



CANINE INFECTIOUS DISEASE SCREENING

Animal Care Clinic recommends a three-way infectious disease screen for all dogs on an annual basis. This simple blood test checks for heartworm disease, Lyme's Disease and Ehrlichiosis, all of which can be treated and prevented.

HEARTWORM DISEASE

This is a true "spaghetti-like" worm that lives in the heart and lungs. It is transmitted by mosquitoes and causes signs of heart, lung and liver failure which can eventually lead to death. From the time a mosquito bites, it takes at least 6 months until a blood test for the disease will be positive. Heartworms are not common in San Luis Obispo, but we see significant numbers in Atascadero, the Santa Cruz mountains and other parts of the state. Treatment success depends on the severity and chronicity of the infection. Heartworm can be prevented by monthly use of Heartgard Plus, Interceptor, Sentinel or Revolution.

LYMES DISEASE

This is a tick-transmitted disease seen most commonly on the East Coast and in the Napa area. Initial signs in dogs usually include lameness. Long-term infections can cause signs in almost any organ system. If caught early, Lymes disease is easily treated with the proper antibiotics, but if allowed to become chronic, this disease can be devastating. Tick control with Frontline or Preventic collars will prevent the problem.

EHRlichiosis

Another tick-borne disease, ehrlichiosis, is rising in frequency in our area. This used to be a disease of the southwest deserts, but it is spreading up through Nevada and California, and it has become the most common of these three diseases at Animal Care Clinic. The acute phase of the disease is often overlooked, as it causes a short-lived fever and sometimes diarrhea or just fatigue. With time we begin to see anemia, bleeding disorders, enlarged lymph nodes and a variety of other symptoms. Treatment is quite successful when instituted early in the disease, but it can be hard to clear the organism if treatment is delayed until outward signs start. Prevention is the same as for Lymes Disease – tick control with Frontline or Preventic collars.

THE ANIMAL CARE CLINIC PREVENTION PLAN

We recommend that all dogs not only receive regular vaccinations (usually every 3 years), but that they have annual fecal flotation exams and infectious disease blood screening along with their yearly physical exam.. The use of monthly doses of Heartgard Plus along with Frontline Plus will prevent roundworms, hookworms, fleas, ticks, heartworms, Lymes disease and Ehrlichiosis. Your dog's lifestyle, travel patterns and daily routine will influence which prevention measures should be used, and our staff can help you set up the right program for your pets.

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