

TAKING ON TOUGH QUESTIONS



AMERICAN
HEARTWORM
SOCIETY™
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FAQs ABOUT HEARTWORM DIAGNOSIS, PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

Q The American Heartworm Society (AHS) has released a new Heartworm Incidence Map. What's changed?



Jenni Rizzo, DVM/
President, American
Heartworm Society

A. The AHS conducts a nationwide heartworm incidence survey every three years and has done so since 2001. Participating veterinary clinics and shelters submit summary reports of the previous year's heartworm tests and complete a survey that provides additional insights on factors influencing heartworm trends in their area. The triennial schedule allows the AHS to capture bigger-picture trends vs. year-to-year changes that are sometimes affected by transient factors, like weather, that influence local mosquito patterns.

Are heartworm rates up or down?

The dark red areas of the map show where heartworm density is greatest. States with the highest incidence include Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, and Arkansas, followed by Georgia and the Carolinas. Heartworm rates in these states have historically been high, thanks to the presence of heartworm-positive dogs and wildlife that serve as reservoirs coupled with warm, humid weather

conditions. What is concerning is that many "dark red" areas are expanding.

Heartworm numbers in the Southwest and West, meanwhile, continue to be much lower than in the South and Southeast, but the picture is changing. Areas of higher infection are spreading and cropping up in metropolitan areas such as Seattle, Boise, and Tucson.

Surveys completed by participating veterinarians support this. While roughly half (53%) of participating practitioners said heartworm rates have stayed the same where they practice, those that saw a change were much more likely to say rates have increased (29%) than decreased (17%). The influx of heartworm-positive dogs from out-of-state and decreased compliance with heartworm preventives were the most common reasons cited. Increased heartworm testing rates may be a factor in some areas as well.

Can these trends be reversed?

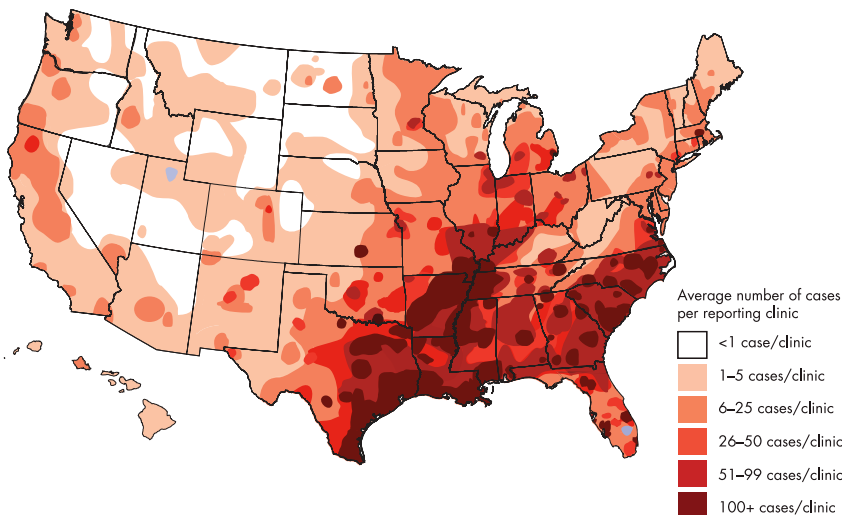
The answer is yes. In the US, we can choose from at least 20 different heartworm preventive options, and ALL products are nearly 100% effective in preventing heartworms when used year-round and administered as directed. Products also come in different forms, at different price points, and cover a range of internal and external parasites. With so many choices, it should be simple to find a preventive option that works for any client's lifestyle or budget.

It's important to enlist every member of the veterinary team in sharing the same message. If we can help pet owners understand the importance, ease, and affordability of protecting their pets from heartworm, there's no question we could be looking at a very different map three years from now.

2022 HEARTWORM INCIDENCE



© American Heartworm Society The severity of heartworm incidence as shown in this map is based on the average number of cases per reporting clinic. Some remote regions of the United States lack veterinary clinics, therefore we have no reported cases from these areas.



If you and your staff want additional training, explore the many resources and videos available at heartwormsociety.org and [YouTube.com/@americanheartworm](https://www.youtube.com/@americanheartworm).