

What is heartworm disease?

Heartworm disease in dogs (dirofilariasis) is a serious and potentially fatal disease. Heartworms spend their adult lives in the pulmonary arteries. The adult worms can cause lasting damage to the heart, lungs, and arteries.

How do dogs get heartworms?

Heartworms are transmitted from one dog to another by mosquitoes, which pick up tiny immature heartworms, called microfilariae, when they bite an infected dog. Larvae develop in the mosquito and then are transmitted to another dog when that dog is bitten by the infective mosquito.

Where are dogs at risk for heartworm infection?

All dogs are at risk for heartworm disease, no matter where they live- heartworms don't discriminate based on geography. In the past, heartworm disease in the United States was primarily limited to the South and Southeast regions. However, it is now found in all 50 states, in Canada, and is spreading to new areas each year. The American Heartworm Society notes that uncared for dogs and certain wildlife can be carriers of heartworms. Mosquitoes blown great distances by the wind and the transportation of infected pets to different geographic locations can all contribute to the spread of heartworm disease.

How are dogs tested for heartworm infection?

The most common method for heartworm testing is for a veterinarian to collect a small blood sample from a dog and evaluate the sample using a specialized test kit to detect the presence of adult heartworms.

How can heartworm disease in dogs be prevented?

Pet owners can use Heartgard plus (Ivermectin/pyrantel), the #1 veterinarian recommended preventive on the market to help prevent heartworm disease. Heartgard Plus kills tissue larval stages of heartworms and helps prevent them from developing into adults and causing heartworm disease. In an unprotected dog, heartworm larvae mature into adults and ultimately migrate to the arteries of the lungs.

Frequently Asked Questions. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://heartgard.com/frequently-asked-questions>