

Pawsitive Press

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Do you have a new kitten?

By: Ashley Shaw, D.V.M.

So you've got a new kitten... Congratulations! The first step in responsible kitten parenting is taking your kitten to the vet for a checkup. Depending on its age and medical history at adoption, your kitten may need to be tested for disease, vaccinated, and de-wormed. A quarantine period of at least two weeks is recommended before gradually introducing your kitten to other pets in the household.



Now comes the fun part, which is getting to know the newest member of your family! Just like humans, every kitten has its own unique personality and preferences. This is the moment to get your kitten accustomed to different tastes and textures of food. Rotate



options for protein source and paté/shreds/chunks/ etc, just make sure that the food is AAFCO certified (check the label) and formulated either for kittens or "all life stages." Mixing a bit of water in to wet food will keep your baby well hydrated now and in the future.

A similar principle applies to enrichment tools (toys and scratch posts). Does your kitten prefer crinkly over plush? Bells over feathers? Sisal over cardboard? There's only one way to find out... and that's to offer them everything! Some kittens are perfectly content to play by themselves, but some may require you to take an active role in playtime to keep their interest.



Dreading the inevitable kitten claws? After playtime is over and your kitten is all tuckered out, gently squeeze each of those tiny toes to get them used to the feel of your hands. Do it often, and in a calm environment. This will make life infinitely easier when it's time to break out the nail trimmers, as it will be a sensation your kitten is comfortable with and not associated with any sort of stressful event.

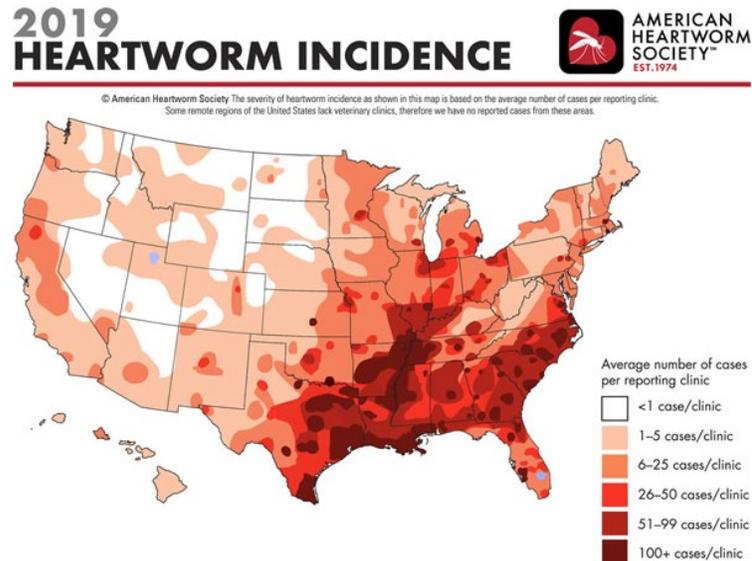


Get ready for the adventure of a lifetime! If you have any questions along the way, we here at the Animal Hospital of Dunedin are always available to answer them.

Dr. Shaw is Fear Free certified and her professional interests include dentistry and feline medicine. While she is an equal opportunity animal lover, she is particularly excited to meet your furry feline family!

April is Heartworm Awareness Month

April is National Heartworm Awareness month, but not every dog owner is well versed in the potentially deadly parasite. It's only transmitted by mosquitos, which pick up larval heartworms — called microfilaria — circulating in the bloodstream of an infected animal. Dogs with heartworm can be treated, but the best approach to the parasite is prevention.



1. The American Heartworm Society and many veterinarians recommend year-round preventative medication due to it being found in all 50 states.

While the prevalence of heartworm historically has been high in the South, the American Heartworm Society reports that it's on the rise throughout the U.S. This increase includes regions that were once considered "non-endemic." Even if you don't live in an area where heartworm is prominent, you still want to talk to your veterinarian about preventative medication for your dog.

2. Heartworm disease can cause lasting damage to the heart, which can affect a dog's health and quality of life — just one of many reasons to have your dog on preventative medication.

Heartworms mature after six months and can live in your dog's body for seven years, constantly producing offspring. After about a year, a dog may harbor hundreds of these worms, although the average is 15. The worms cause inflammation and damage to the heart, arteries, and lungs.

3. Heartworm preventative medication can only be obtained from a veterinarian or with a veterinarian's prescription through a pet pharmacy, so start the conversation early.

There are many different preventatives available, some that are chewable, some that are topical, and some that also prevent other parasites. Talk to your veterinarian about which preventative is right for you and your dog.

4. Certain heartworm preventative medications can protect against many intestinal parasites.

Again, certain preventatives can protect against other parasites such as roundworms, hookworms, fleas, and tapeworms. Your veterinarian will know the differences between the types of preventatives and can help you choose the right one.

5. The recommendation from the American Heartworm Society is to have all dogs tested for heartworm every 12 months, even those already on heartworm preventative medication.

Have your veterinarian test your dog for heartworm during your annual visit.

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