

“Pearls”  
of  
Veterinary Medicine



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### Wildlife and heartworm

While veterinarians have correctly focused on the major problem of compliance of heartworm preventives, they rarely concern themselves with the importance of wildlife reservoirs, particularly the coyote. A number of surveys from across North America have documented just how commonly coyotes are infected with *D. immitis*. Infections in coyotes range from a low of 7%, while in the coastal foothills prevalence can be as high as 92%. Given these infection rates, it is clear that coyotes with circulating microfilariae are a major reservoir for *D. immitis*. Regardless of how many dogs and cats are ever placed on heartworm, flea and tick chemoprophylaxis, these parasites will be ever-present due to their presence in/on native wildlife species and therefore **prevention will always be necessary**.

*Michael W. Dryden, DVM, PhD, DACVIM  
Clinician's Brief, Jul/Aug 2021*

### Radioactive iodine, when not to use

Radioactive iodine destroys active thyroid cells, both normal and neoplastic. When the thyroid adenoma begins (Stage 1), most normal thyroid cells are still functional. If radioactive iodine is given at this point in time, the tumor and many or all normal thyroid cells will be destroyed. Insufficient numbers of functional thyroid cells result in

permanent hypothyroid. This state can be detected by the presence of thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) in the blood. If TSH levels are detectable, the cat should not be treated, and TSH levels should be determined about every two months until it is no longer detectable. This author's protocol is to perform a TSH level on cats with TT4 values of 8 mg/dl or less. Since this is not routinely performed by many radioactive iodine treatment centers, the author suggests you perform this test before sending the cat for treatment. If you are uncomfortable not treating the cat immediately, remember these are Stage 1 cats and HT is a slowly progressive disease. The cat does not become critically ill in just a few weeks. Some cats with the correct clinical signs are diagnosed when the TT4 is in the high end of the normal range. Although the diagnosis may be correct, it is still important to perform a TSH level before treating with radioactive iodine.

*Gary D. Norsworthy, DVM, DABVP  
Vet Practice News, 10:21*

### Using a homemade diet for cats with diarrhea

There are a number of cats with chronic diarrhea that will respond to a homemade diet (high protein, no carb, no additives) – the **best diet to try** (after you have exhausted trials with appropriately chosen commercial diets) is boiled or microwaved cooked chicken thighs – with the fat/skin attached and the bones removed. You may need to chop this into a fine mince or blenderize it to get some cats to eat it (especially if they are not wet food-eating cats or do not get table food). This diet with a calcium carbonate tab crushed in the food, (feed about 1/2 cup morning and night) can be fed for up to 2 weeks without balancing the diet. If an intolerance is the cause of the diarrhea, it will stop in this time frame; if not, an intolerance is not the cause of the diarrhea and other solutions must be sought. You must not feed this diet for longer than 2-3 weeks without adding a vitamin/ mineral supplement mix and appropriate calcium to balance the diet. The best approach is to use [Balanceit.com](http://Balanceit.com) as an on-line approach or to consult with a nutrition specialist to get the appropriate information to properly balance the diet. Thus, addition of probiotics or prebiotics to help influence the microflora are also reasonable therapeutic options as well as addition of either metronidazole or tylosin. Many cats that improve on a homemade diet can eventually go back to a commercial food, as long as the offending substance is not present in the diet – this may be carbohydrates, additives or any