

Flea, Tick, and Heartworm Guidelines from Southport Vet for 2015

There are 2 new changes this year.

All dogs will be tested with a combination screening test (4DX with Quant C6) this tests for Heartworm, Lyme, Anaplasma, and Ehrlichiosis. Up to 50% of dogs in Fairfield County are infected with Lyme disease, Anaplasma or Both ([click here to see the prevalence map](#)). If your pet comes up positive there will be additional testing recommended as infection does not always mean active disease. The treatment for positive tick borne illness is at least 4 weeks of Doxycycline or Monocycline.

Whether your pet is positive for Lyme, Anaplasma, or both we will check a urine sample looking for protein, if this is positive we will run a test to see how much protein there is in the urine. We will also run a CBC or complete blood count to see other indications of active disease, such as low platelets or changes in white blood cell count. Some of these tests are included in wellness labs and will not be repeated if they were done the same day as the combination screening test.

If your pet is positive for lyme disease the combination screening includes a quantitative portion called a C6. The C6 predicts which dogs have an active treatable disease vs. the dogs that are positive from previous exposure. The 4DX will be repeated 6 months after treatment to check the level of this C6.

If your pet is positive for Anaplasma has no symptoms, has normal blood work and urine results, and has never been positive for Anaplasma in the past they will be treated for 1 month. At the end of this treatment an Anaplasma titer will be checked for future treatment decision making. The Anaplasma titer is a quantitative Anaplasma test. If, however, your pet has symptoms, has abnormal blood work or urine results, or has been positive for Anaplasma in the past we will run the Anaplasma titer before treatment. Animals that have been positive in the past have the new titer results compared to the level of their base line titers. If these results are stable no treatment will be necessary. If not they are treated for 4 weeks. At the end of this treatment the titer is tested again to make sure that the levels are not still rising as longer treatment may be required. If any of the Anaplasma titers come back with a result that is greater than or equal to 1:3200 another test will be added on to continue this titer until a final number is reached.

Otherwise all other guidelines from last year are in place: ([click here for 2014 guidelines](#))

12 months of Heartgard for all dogs after 4DX testing

If a single dose is missed contact the office. You will resume Heartgard but be retested with a regular heartworm test 6-7 months after the missed dose. If you miss more than 2 doses of Heartgard you need a heartworm test before restarting then again 6-7 months after missed dose ([click here for to see Heartworm Guidelines](#)). Cats should receive Revolution once monthly topically to prevent heartworm and intestinal parasites. An outdoor cat with tick exposure will still need Frontline or a Seresto collar. We still like Frontline. If you are never seeing attached ticks and aren't forgetting to put it on it's still an excellent product. Seresto flea and tick collars for dogs and cats are safe and very effective but can't be used in dogs that swim or get bathed more than 2x month and for cats that can't keep a collar on (though they are breakaway).

The most important rule no matter what product you use is that you never see an attached tick. If you are seeing attached ticks disease can be transmitted and we need to discuss what products work best on YOUR pet and for their lifestyle.