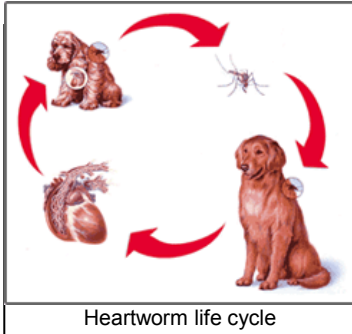




Save on Heartworm Testing in March and April

What is heartworm disease?

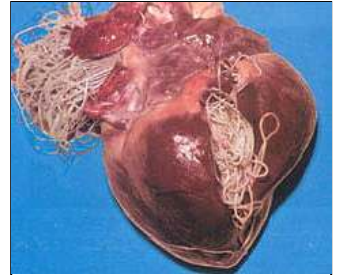
Heartworm is a blood parasite (*Dirofilaria immitis*) that is spread by mosquitoes. When a carrier mosquito bites an uninfected dog, immature heartworms are spread to the dog's bloodstream. Over time, they mature and grow to quite sizeable worms (measuring up to 14 inches long), that live in the vessels of the heart and lungs. Heartworm causes devastating heart and lung disease, and is fatal without treatment.



Idaho didn't have heartworm disease in the past. What has changed?

As a mosquito-borne disease, heartworm has gradually spread across the nation from its origin in the eastern and southern States and has been reported in all 50 States. Heartworm disease is increasing in the Western United States, including Idaho, which had over 20 heartworm-

positive dogs in 2009. Also, thousands of dogs were rescued from the South after hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and these dogs have been transported all over North America. Over 60% of the "hurricane dogs" were heartworm positive, and most were not treated for the disease, accelerating the spread of the disease to other States.



Heart with mature heartworms

How can heartworm disease be prevented?

Prevention is straightforward and much less expensive than treating the disease after infection. The preventive medication, *Heartgard PlusTM*, is a tasty chewable tablet that is administered once per month. Before starting prevention, your dog needs a quick blood test to check for the presence of heartworm disease; Dogs on seasonal prevention are tested every year. Dogs on year-round prevention need to be tested only every two years. If your puppy is less than six months of age, he or she will be tested six months after starting prevention. If your dog has not seen our doctors within the last year, he will need an exam before preventive medication may be prescribed. Heartworm testing is a quick 10-minute appointment with our technician. We use an advanced 4DX laboratory test to check your pet for not only heartworm, but also screen for three tick-borne diseases: Ehrlichiosis, Anaplasmosis, and Lyme disease.



My dog has taken heartworm prevention in the past. Why does he need a heartworm test?

The American Heartworm Association recommends regular heartworm testing for all dogs, regardless of prevention in the past, for several reasons: First, many dogs simply do not receive their prevention consistently. Second, the preventive medication is greater than 98% effective at preventing heartworm disease, but a small percentage will contract heartworm despite prevention. These dogs must be caught before they develop symptoms of heartworm disease. Finally, if a dog has contracted heartworm disease, and the preventive medication is started without knowing this, life-threatening complications may result.

Get your pet tested in March or April for only \$35

Why should I use heartworm prevention year-round?

It is imperative that dogs traveling to even slightly warmer climates have year-round protection against heartworm disease. *Heartgard PlusTM* also protects against roundworms and hookworms, common **intestinal parasites**. Roundworms and hookworms may be spread to humans, and can cause devastating damage, including blindness in children; therefore we recommend prevention year-round. One more benefit is that dogs on year-round prevention require blood testing *every two years* rather than yearly. The manufacturer of *Heartgard PlusTM* offers a \$5 rebate on one-year supplies of prevention.

Call 233-6840 today to make an appointment.