

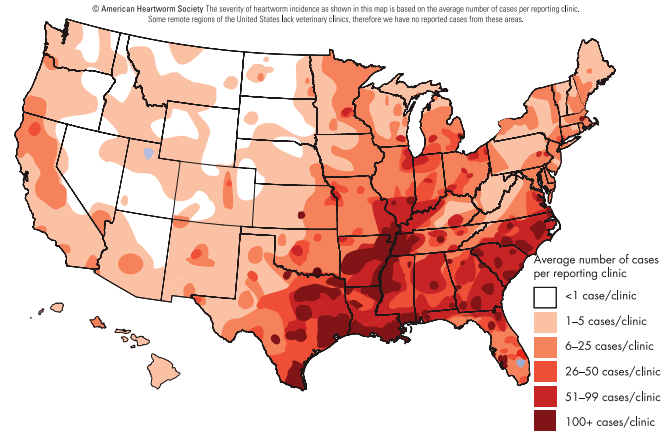
## Did you know?

- **Heartworms are spread by mosquitoes**—if there are mosquitoes in your area, your dog is at risk!
- **Wildlife in your area can be a source of infection.** Mosquitoes that bite an infected fox, wolf, or coyote can then transmit the infection to unprotected dogs.
- **Even dogs that look healthy can be infected** with heartworms, so annual testing for heartworm disease is recommended.
- **Annual testing is critical** to avoid a delay in detecting early infection and starting life-saving therapy, as heartworms can cause significant damage to your dog's heart and lungs. Even after adulticidal therapy, in rare cases a dog will test positive again, requiring further treatment.
- **Heartworm preventive medications are very effective** when given properly on the prescribed schedule.
- **The best way to reduce the risk of heartworm infection in your dog is to give the preventive medication year-round.** Mosquitoes can survive all year, even in parts of the country where there is a cold winter, so all dogs are at risk.
- **While heartworms can be eliminated, prevention is always safer and more affordable** than treating adult heartworm infections.



## Heartworm disease is found in all 50 states.

### 2019 HEARTWORM INCIDENCE



**The cornerstone of heartworm management is prevention.**

**The American Heartworm Society recommends year-round administration of a heartworm preventive medication and annual testing for heartworm disease for all dogs.**



To learn more about the increasing threat of heartworm disease, talk to your veterinarian and visit the American Heartworm Society website at [www.heartwormsociety.org](http://www.heartwormsociety.org).

Learn more about the Association of Shelter Veterinarians at [www.sheltervet.org](http://www.sheltervet.org).

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## What You Need to Know about **Heartworm Treatment** and Your Newly Adopted Dog



**Keep Them Safe. Love Them Always.**

Prepared by the American Heartworm Society and the Association of Shelter Veterinarians

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## Thank you for considering a dog with special needs!

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Rescuing and rehoming animals is a team effort, and we would not be able to save animals if it were not for dedicated adopters like you! **Thank you.**

We are fortunate that we have the ability to treat dogs that come to our shelter with heartworms. Though the treatment protocol recommended by our veterinarian has been completed, ensuring its success relies upon the care that you will provide in your home over the coming months.

It is very important that you limit physical activity and keep your dog confined in a crate or on a leash at all times for the first couple of months after treatment. This is a great opportunity to work on training new pets and stimulating their mental health while giving them time to heal from the physical effects of heartworm disease and its treatment. In addition, ensure that your dog receives a heartworm preventive medication each and every month.

Be sure to follow up with your veterinarian in the months to come. In rare cases, adulticide treatment does not fully clear infections the first time. This may be due to some adult worms surviving treatment, or some “prepatent” worms (juvenile worms too old to be cleared with preventive and too young to be cleared with adulticide).

**The dog you are adopting has been diagnosed positive and has undergone treatment for heartworm disease.**



### What kind of treatment did my dog receive?

Veterinarians may choose from a variety of treatment options based on the needs of each individual dog and resources available to pay for treatment. The treatment protocol recommended by the American Heartworm Society can be found at [www.heartwormsociety.org](http://www.heartwormsociety.org).

In most cases, heartworm disease treatment includes oral medications to weaken the heartworms, prevent new infections, and reduce inflammation in addition to a series of injections to kill the adult heartworms.

Please review your pet’s medical records with your veterinarian to determine the specific course of treatment provided to your new dog. Our medical staff will be happy to answer any questions you or your veterinarian may have.

### What will my veterinarian recommend?

In most cases, no further medical treatment is needed after adoption. However, if you notice your dog coughing, acting lethargic, or having difficulty breathing, he/she should be evaluated by your veterinarian as soon as possible. In these cases, your veterinarian may want to do further tests to better understand the impact of heartworm disease and its treatment on your individual dog. These may include more blood tests, a urinalysis, radiographs (x-rays), or an echocardiogram (ultrasound of the heart).

The American Heartworm Society recommends administering a heartworm preventive medication 12 months a year for the life of your pet. Whether the preventive is given orally, topically, or by injection, all approved heartworm preventives work to keep your dog from developing heartworm disease.



### Do I need to provide any special care at home?

Heartworm treatment is generally undertaken in stages over several months. While treatment is usually very effective, recovery requires patience from the adoptive family. The initial treatment was performed at the shelter; the next phase requires rest and recovery in the new home. Cage rest is a very important part of heartworm treatment, so you will have to plan to keep your dog quiet but entertained during crate rest. One method of entertainment is to slow down feeding time by feeding in a food dispensing toy, such as a Kibble Nibble™, Stuffed Kong®, Kong® Wobbler™, or a home-made PVC pipe food treat dispensing device. Walking on a leash is necessary when your new dog goes outside and will enhance bonding with the new family.

Dogs with heartworm disease can live high-quality lives as long as they are given appropriate care. After completing treatment and following your veterinarian’s recommendations on heartworm disease testing and prevention, the chances of any long-term effects are very low.

### Will you pay for treatment complications?

Though rare, treatment complications occasionally occur. In most cases, these are mild and occur within the first few weeks after receiving treatment. As much as we would like to support you and your new pet through any complications, we are unable to do so. We are grateful to you for partnering with us to save this dog’s life! All medical expenses for testing, treatment (if needed), and prevention are the responsibility of the adopter.

**The veterinarians listed below are familiar with our treatment policy and are happy to see recently adopted dogs.**

**Please make an appointment today.**

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