

# SPRINGTIME TIPS FOR OUR PET PALS

Well it's that time of year again! What time is that you ask? Spring is the time of year when the parasites, such as ticks and mosquitoes, are prevalent and can cause damage to your pet. Ticks can be the source of Lyme disease and other tick born diseases, such as ehrliciosis and anaplasmosis. Mosquitoes are the carriers of heartworm disease. If left untreated heartworm disease is very serious and can cause a slow and painful death for your dog. Fleas are more prevalent as the days warm up. Flea bites itch like crazy and make your pet very uncomfortable. I wouldn't wish that on anybody. If you've ever had a flea bite you know how miserable and unrelenting the itchiness can be. The pet can also have a generalized allergic reaction to the flea saliva. This usually results in hair loss around the tail and other areas around the rear end of your pet. There are many good flea and tick and heartworm preventative medications for your dog and cat. Ask your veterinarian for guidance as to what is best for your pet. Sometimes people think it is too expensive to buy these products, but compared to treatment once your pet gets one of these diseases these preventatives are a total bargain.

Of course, the rattlesnakes come out when the weather gets warmer. They are often hidden in the grass or under wood piles or other places where they cannot easily be seen. Your dog can attend Rattlesnake Avoidance Classes which will help protect your dog by helping him/her identify that there is a snake nearby to avoid. This training works well for some dogs and not so well for others. There are also rattlesnake vaccines you can give your pet which will reduce the severity of the effect of a snake bite. If your pet is bitten it will need antivenom treatment; get your pet to the nearest veterinary hospital asap to give your pet the best chance of surviving the bite. Cats generally have a less severe reaction to rattlesnake bites than dogs and the odds of surviving are higher, but your kitty needs to be seen by a vet quickly, just like your dog.

In addition to all the parasites there are other maladies to consider. Some spring time plants such as lilies, azaleas, rhododendrons, tulips, daffodils and more can be toxic to your pet. As well, garden products such as composts and weed repellents can be toxic to your pets. You need to be sure that you are using pet friendly products in your garden, so you do not unintentionally damage or even kill your pet. If you do spring house cleaning use only pet

friendly cleaners. After cleaning you may want the house to smell pretty, beware of aromatic diffusers containing essential oils like eucalyptus oil, tea tree oil and many others can be very toxic to your pet, causing seizures and other neurological reactions, including death. Before you use these diffusers make certain they will not damage your pet.

The internet is a great way to learn about these parasite related diseases and product safety. The internet should never be used as a diagnostic tool, rather than consulting with your veterinarian, but it can be a place to learn information on toxic plants, cleaners, diffusers and more. Please keep your pet safe!

Springtime is prime breeding season for un-spayed/un-neutered pets. Each year Sammie's Friends takes in approximately 400 abandoned and unwanted kittens. It is not necessary to produce all these poor little helpless creatures who cannot care for themselves. Imagine weighing 3.5 ounces, unable to see or hear and being left to fend for yourself. We have received kittens left in other people's mail boxes and puppies left in paper bags alongside the road. This is sad and heartbreaking. Female dogs and cats come into estrus (more commonly called heat) when the weather gets warm and two months later the kitties and puppies start arriving. **THERE IS NO BETTER TIME THAN RIGHT NOW TO GET YOUR PETS SPAYED/NEUTERED AND AVOID THIS ANNUAL DISASTER.**

Springtime is a time to take time to make sure that your pet is safe from parasites, snakes, toxic plants, garden products, spring cleaning products and unplanned, unwanted mating resulting in unwanted litters. I hope you all enjoy the warmer weather and do the same for your pets.