

The DO's and DON'T's of Heartworm Protection



Knowledge and proper care keep dogs heartworm-free.



DO have your veterinarian test your dog each year for heartworm infection. It takes roughly 6 months for an infection to be detected with a standard heartworm test, so if your dog becomes infected, this schedule helps ensure early diagnosis and treatment.

DO give your dog his or her heartworm preventive on time, every time. Whether you give a monthly pill or spot-on medication—or you visit your veterinarian for a semi-annual injection—being consistent is essential. Not only is your dog protected, but you stay in the prevention habit.

DO make sure the product you rely on actually is a heartworm preventive. With so many parasite protection products on the market, it's easy to get confused. Far too many people assume their flea and tick product is protecting their dog from heartworms when it isn't.



DON'T skip testing just because your dog is on year-round heartworm prevention. While this will likely keep him or her heartworm-free, if you miss a dose, are late with it—or your dog spits out or rubs off the medication—it could create an infection opportunity.

DON'T stop prevention just because you haven't seen a mosquito lately. Heartworm preventives work retroactively, eliminating new infections that were transmitted months earlier. Rather than guessing at when it might be "safe," keep your pet on prevention year-round.

DON'T forget that many heartworm pills and spot-on products protect against other parasites. Some protect pets from intestinal worms; others also protect against fleas and certain ticks and mites. Talk to your veterinarian about what product offers the protection your dog needs.

Think 12. Show your love for your pets by giving them 12 months of heartworm prevention and having them tested for heartworm every 12 months.



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