



Heartworm disease/prevention

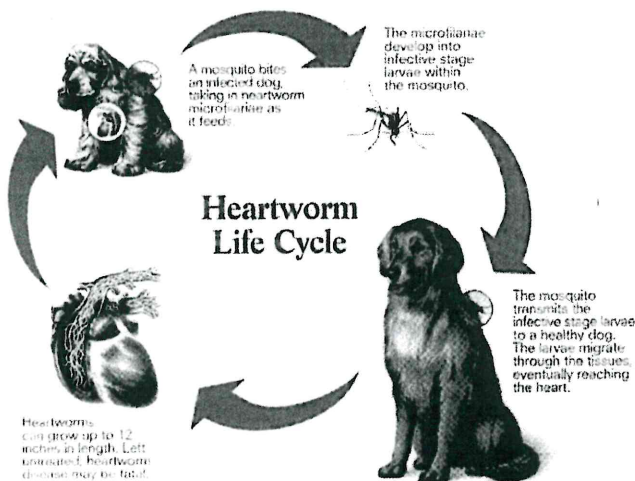
Heartworm disease is a serious and potentially fatal disease in pets. It is caused by foot-long worms (heartworms) that live in the heart, lungs and associated blood vessels of affected pets, causing severe lung disease, heart failure and damage to other organs in the body.

Heartworm disease affects dogs, cats and ferrets, but heartworms also live in other mammal species, including wolves, coyotes, and foxes. Because wild species such as foxes and coyotes live in proximity to many urban areas, they are considered important carriers of the disease.

Mosquitoes blown great distances by the wind to previously uninfected areas also contribute to the spread of heartworm disease. Infected mosquitoes can come inside, so both outdoor and indoor pets are at risk.

The dog is a natural host for heartworms, which means that heartworms that live inside the dog mature into adults, mate and produce offspring. *If untreated, their numbers can increase, and dogs have been known to harbor several hundred worms in their bodies.*

Heartworm disease causes lasting damage to the heart, lungs and arteries, and can affect the dog's health and quality of life long after the parasites are gone. For this reason, prevention is by far the best option.



- The American Heartworm Society recommends that *you get your pet tested every 12 months for heartworm and give your pet heartworm preventive 12 months a year.*
- Annual testing is necessary, even when dogs are on heartworm prevention year-round, to ensure that the prevention program is working. Heartworm medications are highly effective, but dogs can still become infected.
- All dogs over 6 months at LCHS that are over 6 months old have been tested for heartworm disease.

Our low cost Vaccine Clinic offers heartworm testing, and prevention products!