

All Dogs and Puppies Need Deworming

Regular treatment for worms is part of responsible dog and puppy care.

By Jon Geller, DVM

Q. Should I deworm my two dogs on a regular basis? They haven't been wormed since I inherited them two years ago. Within the past two weeks, they both have been acting like they're starving. I haven't changed their diet, but they seem to need more food.

A. All dogs should be dewormed on a regular basis. It is not healthy for them to live with a free-loading population of parasites in their body such as roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, and heartworms.

Although puppies should be dewormed every two weeks with a prescription dewormer, adults can be managed with a monthly heartworm preventive that also controls other parasites. There are many products available, such as Heartgard Plus, Interceptor, or Revolution.

There has been a lot of controversy in veterinary medicine about the best overall approach for parasite control in dogs. One issue driving the debate is zoonotic disease: Humans can acquire these infections, especially young children. Parasites like roundworms can migrate throughout the body, often ending up in the eye, where they can create permanent damage.

Currently, the recommendation is that all dogs, regardless of where they live, receive a monthly multipurpose heartworm preventive, all year round. This will ensure a healthy, parasite-free dog, and minimize the risk to owners.