

What is Heartworm?

HEARTWORM IS A BLOOD PARASITE THAT POSES SEVERE HEALTH RISKS TO PETS IN ONTARIO. HEARTWORMS LIVE IN THE HEART AND THE BLOOD VESSELS THAT SUPPLY THE LUNGS.

WHEN HEARTWORM BURDENS ARE SEVERE THEY DAMAGE THE HEART, LUNGS AND LIVER. THEY ARE SPREAD FROM INFECTED PETS AND WILDLIFE TO UNINFECTED ANIMALS BY MOSQUITOES

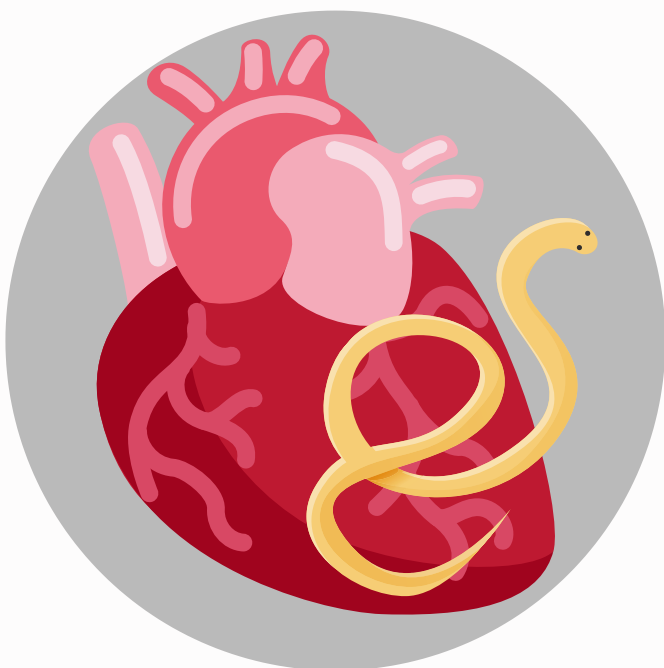
TREATMENT FOR HEARTWORM DISEASE IS AVAILABLE.

IT IS HOWEVER EXPENSIVE AND CAN COME WITH IT'S OWN SET OF RISKS.

PREVENTION IS THE KEY.

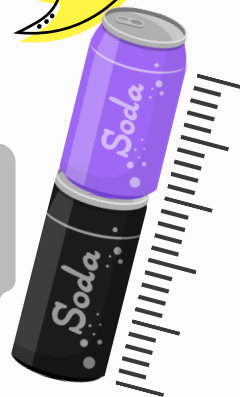
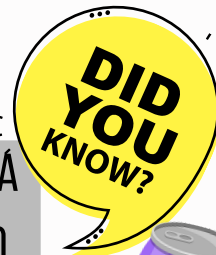
WE RECOMMEND TESTING YOUR PET FOR HEARTWORM ANNUALLY.

WE ALSO RECOMMEND A PREVENTATIVE MEDICATION THAT WILL TARGET IMMATURE HEARTWORMS (MICROFILARIA) IN THE BLOODSTREAM.



THEY CAN GROW TO A LENGTH OF 15 TO 30 CENTIMETRES.

IN SEVERE CASES, A PET MAY BE INFESTED WITH HUNDREDS OF WORMS.



CLINICAL SIGNS OF HEARTWORM DISEASE CAN INCLUDE COUGH, SHORTNESS OF BREATH, EXERCISE INTOLERANCE, LETHARGY, REDUCED APPETITE, AND WEIGHT LOSS. SEVERE CASES MAY RESULT IN HEART FAILURE, WHICH CAN PRESENT AS A SWOLLEN BELLY AND LEGS, DUE TO FLUID BUILD UP.

HEARTWORM IS NOT SPREAD DIRECTLY FROM AN INFECTED ANIMAL DIRECTLY TO ANOTHER. THE PRIMARY VECTOR FOR HEARTWORM INFECTION IS A MOSQUITO.

THERE IS CURRENTLY NO VACCINE AVAILABLE TO PREVENT HEARTWORM DISEASE. HOWEVER, THERE ARE ORAL AND TOPICAL PREVENTATIVES AVAILABLE. CONSULT YOUR VETERINARIAN FOR THE BEST PREVENTION PLAN FOR YOUR PET.

https://www.ovma.org/assets/1/20/Veterinary_Care_Fact_Sheet.pdf
<http://ontariospca.ca/blog/heartworm-in-dogs-signs-causes-what-you-need-to-know/>



Animalhospital
of Cambridge

