



HEARTWORM DISEASE PREVENTION MATTERS

Heartworm is a serious and potentially fatal disease that affects pets in all 50 states.

Heartworm season lasts all year long, so prevention and awareness are key to keeping your pet healthy and safe.

Heartworm disease is caused by *Dirofilaria immitis*, a **parasitic worm transmitted by mosquitoes**.

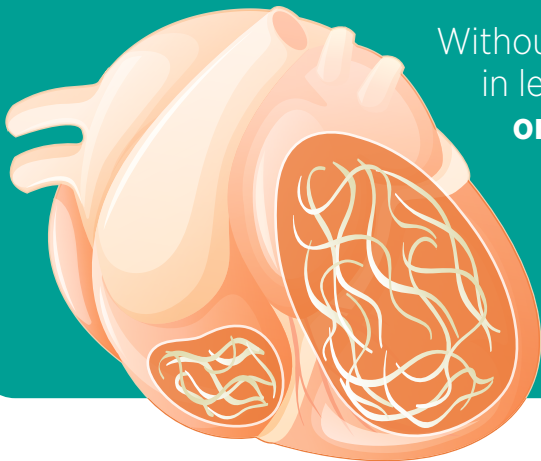
All dogs and cats are susceptible to heartworm, regardless of age, breed, or whether their life is lived inside or outdoors.

If your pet is bitten by a carrier mosquito, **microscopic larvae are deposited into the bloodstream**, eventually taking up residence in the heart, lungs, and blood vessels.



Without treatment, these worms can grow to 14 inches in length, eventually **causing irreversible damage to organs and ultimately death**.

Heartworm treatment is available for dogs, but **there is no treatment available for cats** which makes prevention essential.



Canine treatment involves bloodwork and chest radiographs, a 30 day course of antibiotics followed by a 30 day period of rest, then the first of 3 injections followed by 30 more days of rest, then the remaining 2 injections are administered 24 hours apart. The final injection is followed by 2 months of rest.

To have your pets tested and to get started on heartworm preventative, contact our VBSPCA clinic or your current veterinarian.