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## Notes From The Exam Table



### FLEAS, FLEAS and OTHER PARASITES

Now that the winter snows seem to be behind us and all our thoughts are turning to spring we need to take a moment to consider the needs of our four legged friends at this time of year. We will be out enjoying the outdoors more and of course we will have our pets with us. This is the time of year that the external parasites (fleas, ticks, mosquitoes) all begin to gear up for their yearly attack against our pets. These insects are a major nuisance but they can also be deadly.

First let's consider fleas. The average flea will live less than 21 days as an adult. Once she emerges as an adult her only goal in life is to seek out a host (our pets) and suck blood. When the flea finds a host she jumps on it immediately and will take a 'blood meal' within 5 minutes of getting on your pet. She does this because she needs the blood to produce her eggs. She then will produce roughly 50 eggs a day (this equals a thousand flea eggs in 21 days). I have personally seen an adult Boxer die from anemia due to having so many fleas. There are many way to prevent and to kill fleas on your pet and around your house. We would be happy to assist you in formulating a plan to stop these pesky critters.

Ticks will normally be waiting out in the grass to ambush the next passerby it feels (they don't have eyes). It will grab whatever comes by and if it happens to be a leaf they will let go and then wait for you or your pet. Ticks are the worst to me because they carry so many different diseases. The disease that most everyone is familiar with is Lyme disease but that is only the surface of what these pests carry. Most of the ticks are transported from place to place by deer. That's right, next time you see that beautiful deer eating your Hosta realize that it is nothing but a 'Tick Taxi'. The best way to combat ticks is by using Frontline monthly on your pet or by using a Preventic Collar. We can certainly assist you in choosing between the choices.

With the return of warmer weather the mosquitoes will be back to affect everything we do outdoors. The most serious thing that they do will be to carry heartworms to our faithful companions, dogs and CATS. This is easily prevented by having your pet tested yearly for heartworms and placing and keeping them on monthly preventative. We carry Interceptor and Sentinel for dogs and we recommend Revolution for cats to prevent heartworms (this also does a great job to prevent fleas, but only in cats).

If you would like more information to combat any of these pests, please ask a staff member or myself when I am examining your pet. There are as many different protocols as there are pests so let us discuss your individual needs and help you set up a plan to keep these insects at bay. We will be glad to help you control if not eradicate these potentially deadly nuisances.

Dr. Watts

