

Heartworm Facts

- Adult Heartworms live in the right side of the heart.
- They are 6-14 inches long, and several hundred may be present in an infected dog!
- Heartworms impair blood circulation, resulting in damage to the heart, lungs, liver, and kidneys. Serious damage may occur, before outward clinical signs are present.
- Advanced signs include difficulty breathing, coughing, tiring easily, exercise intolerance, listlessness, loss of weight, and syncope (fainting).
- Heartworms are found in all 50 states.

Mosquitos Spread Heartworms

A dog with heartworm disease cannot infect another dog without the help of a mosquito. Adult heartworms in an infected dog reproduce to form microfilaria. When a mosquito bites an infected dog it ingests these microfilaria and incubates them to an infectious stage that is inoculated into the next animal that the mosquito feeds on. If that animal is a dog, then it will be infected with heartworm disease. It takes 3 to 6 months for adult heartworms to develop in a dog after the bite of an infected mosquito. Heartworms occur in all breeds of dogs: large and small, short-haired and long-haired, inside-dogs and outside-dogs. Heartworms also are known to infect cats. Diagnosis of Heartworms is by a blood test. Treatment is successful when the disease is detected early.

Heartworm Disease can be Prevented!

Heartworm disease IS present in our area. Hundreds of dogs are unnecessarily infected every year in the Chicago-land area. We strongly recommend heartworm prevention (Heartgard Plus® or Proheart®), which also aids in the prevention of other internal parasites. Heartworm prevention should be given year round. Routine testing for heartworms once each year is suggested for all dogs!

Prevent Bad Habits:

Provide appropriate objects for chewing (i.e. NYLA-BONE and KONG products) and praise him for chewing on these objects. It is best to rotate toys to prevent boredom. Gently interrupt inappropriate chewing (clap hands, shout) while directing him to appropriate objects. Praise the puppy once he has started to play with an appropriate toy. Put your puppy in a crate when you are unable to supervise. Crate training will provide a safe environment, prevent unwanted behavior, and give the puppy a safe place of his own. Avoid aggressive behaviors such as mouthing hands, tug-of-war, jumping, growling, guarding food, and nipping. Competition between dog and owner should never be encouraged, even when it is playful. To handle aggressive play, stand perfectly still and cross your arms indicating that you are not interested in playing "rough." If the puppy persists, simply walk away. When he gives up, go and get an appropriate toy and praise him for playing with it. Jumping up is a common behavior which should not be allowed. Never pet or talk sweetly to a dog that has only two feet on the ground. Turn away and ignore him! If the dog knows how to "sit" on cue, then ask him to sit. This will give you a chance to stop the jumping and praise him for keeping all four paws on the floor. When your dog comes to you, or anyone else for attention, the dog should sit first, then get petted. Kneeing, hitting him under the chin, or squeezing his paws may actually lead to increased jumping. Pushing him off is also not recommended because most dogs see that as an invitation to play. The dog will usually come back for more play and continue to jump. Make definite decisions about manners. Will your dog be allowed on the furniture? Are any rooms "off-limits"? When you tell your puppy "no", you must be prepared to enforce your decision immediately.

Nothing is Free:

The "nothing is free" technique helps you establish leadership. The concept is to teach your puppy "nothing in life is free". Your dog must obey a command before he gets anything. No food rewards are used. The reward is what he wants in the particular situation, be it love, praise, pats, going out, etc. Don't allow your dog to be demanding in obnoxious ways. The only way he should get what he wants is by behaving. An example of this technique would be to ask your dog for a sit-stay cue before placing the bowl and food on the floor for a meal. If the dog stands up and moves toward the food before you have released him, lift the bowl from the floor and ask the dog to sit again. Continue this until he will sit/stay without standing up. Give a release cue ("okay") to tell him that he can eat.

Additional Training:

Additional training can begin as young as 8 weeks of age. Our on-staff trainer is available to help you teach your dog to:

- Sit and stay on command
- Come when called
- Walk on a leash

... and much more. Please call (630)968-2812 for more information.

Good Books to Read:

- It's Me or The Dog: How to Have the Perfect Pet by Victoria Stilwell
- Play Together, Stay Together: Happy and Healthy Play Between People and Dogs by Karen London and Patricia McConnell
- The Ultimate Puppy Toolkit by Premier Pet Products
- Way to Go: How to Housetrain a Dog of Any Age by Karen London and Patricia McConnell