

New to the Big Island?

Here are some important things dog parents need to know about living in Puna...

Dogs

Fleas

Flea infestations on your pet's skin and fur is a continual concern because there is never a season where the temperature gets cold enough here for them to hibernate or die off. Fleas are not only itchy for our pets, but can cause secondary skin infections and constant irritation and internal parasites.

Heartworms

Heartworms are transmitted by mosquitoes to our pets, so even strictly indoor dogs can contract heartworm disease. This costly and potentially fatal disease is easily prevented by administering a heartworm preventative medication once a month.

Parvovirus

Parvo is typically a puppy disease, but it can affect adult dogs that are not current on their vaccines. It's highly contagious and often fatal. How can you help prevent Parvo? Getting your pup vaccinated is an important part of prevention. Before the series of vaccines is completed, avoid taking your pup to public places, letting them play with unvaccinated dogs and be sure to regularly disinfect their area at home. All dogs need to complete their puppy series of vaccines and semi-annual wellness visits are recommended.

Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is a bacteria that can cause symptoms anywhere from vomiting/diarrhea to liver/kidney failure. The bacteria is passed from pigs, mongooses, rats, mice, livestock and live for long periods of time in fresh water and mud. Lepto is also contagious to people.

Rat lungworm

Rat lungworm disease is caused by eating slugs commonly found on the ground and on plants. This is most common in curious puppies since they like to eat everything. RLW disease causes neurologic symptoms and extreme pain.

Feral Pigs

Feral pigs can be very problematic because they can become aggressive and carry disease. Dogs who come in direct contact with them are at huge risk of contracting Pseudorabies, which is a disease that is not treatable and fatal. Pigs can also cause life threatening wounds if fighting with your dog.

Cane toads

Cane Toads are immediately toxic to your pet. Symptoms include frothing and drooling at the mouth and neurological symptoms that make your pet seem "drunk". If you see your pet eat, or even lick a toad - immediately wash their mouth out with clean water and encourage them to vomit by making them swallow hydrogen peroxide. Seek immediate veterinary care following these actions.

Coqui frogs

Coqui Frogs are toxic to dogs if eaten. Even though Coqui frogs tend to be very small, seek immediate veterinary care if you see your pet ingest one.

Geckos

Geckos are commonly found inside your house as well as outdoors. If your dog ingests a Gecko, they are at risk of Salmonella. Vomiting, fever, diarrhea and mucus in stool are common symptoms.

Fire ants

Fire ants can cause lesions on your pet's eyes that leave cloudy scar tissue that can affect their eyesight. Fire ant bites are also itchy and painful. Fire ants are attracted to your pet's food and water dishes. Keep your pet's feeding area clean and store food and treats in sealed containers to avoid attracting fire ants. You can treat your property with fire ant poison to prevent them from infesting your property.

Internal parasites

There are many internal parasites found in Hawaii. Regularly getting your pet's stool checked and having them on flea preventative medication combats these parasites. The two most common internal parasites are as follows:

Hookworms - Can cause anemia and can become fatal. Passed by contaminated stool. Can be passed to people.

Tapeworms - One of the only internal parasites that can be seen with the naked eye. Caused by ingesting live fleas.

Tick borne diseases

Although not common, we have been seeing an increase of tick borne diseases in dogs. These diseases cause very serious health concerns. Because of this, we now test for Lyme disease, ehrlichia and anaplasmosis as a part of annual wellness.

Feral cat colonies

Especially in rural Puna, feral cat colonies are common. These cats are unvaccinated, not fixed and not on flea and tick preventative medication. Because of this, they pose a risk to domesticated pets by spreading all the aforementioned diseases and parasites. This is why it is very important to spay, neuter, vaccinate and keep your pets on flea and tick preventative medication.

Recommendations:

Puppy Wellness:

8 wks old - DHPP

12wks old - DHLPP

16 wks old - DHLPP

Adult wellness: vaccines are based on your pets needs

DHPP every 1-3 years

Lepto every 1 year

Bordetella every 6 - 12 months

Fecal every 12 months

ALL DOGS should be on monthly heartworm, flea and internal parasite prevention

Things we don't have in Hawai'i...

Rabies and many dangerous animals like coyotes, snakes and other large predators...