NEXGARD ORAL ONCE A MONTH FLEA & TICK PREVENTIVE

It seems to happen every year – at least one new medication arrives on the market for heartworm, flea or tick prevention. This year is no exception. This year's most exciting product is a once a month oral flea and tick preventative – **the first ever oral medication that kills ticks**. It's made by Merial, the company that also makes Heartgard, Frontline and Certifect. I don't know about yours but my dog doesn't like having Frontline put on her, so I'm glad to have an alternative that she can take like a treat.

Another advantage of this new product, Nexgard, is that you can use it regardless of whether your dog is going to have a bath or just received a bath. You can't apply a topical product such as Frontline within 48 hours of bathing. With Nexgard it doesn't matter when your grooming appointment is and you won't need to worry about getting the stuff on your hands or having an area of hair loss on the back of the dog's neck.

Like all products that kill ticks, it takes a while for Nexgard to work. Ticks are so well shielded by their tough exoskeleton – outer shell – that it takes hours for them to absorb enough topical insecticide to kill them. Nexgard circulates in the bloodstream. This means the tick has to actually bite the dog to ingest some of it, and then it dies slowly over the next 12-24 hours (the tick dies, not the dog!) Ticks crawl around for a while before they latch on and begin feeding and Nexgard won't have any effect during this time.

Frontline, and especially Certifect, kills ticks more quickly, usually before they bite. If you don't like to see any ticks on your dog Nexguard probably won't be the product you'll want to use. However, deer ticks are so tiny that we often never see them at all anyway. Milwaukee and Ozaukee counties have the least ticks of any counties in Wisconsin, so for many of us the risk of our dogs picking up ticks isn't that high. Nexguard is perfect for light tick risk, especially if you don't like that greasy spot on your pet's neck after applying a topical product.

Certifect remains our favorite product for heavy tick risk. It's Frontline with an





added ingredient (amitraz) that makes it more effective against ticks. However, Certifect has a couple disadvantages. It has an unpleasant odor for the first few days after putting it on; and it can cause lethargy for a few days after applying it as well. (This is much more likely to occur if the dog can lick some of it off, so make sure you are applying it far enough up the back of the neck that your pet can't get to it.)

If your dog doesn't swim, the Preventic collar, which also contains amitraz, is a good option and it's inexpensive compared to topical medications. In collar form the odor of the amitraz is much less and the collar lasts four months. If you use Sentinel for your heartworm and flea protection adding a Preventic collar works out well.

There are many over-the-counter flea and tick products on the market. Most contain pyrethrin or permethrin or a synthetic chemical in that same family of compounds. These chemicals were developed in the 1970's. They are much more toxic than modern products, especially to cats, and many insects are now resistant to them. If you have no cats in your household and your pet's exposure risk is small using these products is reasonable – although none of us who work at Best Friends would ever use one of these products on our own pets. Both safety and efficacy are poor compared to Frontline.

That brings up another point. Frontline is not a prescription product, so you can buy it anywhere. The problems with purchasing this product from a big box store or on-line are that 1) there is a lot of counterfeit Frontline on the market and 2) the main ingredient in the product is heat sensitive. If it is stored or transported in a warehouse or truck that gets too hot, it won't be effective anymore. These problems account for most of the complaints we get about Frontline that's not effective. What they bought was probably either not really Frontline or it wasn't stored properly somewhere along the way to its final destination. 9 times out of 10 the customer didn't get their Frontline from us. Be careful where you get it from and store and apply it properly, or you may be wasting your money. Remember that we get our product directly from the manufacturer and our rebates and free product deals often make purchasing from us just as good a deal as getting it elsewhere for less per tube. Plus if you buy it from us, it's guaranteed.

So that said, how do you decide which of the many products out there is right for you? Here are our recommendations:

All pets that go outdoors have risk for picking up fleas. Sentinel is our main product for dogs who have flea risk but **no tick risk**. Sentinel prevents heartworms, fleas and three types of intestinal parasites.

For **mild tick risk** in dogs, use a name brand or generic ivermectin/pyrantel heartworm preventative, such as Heartgard or TriHeart, plus Frontline or Nexgard for fleas and ticks.

For heavy tick risk – going up North, taking your dog hunting, living in the boonies with lots of wildlife – use Certifect, Nexgard or a Preventic collar. If you use Nexgard be aware that you will still see ticks on your dog but they will die and fall off within 24 hours of taking a bite out of your pet. It's fine to only use these heavy duty products only for months when you have more exposure to ticks and not all year round if you like. For example, you could use Sentinel year round and add Certifect or Nexgard when you go up North in the summer or when hunting with your dog in the fall.

If your dog has had whipworms in the past and has risk for ticks, use Sentinel plus Frontline or Nexguard.

If your dog has food allergies and can't take chewable tablets use Revolution to prevent heartworms, fleas and ticks. For high tick risk you'll need to add Certifect.

Cats should be on monthly heartworm medication just like dogs. If they go outdoors or won't eat Heartgard then Revolution works best. Revolution prevents heartworms, fleas, ticks and one or two species of intestinal parasites as well. For heavier flea and tick risk Frontline for cats works great, it's more effective than Revolution at flea and tick control.

As always, please ask if you have any questions or concerns about any of our products or services!