

HEARTWORM DISEASE: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

What are heartworms?

Heartworms are a very common parasite that are spread by mosquito bites. The heartworm starts out as a very small worm, then travels to the heart and can grow up to a foot long!

How can these worms hurt my dog or cat?

These long worms clog up the heart, eventually causing the heart to fail. This is usually fatal to your pet. This process can take several years, so you cannot tell your dog has heartworms just by looking at them.

How can I check if my dog has heartworms?

We need several drops of blood to run a quick test to find out if your dog has heartworms or not. It is strongly recommended to have this test run every year, even if your dog has been on regular heartworm prevention.

What if my dog gets heartworms?

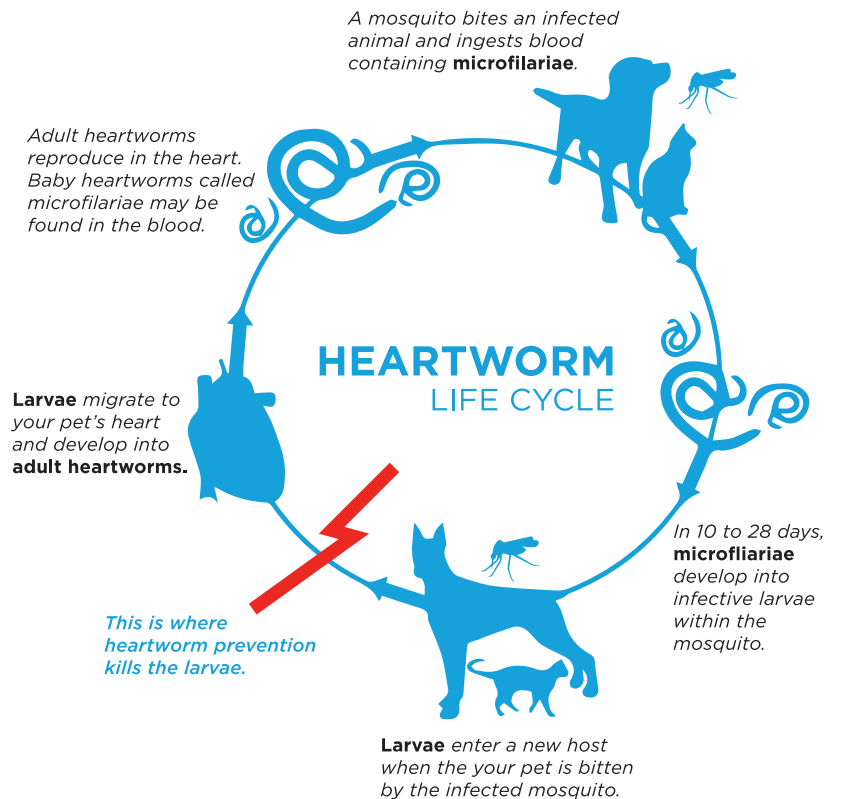
Fortunately, there is a treatment for heartworms in dogs, but it is very expensive and painful for your dog. It requires your dog to be on strict cage rest for 2 months. This is why prevention is so important.

What about my cat?

Cats can get heartworms too, so prevention is very important for them. Testing cats for heartworms is not easy and there is no treatment for cats if they get heartworms.

How can I make sure my pet does not get heartworms?

Prevention is easy! Once your pet is at least 8 weeks old, you give a monthly pill or topical medication to prevent infection. For dogs, there is a safe injection that prevents heartworms for 6 months. Remember that even indoor pets are at high risk of getting heartworms from mosquito bites. To ensure protection, all dogs and cats should be on heartworm prevention every month of the year for the rest of their lives.



SYMPTOMS OF HEARTWORM DISEASE



DOGS

- Mild Persistent Cough
- Reluctance to Exercise
- Fatigue After Moderate Exercise
- Decreased Appetite
- Weight Loss
- Advanced: Heart Failure, Fluid in the Abdomen



CATS

- Coughing
- Asthma-like Attacks
- Periodic Vomiting
- Lack of Appetite
- Weight Loss
- Advanced: Fainting, Seizures

CARLYN SAYS:

Heartworms can live up to 5-7 years inside the pet if left untreated.



HEARTWORM SOCIETY RECOMMENDS:

Only year-round protection can prevent heartworm disease in your cats and dogs. Have your dog checked every year for heartworms.