



HEARTWORM DISEASE

What is Heartworm disease?

It is a parasitic infection, of the bloodstream that occurs in dogs and occasionally cats. It can be a fatal disease if not treated.

How does my dog get heartworm?

Heartworm is transmitted, to a dog by a bite from an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become carriers (infected) when they bite a dog that has heartworm. Young heartworms called microfilaria, then circulate through the blood vessels and travel to the heart, where they may grow to 12 inches in length.



What are the symptoms of heartworm?

The most common symptoms of heartworm include chronic coughing, intolerance to exercise, decreased energy, and difficulty breathing.

How do you test for heartworm?

A blood sample is drawn and sent to the lab. The blood sample is examined for microfilaria and heartworm antigens (a substance produced by an adult heartworm). It is important that the heartworm test is negative before administering heartworm prevention medications.

How is heartworm prevented?

Heartworm is preventable with medications given monthly. If your dog is on year round medications, a blood sample is needed every two years. If your dog is on heartworm medication for 6 months, a blood sample is needed yearly.



Types of Prevention we carry:

Tri-Heart Plus from Schering-Plough is the most popular brand we carry for dogs. It is a chewable tablet given once monthly. It's available in 3 different sizes. In addition to preventing heartworms, it also treats and controls hookworm and ascarid (roundworm) infections; common intestinal parasites.

<http://triheartplus.com>



Heartgard Plus, made by Merial is a chewable block given once monthly that is available in 3 different sizes. It treats and controls hookworm and ascarid infections in dogs.

<http://heartgard.us.merial.com/home/>

Interceptor is made by Novartis. It is available for dog and cat heartworm prevention. For dogs and puppies it also controls hookworm, roundworm, and whipworm infections. For cats and kittens it also controls hookworms and roundworm infection. (Please note the in the state of Colorado feline heartworms is uncommon).

Revolution is made by Pfizer, and is a topical parasiticide for dogs. It is applied once monthly to the skin to prevent heartworms along with preventing/controlling flea infestations, ear mites, sarcoptic mange and certain tick infestations.

Please ask your Veterinarian which product is right for you and your pet.

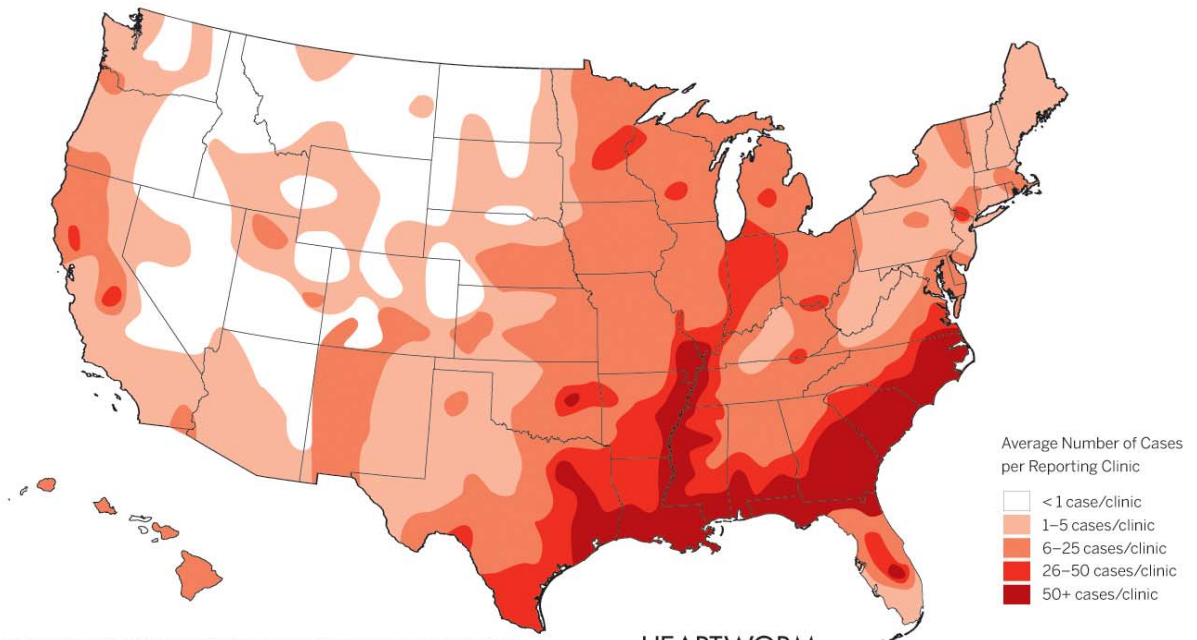
When do I start heartworm prevention?

For puppies-between 4-6 months of age.
Adults/Seniors-after they have had a blood test.



What happens if I miss a dose?

It takes up to 6 months to see a positive test result due to the lifecycle of heartworms. Monthly heartworm preventives are effective against the heartworm microfilariae (the immature heartworm) that accumulate in the dog's body in the month prior to giving the dose of preventive. Therefore if your pet has missed a dose or two it is important to test before starting again. Example: missed dose in June-August (could have been bitten by infected mosquito) won't see result until December-February. Even though its winter it's important to test to see if they were infected in those summer months.



The severity of heartworm incidence as shown in this map is based on the average number of cases per reporting clinic. Some remote regions of the United States lack veterinary clinics, therefore we have no reported cases from these areas.

HEARTWORM INCIDENCE 2005

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