



Health topics

Dogs and cats

THE GUIDE TO TREAT YOUR PET AGAINST PARASITES

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Treatment against parasites, what for?

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Some owners wonder why to treat their pets against external parasites. What are the risks for the animal and for us? Are antiparasitic drugs toxic? What are the differences between the different brands and application modes?

And particularly what parasites can be found on their pet?

Fleas, ticks, harvest bugs (red bugs), ear mites, scabies (seven-year itch) mosquitoes and phlebotomes... These parasites are present in our outdoor surroundings and can infest your pet **during a walk** or through **contact with another animal** already infested.

These parasites can weaken your pet in case of massive infestation, but also transmit other parasites responsible for diseases that can potentially be fatal.

Here are **7 species** of parasites or **7 good reasons to treat your pet** if he is at risk to be exposed to them :

1. Fleas

They can be the source of severe **allergic skin reactions** : Heavy itching and secondary lesions due to scratching, eventually even pyoderma (skin infection), and severe hair loss. They can also transmit larvae of an intestinal worm (*Dipylidium caninum*), which can lead to important **digestive troubles**. Additionally, they even can allow the transmission of a bacteria (*Bartonella henselae*) that is responsible for a **potentially serious infection** in cats and humans.

Finally fleas can reproduce and multiply inside your house/apartment and in case of severe infestation it takes several weeks, or even months, to eliminate them completely!

They can be found all year round. All animals having outdoor access or having contact with other animals should be protected (not to forget pets going in a boarding kennel for holidays).

2. Ticks

Can cause **anemia** in cases of massive infestation, especially in young animals.

They can transmit :

- A blood parasit (*Babesia canis*), responsible in dogs for **piroplasmosis**, a disease causing high fever, vomiting, diarrhea, anemia and finally an acute kidney failure. Without early diagnosis and treatment, the consequence is **death** ! However, this parasite is not present everywhere and some regions are at higher risk than others.
- Bacteria :
Borrelia burgdorferi or **Lyme disease**, causing fever, intermittent and recidiving **pain in muscles and joints**, several months after being infected.
Erlichia canis, causing fever, pain in the joints, anemia, coagulation disorders with a potentially **fatal** issue.

Ticks are present when environment temperature ranges around 10°C / 50°F (not connected with a specific season). Their habitats are diverse according to the different species, so not only in the woods but more generally everywhere below 1'200m altitude.

3. Harvest bugs (red bugs)

Small red-orange colored mites, adults mostly present by the end of summer and autumn, even in urban surroundings. They cause **heavy itching and skin lesions** that can extend if not treated.

4. Ear mites

Very common upon dogs living in places with regular contacts with other dogs and in cats living in groups (i.e. kennels/catteries). It can also easily be transmitted from the mother to the puppies/kittens. They are very contagious but are transmitted by direct contact between animals and does not affect humans. It is one of the main causes of **external otitis** in dogs and cats.

5. Scabies (seven-year itch)

Also called dog (or fox) mange is highly contagious, is transmitted by direct contact or by contaminated environment, and can affect humans. In most cases it appears as « accidental » contamination, either with another dog or often with a fox (80-90% of foxes have scabies). It causes heavy itching,

hair loss and skin lesions, sometimes even wounds. If symptoms persist, general condition of the animal can become severely affected (weight loss). Scabies is present all year long.

6. Mosquitoes

Some species can transmit larvae of a worm called *Dirofilaria immitis*, or **Heart worm**. In case of massive infestation, it causes a severe heart failure or even a pulmonary embolism.

This parasite is present all around the Mediterranean area, France (excepted Nord-East), Spain as well as both North and South America.

7. Phlebotomes

These are insects that look very similar to mosquitoes and that can transmit another parasite (*Leishmania infantum*) responsible for **Leishmaniasis**. This disease causes skin lesions and general symptoms with fatal prognosis at middle-long term. This disease can affect humans. This parasite is present all around the Mediterranean area, France is now even on alert due to an important rise of the number of cases.

ANTI-PARASITIC DRUGS, THE DIFFERENCES

Application modes :

- **Tablets** (Program, Capstar, Nexgard, Bravecto) : convenient for dogs who regularly go in the water, if there are young children as there will be no risk of contamination if they touch the dog, long acting for Bravecto (3 months)
- **Pipettes** (Frontline, Frontect, Duowin, Broadline, Certifect, Stronghold, Advocate, Cyclo, upon others...) : Easy application mode, instant washing out possible in case of allergic reaction, application 1x/month (excepted Cyclo 4x/year), Often more expensive, diffuses in the skin but very little in the blood so less heavy for the metabolism
- **Collars** (Seresto, Scalibor) : long acting, often lowest price, instant washing out in case of allergic reaction, diffuses in the skin but very little in the blood so less heavy for the metabolism, but all disadvantages of a double collar, contamination possible for young children or other dog chewing on the collar
- **Injections** (Program) : long acting (6 months), low price.
- **Sprays** (Frontline) : about 1 month acting, diffuses in the skin but very little in the blood so less heavy for the metabolism, application can be difficult (not all pets accept to be sprayed, especially in some body areas, **do not spray the head !**)

Efficacy :

- **Program and Capstar** (dog and cat) : only against **fleas**, long acting for the first, but doesn't kill fleas, needs to be combined with the second in case of infestation.
- **Nexgard and Bravecto (dog only)** : fast and insecticide acting (fleas and ticks), possible use (not AMM) against different manges, 1x/month for Nexgard, 4x/year for Bravecto, possible use on MDR1+ positive dogs
- **Frontline** (dogs and cats) : fleas and ticks, **insecticide but not repellent** acting, usually well tolerated by atopic animals, possible use on MDR1+ positive dogs
- **Avocate, Stronghold** (dog and cat) : action against fleas, intestinal worms (excepted tenia), heart worms, manges, weak efficacy against ticks, application 1x/month, well tolerated by atopic animals, do not use advocate for MDR1+ positive dogs, stronghold is possible, possible use on puppies/kittens
- **Broadline** (cat) : insecticide but not repellent acting against fleas and ticks, intestinal worms (round and tape worms), heart worms, well tolerated, application 1x/month
- **Ceresto** (dogs and cats) : long acting (7-8 months) against fleas and ticks, and lice, cheap.
- **Frontect, Duowin, Scalibor, Advantix, Expot (dog only)** : against fleas and ticks insecticide and repulsive acting, repulsive acting against mosquitoes and phlebotomes, not always well tolerated by some atopic dogs, and by cats (fatal !)
- **Certifect (dog only)** : fleas and ticks insecticide acting, active also against lice, possible use against manges (not AMM)