

# TAKING ON TOUGH QUESTIONS



AMERICAN  
HEARTWORM  
SOCIETY™  
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FAQs ABOUT HEARTWORM DIAGNOSIS, PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

**Q** Dear AHS: When I discuss heartworm prevention with my clients, they always ask which one is best. Does the AHS have an answer? – Dr. D.



**Elizabeth Clyde, DVM**  
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## THE SHORT ANSWER

The **BEST** heartworm preventive is the one the client will **GIVE**.

Dear Dr. D.,

We're fortunate to have many different FDA-approved heartworm preventive compounds and formulations to offer our clients. While all preventives are nearly 100 percent effective when given as directed, there is no "one-size-fits-all" recommendation that covers all clients. The "right" preventive is one that fits our patients' exposure risk as well as both the owner's preferences and limitations.

**Exposure risk.** Consider first the pet's health and the health of its human family members. I recently saw an indoor/outdoor cat in my practice whose owner is a mom with several children under age 5 at home. The risk of exposure to zoonotic parasites is real for this family. Because the cat spends part



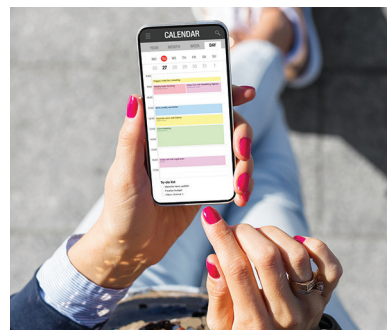
of his life outdoors, where he may be catching and consuming mice and other prey, he needs protection from intestinal parasites, fleas and ticks—as well as heartworms. A monthly or bi-monthly all-in-one preventive that protects the cat from internal and external parasites is the best option for this patient.

**Lifestyle limitations.** Another of my clients had a dog that came up heartworm-positive because the owner simply couldn't remember to give the dog her monthly preventive. After treating the dog for heartworms, I switched her to a 12-month injection I can administer at the dog's annual check-up—an appointment I make sure to schedule at the same time every year. I also have both elderly clients

who struggle with topical tubes and clients with picky pets that turn up their noses at heartworm "treats." If cost is a significant factor, both topical and oral products are available at a range of price points.



**Compliance keepers.** Even so, finding the "right" product for a patient isn't enough if there are obstacles to on-time preventive administration. One of my clients is a professional couple that wants no-expense-spared broad-spectrum products for their dog and cat, but they also want convenience. Setting up auto-shipment and home delivery for their pets' monthly preventives met



their needs. And remember that busy mom with the small children? She sometimes has trouble remembering to give her cat his preventive on time, so my staff had her download

and set up a monthly reminder app on her phone while she was in the clinic for her cat's annual check-up.

Whether it's manufacturer loyalty, personal preference or simply habit, it's easy to get in a rut of recommending just one or two heartworm products for all patients. Remember that there is no "best" preventive—there's only the preventive that is best for an individual patient and client. ■