CLIENT HANDOUT

Parasite Protection: Important for Your Pet...and for You!

Many common parasites can not only make your pet itchy and uncomfortable, but also transmit certain diseases to both animals and people. Such diseases are known as zoonotic diseases. Keeping your pet safe from parasites also helps protect the rest of your family.

FLEAS

Fleas have been around for millions of years and are found all over the world. Diseases that people can get from fleas include plague and bartonellosis ("cat scratch fever"). Preventing fleas helps protect against these diseases and can be achieved with a variety of oral and topical medications. If a flea infestation is discovered, your veterinarian can choose a product to treat your pet. Some light cleaning, such as vacuuming, will aid in ridding your home of fleas.

TICKS

Ticks can transmit a variety of zoonotic diseases, such as Lyme disease. While the best defense against ticks is to avoid them by staying out of tall grass and bushy areas—or at least check carefully for them after being outside and remove them quickly—many medications that kill or repel ticks on pets are available as spot-on or oral products or collars.

Nick Alias/shutterstock.com

HARVEST MITES

Harvest mites, or chiggers, can cause intense itching in people and pets. In some countries, they can also transmit a disease known as scrub typhus. Harvest mites are common in woods and fields, especially in autumn. The best protection is to avoid contact with them, since no current parasite preventives are meant for harvest mites. Chiggers eventually remove themselves, and people may be able to wash them off; however, your veterinarian can help treat cases of heavy infestation in your pet.

SCABIES MITES

Scabies mites typically infest dogs, causing sarcoptic mange (scabies). People may be affected if there are large numbers of mites in the home. Dogs with sarcoptic mange may have red, crusty skin and itching; in people, scabies mites can cause a raised, itchy rash. Your veterinarian can prescribe treatment and prevention for your dog, and your human healthcare provider can do the same for you.

If you have any questions about parasite prevention or think your pet may have a parasite problem, contact your veterinary clinic! TVN