

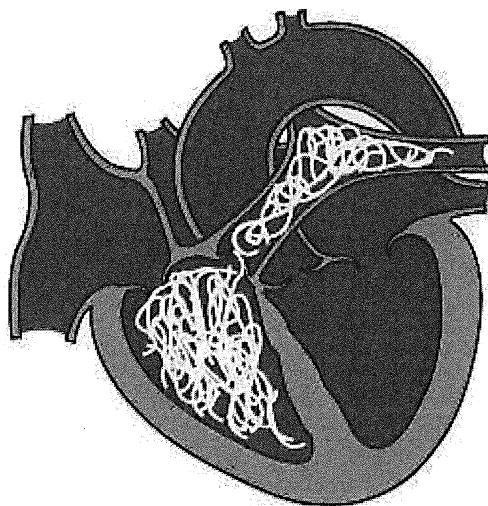
## Heartworm Disease: The Importance of Prevention

Heartworms are worms that live in the bloodstream and cause major damage to the heart and lungs. Heartworm infections can potentially be fatal, but treatment does exist. However, treatment itself carries its own risks and can be very costly. Year-round use of a monthly heartworm preventative and annual heartworm testing is highly recommended. Heartworm disease is transmitted by mosquitos, so any dog living in an area where mosquitos are found is at risk.

Heartworm preventatives work by killing heartworm larvae that may have already infected your pet. It takes months from the time your pet is bitten by an infected mosquito for the larvae stage to be reached. For example, if your pet is bitten in October, it is the December/January dose of the preventative that will be responsible for killing the larvae – this is why you should never skip doses in the winter just because it is cold outside and you are not seeing any mosquitos!

Heartworm preventatives are dosed according to your dog's weight. As the weight increases, the dosage should also increase. Please note the dosing instructions on the package.

When heartworm preventatives (and flea/tick preventatives) are purchased through the clinic and are given as prescribed every 30 days, they come with a guarantee. If your pet should become infected, treatment will be covered in full by the company making the products. When these products are purchased over the counter or online, this guarantee is not provided. Additionally, there are many counterfeit products being sold by online retailers.



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