

Have a topic you're interested to know more about? Email or text us your ideas! **(817) 282- 7371** or **info@browntrailah.com**

Allergy Season is Here!

Just like us, our pets can have seasonal allergies. One big difference is that our cats and dogs typically show their allergy signs with itchy-scratchy skin and ears rather than “hay fever” with runny noses like us. (Sneezing is actually more often associated with stress and/or with upper respiratory infections.) These allergies often lead to secondary skin and ear infections, which cause worsening itch.

Is your pet showing any of these signs of pruritus (itchiness)?

- chewing
- scratching
- licking
- head shaking
- rubbing/rolling (on furniture, carpet, etc.)
- patchy hair loss or thinning hair coat (this can be a more subtle sign of itch in some pets, but it may also indicate issues other than itchiness)

If so, your pet may be experiencing seasonal allergies, and truth be told, a pet can have allergies year-round.

- 🐾 **The number one allergy in pets is FLEAS** (specifically, flea saliva). A single flea bite on a flea-allergic pet is enough to trigger a massive inflammatory and pruritic (itchy) skin response.
- 🐾 The second most common allergy is ENVIRONMENT: pollen, dust, trees, weeds, grass, etc. These may vary by geographic region and season. Does your dog seem to get an ear infection the same time every year?
- 🐾 The third most common allergy is FOOD. If a pet has a food allergy, it is to the PROTEIN source. (While there are certain GI conditions that respond to fiber content, it is not an allergic response. Please note that cats and dogs do not get Celiac’s disease or gluten intolerance.) The top three food allergies in dogs are beef, chicken, and soy. The top three in cats are chicken, fish, and milk. If it is determined that your pet may have a food allergy, a food trial is recommended. During a food trial, we must completely avoid ANY trace of that protein source (including any treats or supplements).

Although we cannot cure allergies, we can manage them with cutting-edge medications like Apoquel and Cytopoint. If you think your pet might have allergies, contact us! We can help tailor a plan to keep your pet happy and comfortable all year-round.

Easter Hazards

Lilies and eggs full of candy are always fun, but beware! Easter lilies are incredibly toxic to animals (especially cats). If ingested, lilies can cause severe kidney damage, even up to kidney failure.

Chocolate and other sugary sweets can be toxic to pets. Ingestion may lead to gastroenteritis, pancreatitis, or in severe cases, liver and kidney damage. Keep in mind that the wrappers also present a danger; smaller pets are especially at risk for wrappers getting stuck in the GI tract causing an obstruction which may require surgery to correct.

To make sure you and your pet enjoy the season safely, be certain he or she can’t get access to any of these seasonal risks. And if you think your pet may have been exposed, don’t wait to call for help! The sooner supportive therapy is started, the better.



Fleas

As with most problems, it is much safer and easier to prevent flea infestations than it is to eradicate them after the fact. Flea bites are irritating to a pet and can create the opportunity for secondary skin infections. Fleas can also carry disease, the extreme historical example being bubonic plague (<https://www.cdc.gov/plague/faq/index.html#how>).

The adult fleas seen in the hair coat are just the tip of the iceberg. The vast majority of the flea's life cycle is spent in the environment around your pet (in the carpet, bushes outside, bedding, and so on). Therefore, while the easiest stage to control is the adult flea on your pet, additional measures may be needed to address the presence of fleas in the environment.

There are several flea prevention products of excellent quality available on the market. Depending on your pet's needs and lifestyle, we can help you choose the best method of flea prevention to keep your furry friend comfortable and parasite-free.

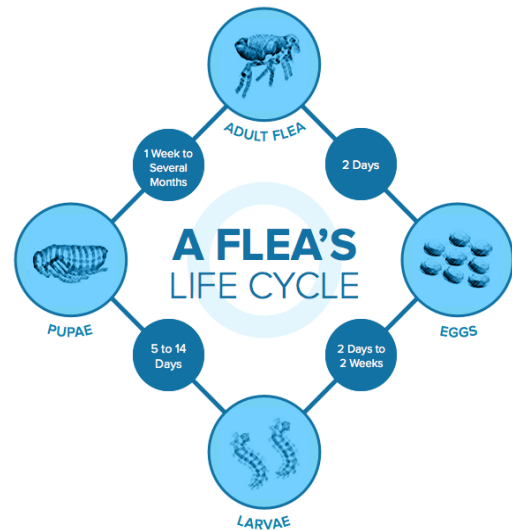


Figure 1: https://www.petmd.com/dog/parasites/evr_multi_understanding_the_flea_life_cycle

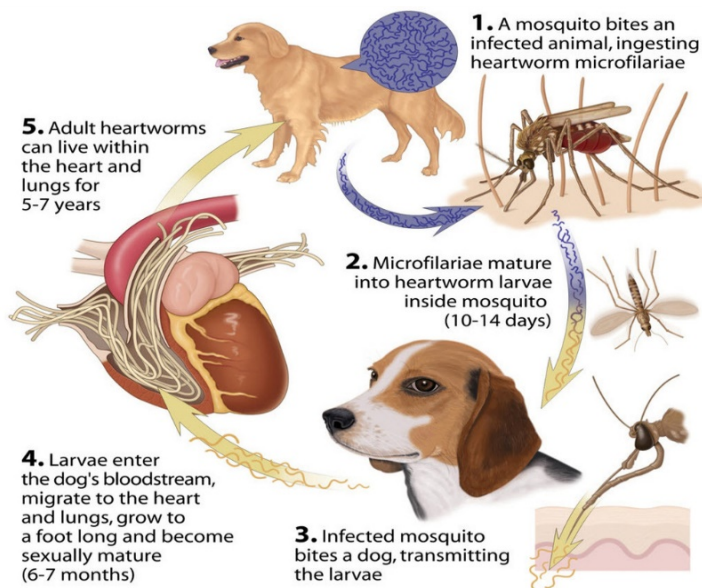


Figure 2 <http://www.wonderweimsrescue.com/hunger-concept/>

Heartworms

Heartworms, as the name indicates, are parasites that live inside the blood vessels and chambers of the heart of infected animals. As with any parasite, their presence creates inflammation and scarring which affects the function of these tissues. Heartworm infestations can lead to major secondary health issues such as heart murmurs (up to an including heart failure), strokes, caval syndrome (obstruction of the major vessel carrying blood into the heart), hepatitis, respiratory distress, and in severe cases, death. It is much easier, safer for your pet, and less costly to you to **prevent** heartworm disease than it is to treat it once it is present.

Heartworms are spread via mosquitoes to both dogs and cats. Indoor-only pets are still at risk since insects can and will get inside the home! Even during colder seasons, research has shown that “microclimates” of warmth provide a haven for mosquitoes to survive and reproduce, thereby allowing heartworm infection to occur year-round. (This study was done in the New England area when snowfall was being measured by the foot.)

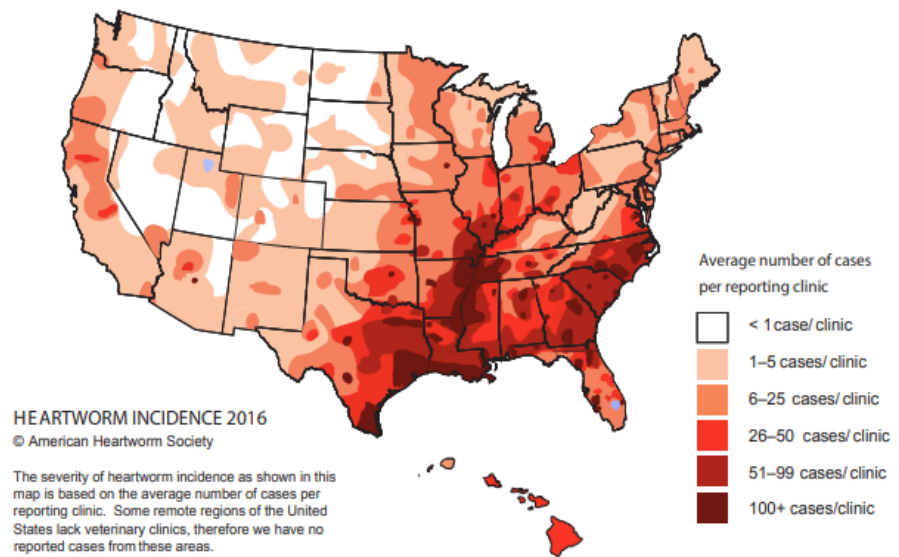


Figure 3: <https://www.heartwormsociety.org/pet-owner-resources>

Texas is “blessed” with an abundant mosquito population. We are also in a region with a higher prevalence of heartworm disease. Texas is regularly in the top 5 states in the nation for heartworm positive pets. Don’t let your pet join the statistics! Whether they prefer tasty treats or topical applications, let us help you find the right formulation that will protect your friend throughout the year.

Paws for Thought

- 🐾 Feel free to send us pictures or videos of your pets! Whether it’s just to share their antics or if it’s for a medical concern, modern technology can help us see more of what your pet shows you at home.
- 🐾 Is your pet nervous coming to the clinic? Bring their favorite toy or treat for the appointment, or even a moral support buddy (if they are more confident with their “brother/sister” than they are on their own).

Questions, Concerns, or Suggestions?

Use any of the following methods to reach us for: heartworm or flea prevention refills, appointments, follow-up questions from your recent visit, check when services are due, etc.

- 🐾 Phone: 817.282.7371
 - Call or text! The first time you text, please include your name as well as your pet’s name.
- 🐾 Email: info@browntrilah.com