

# Prevention is better than cure

Prevention is the best course of action for controlling parasites in our pets.

Parasites, as a group, always tend to attack and populate the weakest and sickest animals, and are found in much smaller numbers in strong healthy animals. So the number one goal in managing all parasites is to keep your pet in the very best health, with a strong immune system to fight off parasites.

The most common parasites we deal with are intestinal worms, topical fleas and ticks, and blood born parasites like heartworm.



Fur Life Vet provides health and wellbeing information for you to help care for your pets throughout their lives.



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# Worms, Fleas and Ticks!

How to combat those annoying little parasites



# Intestinal Worms

There are five different types of intestinal worms that can infect your pet; Hookworms, Roundworms, Whipworms, Tapeworms and Hydatids.

Adult worms can lay thousands of eggs a day. The eggs are microscopic and contaminate the pet's coat and the environment.

Other pets or people can ingest the eggs. If children ingest the eggs, or if the egg is a hydatid egg, the person can become seriously ill. If an animal ingests them, the eggs hatch and develop into adult worms in the new host.

Adult pets should be wormed at least four times a year, but when the risk of hydatids is high it should be done every 6 weeks. The risk of hydatids is high if the dog has access to unprocessed sheep meat or offal.

Puppies and kittens need more frequent worming with a strong emphasis on roundworm control. It is recommended that they are wormed at 2, 4, 6, 8, & 10 weeks of age with a product that at least controls roundworms.

After this they should be wormed with an allwormer at 12, 16, 20, & 24 weeks of age. After six months of age animals should go onto the adult control regime.



# Fleas

Adult fleas bite pets sucking their blood. Although each flea only takes a small amount of blood, it is possible to get significant blood loss in heavily infected animals and also cause significant discomfort. Disease and worms can be spread to pets via fleas.

Fleas move very quickly so they are often hard to detect. If your pet is scratching but you cannot see any adult fleas have a look for flea dirt. Flea dirt is actually flea faeces, it looks like small grains of black pepper. If you see flea dirt you know your pet does have fleas.

Some pets become allergic to fleas. Allergic animals chew and scratch at themselves causing hair loss and serious skin damage. This is known as Flea allergy dermatitis. Flea allergy dermatitis was once extremely hard to control because we could only kill the adult fleas but with the latest products available good control is possible.



# Ticks

The paralysis tick is found right along the east coast of Australia. Ticks can also be transported on camping gear, clothing or on pets that have travelled to a tick infested area. It has also been suggested that paralysis ticks may be able to survive in major cities, such as Melbourne, for many months at a time. Tick paralysis is seen most commonly in spring and early summer, as the weather is warming up and there is still a moderate amount of humidity present.

The average time between attachment of the tick and the development of clinical signs in pets is 7 days, and will most likely lead to death within 24 hours if left untreated. Generally, the first signs seen are paralysis and increased breathing rate and effort. As the toxin progresses through your pet's body, their breathing becomes more laboured and they are at great risk of suffering a fatal heart attack or respiratory exhaustion.

Every hour that passes without treatment increases the risk of fatality in your pet. It is important to bring them straight to the Vet clinic, but be sure that your pet is kept cool and in a stress-free environment to keep their breathing as calm and slow as possible.

If you live in a high risk area or are planning on taking a holiday in high-risk areas, it is important that your pet is protected against ticks and that a tick search is completed daily. Talk to your Vet about the most appropriate tick treatment for your dog.

Your Vet and the trained nurses and receptionist at your Fur Life Vet clinic are the best people to advise you on the right parasite control product for your dog or cat. With an increasing range of products available the right advice is vital to ensuring your pet is protected. **Importantly products that are made for dogs can be lethal to cats so it is always wise to seek professional advice before administering any product to your pet.**