



"The leaders in Canine Education"

HEARTWORM

Preventing heartworm disease is critical to good canine health since it is not only debilitating to your dog, but can be potentially fatal. The cause is a roundworm that, as an adult, normally lives in the right side of the heart and connecting blood vessels. Adult heartworms are long and slender, often measuring up to 14 inches in length. When present, they can cause inflammation of the walls of the arteries in the lung, obstruct blood vessels and interfere with the blood supply to vital organs. The increased work load on the heart gradually weakens heart muscles which can lead to chronic congestive heart failure. As the disease progresses, an excess of fluid accumulates in the abdominal cavity, lungs and limbs; left untreated, death results.

It is only in the later stages when the disease is difficult to treat that animals manifest the typical signs of advanced heartworm disease; a chronic cough, labored breathing, listlessness, fatigue, loss of condition and a distended abdomen. For this reason, the dog owner that does not test and medicate their dog, may not realize their pet has a problem until the disease is well advanced, when it may be too late.

The parasite is transmitted from dog to dog by a mosquito which deposits infective larvae on the dog's skin when it feeds. These larvae then enter the skin and after a period of growth in the tissue, they penetrate the blood vessels and migrate to the heart and connecting blood vessels where they mature into adults. Adult female worms release offspring called microfilariae that develop into infective larvae inside the mosquito within two to three weeks. The mosquito passes these larvae on when it feeds on another animal and the cycle begins again. The entire process from initial infection to the time when mature adults are present in the heart and connecting blood vessels takes approximately six months.

Your dog should be tested by your veterinarian for existing heartworm infection prior to starting treatment. The detection of microfilariae in a blood sample is currently the most reliable method your vet has to diagnose the disease early. However, there have been cases where the worms were older or when only one sex is present that no offspring (microfilariae) were produced which makes the infection very difficult to detect until obvious signs develop.

Preventative medication can be given on a daily or monthly basis and when used as directed, has a wide safety margin in dogs, including pregnant females, breeding bitches and stud dogs. Heartworm disease can be successfully treated, but depends on early detection, prompt treatment, and close veterinary supervision. In the final analysis, the best way to control heartworm disease is to prevent it.

Mailing Address: 3072 Roberg Road, Duluth, MN 55804

Training Facility Address: 5153 N Tischer Rd, Duluth, MN 55804 ~ Phone: 218-525-1234

Email: info@ArrowheadDogTrainingAcademy.com ~ Website: ArrowheadDogTrainingAcademy.com