

Empathetic Questions to Explore Barriers



General Understanding & Experience

“What do you already know about parasites and prevention?”

“Have you ever had an experience with fleas, ticks, or heartworms in the past?”

“What has worked well — or not so well — for you when giving your pet preventives before?”



Cost Concerns

“How do you feel about the cost of parasite prevention compared to other pet care expenses?”

“Would it be helpful if we discuss different options or payment plans to fit your budget?”



Forgetfulness / Routine Challenges

“What helps you remember your pet’s monthly parasite prevention care?”

“Would reminders by text or email be useful for you?”



Pet Resistance / Administration Difficulties

“How does your pet usually respond when you try to give medications?”

“Do you prefer chews, topicals, or other options that might make it easier?”



Side Effects / Safety Concerns

“What might worry you about the safety and possible side effects of these products?”

“Would it help if I walked you through what most pets experience with this medication?”



Risk Perception

“What do you think your pet’s risk might be for fleas, ticks, or heartworm?”

“Do you feel like your pet needs prevention year-round, or just certain times of year?”



Cultural / Personal Beliefs

“How does parasite prevention fit into how you care for your pet at home?”

“Are there any traditions or beliefs about pet care that you’d like us to know so we can better support you?”



Collaboration & Trust

“What questions or concerns do you still have about these medications?”

“Is there anything you may be wondering about at this time?”

FIGURE 2

Empathetic Questions to Explore Barriers

2026 AAHA One Health Guidelines: Emerging Concerns in Canine and Feline Parasitology are available at aaha.org/one-health-parasitology

These guidelines were prepared by a Task Force of experts convened by the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and were subjected to a formal peer-review process. This document is intended as a guideline only, not an AAHA standard of care. These guidelines and recommendations should not be construed as dictating an exclusive protocol, course of treatment, or procedure. Variations in practice may be warranted based on the needs of the individual patient, resources, and limitations unique to each individual practice setting. ©2026 AAHA.

