

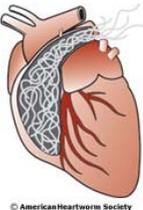


## The Importance of Heartworm Preventative

Please help us to educate dog owners about heartworm disease. Not everyone is aware of how life-threatening heartworms can be and how easy it is to prevent them. There are very few areas of the US where heartworm is not a threat to the health of dogs for at least part of the year. Administering heartworm preventative on a regular basis is an important part of responsible dog ownership!

Prevention of heartworms is easy, but the treatment is hard on a dog. Heartworm preventatives kill the immature worms in a dog's blood and have little or no effect on the dog. Killing the adult worms is very hard on a dog, requiring hospitalization and four weeks of limited activity to prevent damage to the lungs as the adult heartworms die, but *Preventing* Heartworm Disease is definitely easier on the dog and is now much simpler than it used to be. The most common preventatives are given once a month by the pet's caretaker. Preventatives kill the immature Heartworm larvae before they molt to the L5 stage. As long as they are given every month, they are very effective in preventing Heartworm infection and subsequent development of Heartworm Disease.

### IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT HEARTWORM



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- \* Heartworms are a parasitic worm (about the diameter of thin spaghetti) that normally live free floating in the right ventricle of the heart and nearby blood vessels.
- \* The parasites are transmitted from one individual to another by mosquitoes.
- \* Heartworm is diagnosed with blood tests, and/or X-rays, along with other tests.
- \* Heartworms are not detectable with the commonly used antigen blood test until they are sexually mature (about 6 months after entering the patient). Female worms must be present for accurate test results.
- \* In most areas of the USA, veterinarians recommend Heartworm prevention for dogs. Your local veterinarian is your best source of information.
  
- \* Dogs should be tested **FIRST...** before starting heartworm preventatives unless they are less than 7 months old.
  
- \* Dog's over 7 months of age that are started on preventative without first testing for Heartworm are at an increased risk of developing severe reactions.
  
- \* Puppies should be started on Heartworm preventative by 8 weeks of age (depending on the product being used) and then blood tested at 7 months of age.
  
- \* Dogs should be tested on a regular basis, yearly if any doses of preventative have been missed and once every 2-3 years even if no doses were missed and preventative is given year around.

**Check with your veterinarian for the Heartworm Preventative**