



Responsible use of parasiticides for cats and dogs: the 5-point plan

1 Work with clients to prevent and check for parasites

- ✓ Promote regular health checks and provide clear information on all practical ways to prevent animals getting parasites
- ✓ Demonstrate how to check for common parasites such as ticks and fleas, and where relevant explain the symptoms of other parasites such as intestinal worms, mites and lungworm
- ✓ Inform dog owners of the risks associated with dog fouling and remind them to always pick up faeces and dispose of responsibly

2 Understand the potential risks to animals, humans, and the environment

- ✓ Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of veterinary parasitology and the possible risks to animal and human health from the parasites you treat
- ✓ Know how parasiticides work and familiarise yourself with their datasheets/product SPCs
- ✓ Be aware of the potential harm parasiticide products may cause to natural invertebrate populations and the wider ecosystem
- ✓ Make sure you advise clients of the risks and benefits for the parasiticides you prescribe

3 Take a risk-based approach to prescribing

- ✓ Ask your client about relevant lifestyle factors, such as walks, indoor vs outdoor cat, travel, presence of other household pets, and about household members, including children, the elderly and those who are pregnant or immunocompromised
- ✓ Consider local parasite risks where possible
- ✓ Consider the benefits and limitations of faecal testing or serology to improve surveillance for local disease risks and better understand how to treat the individual animal
- ✓ Avoid a blanket approach; tailor products and frequency to the animal's needs and level of risk
- ✓ Target treatment to the parasite, using narrow spectrum parasiticides where appropriate
- ✓ Choose the most appropriate formulation for the animal and owner eg, where possible, do not use a topical product for a dog that frequently swims

4 Ensure appropriate use

- ✓ Discuss mode and frequency of application with the client and select a product that is likely to encourage best compliance for that client and pet. Discuss and factor in owner wishes regarding format and frequency to improve compliance. Don't assume all clients find the same mode and frequency of administration easy
- ✓ Advise clients on correct administration, storage and disposal of products and packaging, and administer products for clients as necessary
- ✓ Explain that inappropriate use or disposal can affect user safety, reduce efficacy and increase the risk of polluting the environment
- ✓ Advise clients on grooming, bathing and swimming precautions after topical treatment. Where possible, do not use topical products for animals that need to be bathed frequently or swim regularly

5 Record and monitor use

- ✓ Ensure individual vets are empowered to make risk-based decisions with their clients
- ✓ Be able to justify your choice of parasiticide and treatment regime
- ✓ Keep accurate records of treatment and outcomes to help evaluate therapeutic regimens
- ✓ Regularly assess your practice parasiticide use and develop written protocols for appropriate use
- ✓ Report any concerns, including of suspected resistance, to the manufacturers and through the Suspected Adverse Reaction Surveillance Scheme (SARSS)

Parasiticide products are important for the treatment and prevention of many parasites, which can pose risks to both animals and humans. Every use needs to follow correct administration and disposal guidelines to minimise risk of environmental contamination and selection for resistant parasites. Responsible use optimises therapeutic effects while minimising the risks. Always take a proportionate and targeted approach to treatment and think 'One Health' to factor in risks and benefits to animals, humans, and the environment.