

Heartworm Facts

Important Facts About Heartworms

- Heartworms are parasitic worms that live free floating in the right ventricle of the heart and nearby blood vessels.
- The parasites are transmitted from one individual dog to another by mosquitoes.
- Heartworm is diagnosed with blood tests and/or x-rays.
- Heartworm has been diagnosed in all 50 states and also worldwide. In most areas of the country Heartworm is an important pet health care issue.
- Dogs should be tested FIRST ... before starting heartworm preventative unless they are less than 6 months old.
- Dogs over 6 months of age that are started on preventatives without testing for Heartworm are at an increased risk of developing severe reactions.
- Puppies should be started on Heartworm preventative by 8 weeks of age and then tested at 6 months of age.
- Dogs should be tested on a yearly basis.
- Heartworm infestation is dangerous; untreated dogs die and treated dogs go through weeks of discomfort while the worms are killed and absorbed by white blood cells.

Heartworm Prevention

- Preventative monthly doses come in oral and topical versions and are only available from a veterinarian.
- Many veterinarians recommend and many owners use a year-round heartworm preventative to guard against the occasional mosquito in the winter season.
- Heartworm prevention costs considerably less than treating Heartworm Disease.
- If your dog has already had his yearly check-up, call your veterinarian to schedule a heartworm check. If due for yearly vaccinations, be sure to include a heartworm check in the visit.