

Canine Heartworm Disease

CANINE HEARTWORM DISEASE . . .

is a serious, deadly disease wherever mosquitoes are present. Each year thousands of dogs become permanently debilitated or die from lung, heart or circulatory problems caused by heartworms. Your dog can have heartworms for several months before symptoms are obvious. By then the disease may be difficult or impossible to treat successfully.

SYMPTOMS . . .

An infected dog becomes less active and tires easily. Coughing, weight loss, chronic fatigue and fainting may appear in advanced disease stages.

Adult heartworms are found in the heart, lungs and major blood vessels. Secondary liver and kidney disease may result. Heartworms can grow from 5 to 14 inches long. (They look like spaghetti.) In advanced cases, a hundred or more worms have been found in a single heart.

PREVENTION . . .

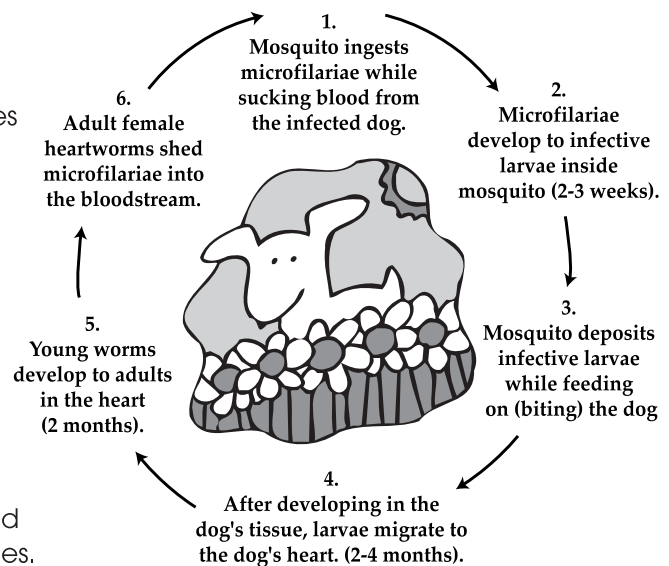
A simple blood test is required before starting your pet on effective, easy-to-use preventive medication. Annual or every other year blood testing is recommended depending on whether you administer the preventative medication all year long or just during mosquito season. Make sure your pet is tested and protected. Don't gamble with your pet's life!

TREATMENT . . .

Successful treatment depends on early detection and close veterinary supervision. If permanent damage has occurred, prognosis is very poor.

We are happy to say that most of our clients who own dogs do have them tested for heartworms and put them on preventative medication every year. It is easy and inexpensive to test for and prevent heartworm disease. The blood test requires only a brief office visit. The preventative medications usually cost from \$6 to \$20 per month, depending on the size of the dog and the medication chosen.

Not only are heartworm medications reasonably priced but many of them now prevent roundworms, whipworms and hookworms as well. These parasites live in the intestines. 95% of puppies are born with one or another of these parasites, and they are common in adult dogs as well, especially those that spend a lot of time outdoors. Roundworms and hookworms can also cause problems for people,



especially children who may be out barefoot in the yard, or toddlers who may put soiled fingers in their mouths. There are 10,000 cases of animal parasites causing disease in children every year in the United States, and 1-3 million people become infected.

Why risk problems for your pet or for your family?

We recommend having a stool sample checked for intestinal parasites at the time the heartworm test is done. If the stool sample is positive for intestinal parasites, your pet will need deworming to kill adult intestinal worms. The heartworm preventatives given after that will prevent your dog from becoming reinfested with the intestinal parasites. Eggs of intestinal parasites survive on grass for long periods of time, so without the heartworm medication, it is very common for dogs to pick up intestinal parasites repeatedly from their yard. Some kinds, especially roundworms, are also transmissible to humans. There are 10,000 cases of animal parasites causing disease in children every year in the United States. (We know we already said that, but it's very important!) In fact, 1/2 of all cases of "flu" in the southern US are actually due to infection with roundworms!

Heartworm preventatives come in both chewable beef flavored form or in non-chewables and are also available as a monthly topical ointment or a 6 month injection. Which kind you choose depends on what is easier for you to administer. The chewable Heartgard Plus™ once-a-month pills are our most popular sellers.

Knowing how long to medicate is critical for successful prevention!

Preventative medication should be started by May, or as soon as your pet has been blood tested in the spring. The medication should be continued until at least one month after a hard freeze in the fall. Even though it may seem cold, mosquitoes will come out to feed on warm, sunny, fall days, so it is important not to stop the medication too soon. Your December pill should usually be the last of the season. We have many clients who give heartworm preventatives year 'round to better control intestinal parasites.

Untreated animals spread disease. Please don't let yours be one!

Unfortunately, heartworm disease is here to stay as there will always be dog owners who do not choose to put their pets on a heartworm prevention program. In fact, only 75% of dog owners in this area have their dogs tested. Unprotected animals serve as a reservoir, spreading the disease to other dogs. Please don't let your dog become a victim of this deadly disease. Call for an appointment to get your pet started on a parasite prevention program today.

FACT ... All dogs, regardless of age, sex, size or breed, are at risk wherever mosquitoes are present. It takes only ONE infected mosquito to infect your dog.

FACT ... Heartworm Disease can kill your dog.

FACT ... Effective, easy-to-use preventive medication can save your dog's life!

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