

Heartworms are large worms that live in the hearts of dogs and cats. Heartworms are spread through mosquito's and only through mosquito's. It cannot be passed from one dog to the other. A mosquito would have to bite the infected dog and then bite another dog to infect it. It's a specific parasite that only affects dogs and cats and ferrets and other mammals. In rare cases, heartworms have infected people, but it does not complete its life cycle. The heartworm will migrate to the lung and cause a round lesion that looks like a tumor. But these are very rare cases.

Heartworms are easy to prevent but difficult and costly to cure, this is why preventative is so important. It takes about seven months, once a dog is bitten by an infected mosquito, for the larvae to mature into adult heartworms. They then lodge in the heart, lungs, and surrounding blood vessels and begin reproducing. Adult worms can grow up to 12 inches in length, can live 5-7 years, and a dog can have as many as 250 worms in its system. Initially, there are no symptoms. But as more and more worms crowd the heart and lungs, most dogs will develop a cough. As it progresses, they won't be able to exercise as much as before; they'll become winded easier. With severe heartworm disease, we can hear abnormal lung sounds, dogs can pass out from the loss of blood to the brain, and they can retain fluids. Eventually, most dogs will die if the worms are not treated

A year's supply of heartworm preventative will range from \$35 to \$80 depending on the weight of your dog. Depending on the treatment and the area that you live in treatment can cost from \$300 to \$1,000. It can be dangerous and your dog might die. It is very important that they are kept quiet for several months after treatment. As the old saying goes "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure". He is your best friend don't you think he is worth it.

