Spotlight on Heartgard for Cats

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HEARTWORM DISEASE

Many people know that heartworm disease is transmitted by mosquitoes, but some are surprised to hear that it can affect cats as well as dogs. When a mosquito bites a dog infected with heartworm, the mosquito takes in heartworm larvae, called microfilariae, and passes them on to the next dog or cat it bites. After an infected mosquito bites a cat, the heartworm larvae move into the bloodstream and begin to mature in the blood vessels of the heart and lungs. In cats, the effects of heartworm disease are most often related to the lungs. An infected cat may have persistent coughing or wheezing, clinical signs which may easily be mistaken for those of other common feline respiratory conditions, such as asthma or bronchitis. Heartworm disease can be especially difficult to detect in cats, because some infected cats show no symptoms at all. In addition, heartworm testing is more complicated in cats than it is for dogs and a negative blood test result does not rule out heartworm disease.

Butter was an inside cat, so her owners did not think about heartworm disease until their son's cat was diagnosed with it. Butter's veterinarian explained that although heartworm disease is not as common in cats as in dogs, felines do get this disease, and the best strategy is prevention. Butter's veterinarian gave them a prescription for Heartgard for Cats.

Outcome: Butter is on monthly Heartgard for Cats year-round, and is tested yearly for heartworm.

FELINE HEARTWORM INFECTION IS A SERIOUS MEDICAL CONDITION

The good news is that it is also one of the most easily preventable. Heartgard for

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Cats is an excellent heartworm preventive, which also controls hookworms in cats. To be most effective, it must be administered monthly, preferably on the same date each month. We recommend giving Heartgard for Cats year-round, to avoid forgetting to start it again when mosquito season begins. We also recommend giving it to indoor cats, since mosquitoes can come inside through screens or open doors. In the long run, maintaining your cat's heartworm protection is money well spent.

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