (scabies) Demodex Ear mites

Know your pet's parasite risk

The risk of your pet contracting any one type of parasite can vary, depending on:

- **Where you live** (certain species of ticks, for instance, are much more prevalent in some locales than others),
- **Your pet's environment** (does she spend most of his time inside or outside; if outside, where?), and
- **Your pet's lifestyle** (for instance, do you and your pet travel or do lots of outdoor activities together? Is he frequently in contact with other pets?).

Some parasites are so prevalent and represent such a significant risk that prevention is a universal recommendation. For example, the risk of exposure to heartworm—which is spread by mosquitoes—is usually greater for a dog that spends its days outside than it is for an indoor cat that is only occasionally exposed to mosquitoes that come indoors. Nevertheless, both of these animals are at significant enough risk to warrant routine protection.

In addition, many parasites, such as roundworms and hookworms, can be transmitted to people as well; this is called zoonosis. Zoonotic parasites are especially a concern if you have young children or older adults either living or frequently visiting in the household, as their immune systems are not as strong as those of healthy adults. Protecting your pet can keep your family safe as well.

Use the right product(s)

Veterinarians report that pet owners frequently assume their pets are getting more parasite protection than they are because they simply don't always understand what different products are for.

Some broad-spectrum products are effective against a number of different internal and external parasites, while others may be designed for only one or two pests—or even killing pests at specific stages of their life cycles. In this case, giving your pet the protection it requires will likely involve giving several different medications. For example, you may need to give one product for fleas, another for ticks and another for heartworms and intestinal parasites. The important thing: know the difference. Read the products' label and follow your veterinarian's instructions carefully.

Pet owners today are fortunate to have a wide variety of safe, effective and easy-to-administer products to protect their pets from parasites. By knowing which parasites put your pets—and your family—at risk, and ensuring that the products you give are providing complete protection, you can keep your household safe and healthy.

