

**HOLT
VETERINARY
CLINIC**

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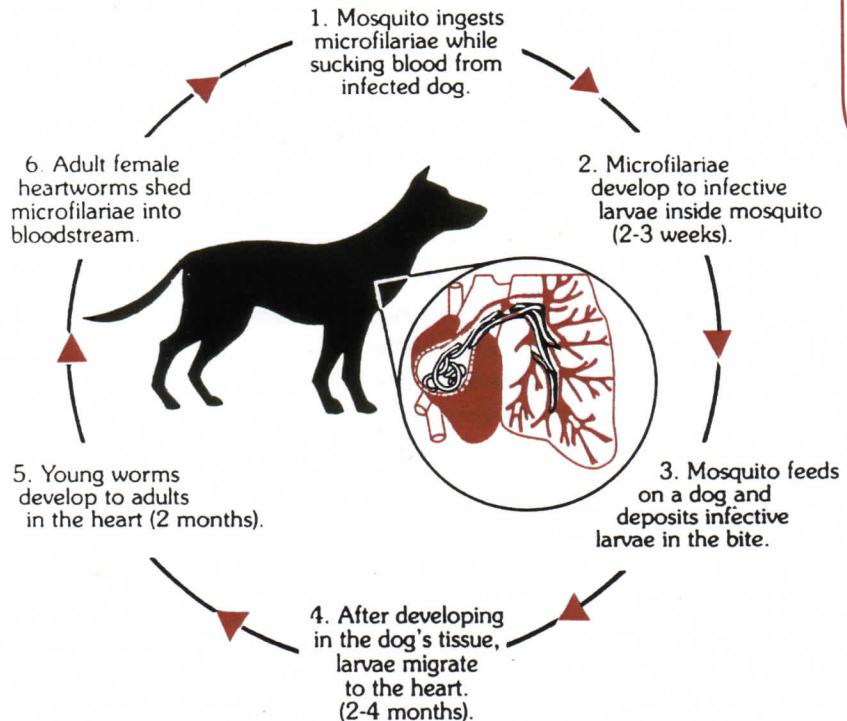
HEARTWORM DISEASE

CANINE HEARTWORM DISEASE is a serious, deadly disease wherever mosquitoes are present. Thousands of dogs each year become permanently debilitated or die from lung, heart, or circulatory disease 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 inches for males to 14 inches for females. In severe cases, a hundred or more worms have been found in a single dog.

PREVENTION: A simple blood test is required before starting your pet on effective, easy-to-use preventive medication. A life threatening reaction can occur if this medication is administered to an infected pet. Annual testing is recommended even in year-round use of the medication. Make sure your pet is tested and protected. Do not gamble with your pet's life.

DIAGNOSIS: This is usually through laboratory testing of a blood sample to look for adult heartworm antigens, but other methods such as x-rays of the chest may be required.



TREATMENT: Successful treatment depends on early detection, and close veterinary supervision. If permanent damage has occurred, chances for full recovery can be poor.

CAT OWNERS: A cat can become infected with heartworms, even though the cat is an accidental host, not the definitive host (this means that the heartworm cannot complete its entire life cycle in the cat). As a consequence, a cat is not a reservoir of infection as the dog is. A blood test is not used for cats.

Consider using a preventive for your cats who come into contact with mosquitoes. Damage caused by only a few worms in a cat's heart is often fatal. Remember that a cat's heart is about half as large as a heart in a similar sized dog, yet the mature heartworms are the same size in both cats and dogs. Call our office for further information.

**ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE CAN BE ANSWERED BY CALLING OUR OFFICE.
PRACTICE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE, SURGERY AND DENTISTRY**

VETERINARY FILE: HEARTWORM DISEASE

(Over Please)