



MOSQUITO-TRANSMITTED DISEASES

Is your pet protected?

During these warmer, humid months between February-April, we see an emergence of mosquitoes and with that, mosquito-transmitted diseases to our pets. We particularly see Myxomatosis in rabbits, however the Heartworm parasite is also transmitted via mosquitoes. Both of these are deadly to pets, and unfortunately regarding Myxomatosis, there is no cure.



MYXOMATOSIS

Myxo was introduced in the 1950's to assist in the prevention of wild rabbits, however the disease eventually became un-containable and began to affect domesticated rabbits within Australia and other countries. The disease causes rabbits to become red, swell and weep discharge from the eyes, nose, mouth and anogenital areas. The rabbit will begin to lose its appetite, develop high fevers and eventually have laboured or difficult breathing.



Between February-March last year, we had to euthanise a large number of pet rabbits due to the virus, and we see this pattern arise each year. There unfortunately is no vaccination to protect pet rabbits against the virus, however we urge our clients to protect their pets by keeping them in mozzie-proof hutches and keeping them inside during high-mosquito times, ie dusk and dawn.

HEARTWORM

Heartworm can affect both dogs and cats, but predominantly dogs. There have been over 490 cases of heartworm in Australia since 2014, recorded by the heartworm surveillance project, conducted by Zoetis petcare. The larvae of the worm is carried by a mosquito from an infected dog to another dog, where the parasite lodges into the arteries of the new host's heart and grows to large lengths. This eventually becomes fatal to the dog. Although many owners are aware of heartworm in dogs, we encourage owners to choose a long-lasting prevention method, such as the 12-monthly prevention injection rather than monthly tablets, as it can be easily forgotten.

This mosquito-season, we urge owners to take necessary precautions for prevention of mosquito-transmitted diseases. Talk to us about heartworm prevention medication, or if you have a rabbit, about its enclosure and lifestyle. We are here to help.

