

Heartworm Prevention Protects Dogs, Wallets

Rise in mosquito population prompts warning from American Heartworm Society.

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Prevention is key to protecting dogs and cats from parasites, and while the U.S. economy struggles and pet owners look for ways to save money, stopping year-round heartworm preventive medication might end up costing more in the long run, according to the American Heartworm Society.

The Heartworm Society strongly urges pet owners to not cut back on preventives because failing to protect animals could cause harm and might end up increasing the financial burden if heartworm disease treatment is needed. The recent warning was issued as this year's increase in precipitation, widespread flooding across the country, and surge of hurricanes has increased the mosquito population.

An increased mosquito population creates a greater potential for heartworm disease. The disease primarily affects dogs, but infection may also occur in outdoor and indoor cats. According to the Heartworm Society, diagnosis in cats is on the rise.

"It's tempting to cut preventive heartworm care for pets, but the cost of prevention is still relatively low compared to the cost of treatment if heartworm disease is diagnosed. Both dogs and cats may needlessly suffer and possibly die from this completely preventable disease," said Dr. Sheldon Rubin, Heartworm Society president and Chicago-area practitioner. "The risk from the increased mosquito population makes the need for prevention even greater this year."