

## Preventing Parasites in Dogs

**Steps can be taken to protect dogs from risk of disease.**

Posted: February 16, 2007, 5 a.m. EST

Many pet owners know that parasites can make their animals sick and that parasitic diseases can be transmitted from pets to people. What they may not know is that there are easy steps they can take to eliminate the risks parasites pose.

A fall 2006 survey of more than 1,000 dog and cat owners across the United States by the Companion Animal Parasite Council, a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering the human-animal relationship, revealed that relatively few pet owners took preventive measures against parasites.

When it comes to heartworm, for example, 92 percent of survey respondents said they'd heard of it, and 82 percent knew it could be prevented. Yet even though 75 percent have a veterinarian who recommend monthly heartworm preventives, only 31 percent said they use such products.

Administering preventive medicines year-round is one of the top five things pet owners can do to protect their pets and families from the risks associated with parasites like fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes, according to the Companion Animal Parasite Council. Preventive action is still important during colder months, because many parasites live in homes year-round.

Tips to protect your family: Wash your hands after contact with an animal. Pick up dog and cat waste from your yard daily, especially in areas where both children and animals play. Cover home sandboxes to protect them from fecal contamination. Have your pet tested for parasites by a veterinarian at least once a year, and administer year-round flea, tick, and heartworm preventives medications to control parasites.

For more information on parasites, parasitic disease and how to keep the canine and human members of families healthy, visit the CAPC website, [www.petsandparasites.org](http://www.petsandparasites.org)