



Animal Alternatives Holistic Health Clinic
Anne Lampru, DVM, CVA
Linda Register, DVM
238 E Bearss Ave · Tampa, FL 33613
Phone: (813)265-2411 · Fax: (813)265-4477



Preventing Heartworm Disease

General Information

Highly effective medication is available to prevent heartworm disease. Mosquito control is certainly helpful but should never be the sole means of prevention.

Preventive Medication

1. *Ivermectin*: This drug is a highly effective heartworm preventative available as a chewable treat or tablet. Its main advantage is that it needs to be given only once monthly. Because the drug kills any infective stages of heartworm acquired during the 30-day period before dosing, administration should start within 30 days of the first exposure to mosquitoes and continue monthly for the rest of the pet's life. This drug is also available combined with pyrantel pamoate to provide control of roundworm and hookworm in addition to heartworm. The trade names for ivermectin are Heartgard, Heartgard Plus and Triheart.
2. *Milbemycin*: This drug is another highly effective once a month heartworm preventative. In addition to heartworm, milbemycin controls hookworms and removes and controls roundworms and whipworms. The drug should be given monthly beginning within 30 days of first mosquito exposure and continued for the rest of the pet's life. Milbemycin is provided under the trade name Interceptor and comes as either a plain or chewable tablet.
3. *Topical Products*: There are several topical products now available. Some with protection against intestinal parasites and fleas as well. If you cannot give an oral product to your dog this may be an effective option. Topical heartworms products are available under the brand name Advantage Multi.

Dogs must be treated year around to prevent heartworm infection. Most of these products protect against intestinal parasites as well.

Important Points in Treatment

1. Heartworm preventatives must not be given to dogs harboring microfilariae. Your dog must be blood tested annually before starting the preventative medication.
2. Weigh your dog monthly during the treatment period. A change in your pet's weight might require a change in dosage.
3. If you give the drug in your dog's food, mix the medication in a small amount of food and give this first. If you mix the medication in a whole bowl of food, your pet may not eat everything and you will not know if the proper dose was given.
4. These drugs must be given on the prescribed schedule to be effective. You must not skip doses. Call the doctor if you are having trouble adhering to the prescribed schedule.
5. We do not recommend products purchased online because the original source is unknown, people get expired products and the manufacturer will not guarantee the product. If you normally order products from the internet please discuss other options with us.

Mosquito Control

- Screen outdoor kennels, especially in areas where heartworm is prevalent.
- Keep your pet indoors during early morning or evening hours, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Electronic insect killers can be positioned near kennels. Premise sprays are available for treatment of the environment.