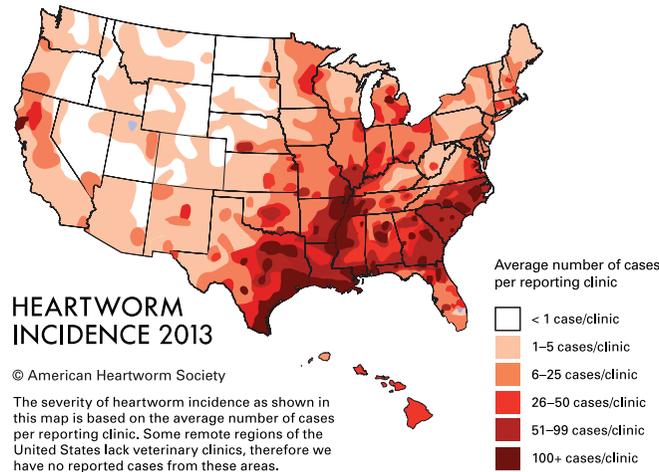


## Did you know?

- **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 12 months a 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.



**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).

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## Are You Adopting a Heartworm-Positive 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.

Most dogs that end up in animal shelters can become wonderful companions, and may have been caught in unfortunate life circumstances through no fault of their own.

Some animals come to us with conditions that our animal shelter cannot afford to treat, but we don't think this should prevent their chance for adoption.

The dog you are considering adopting has tested positive for heartworm disease.

### What is heartworm disease?

Heartworm disease is a serious and potentially fatal disease in pets, spread by mosquitoes. The disease is caused by foot-long worms (heartworms) that live in the heart and blood vessels of the lungs of affected pets, causing severe lung disease, heart failure, and damage to other organs in the body. Heartworm disease is easy to prevent with regular use of preventive medication available through your veterinarian. Treating heartworm disease is more complicated.

The dog you are considering adopting has tested positive for heartworm disease.

### What does a positive heartworm test mean?

The dog you are considering adopting tested positive for heartworms. This means he or she was bitten by a mosquito carrying heartworms and has become infected. This test does not tell us how long the dog has been affected, how many worms are present, or whether any serious damage has already occurred.

You will need to speak with your veterinarian about the next steps in following up on this positive test and treating your new pet for this disease.

### What will my veterinarian recommend?

Your veterinarian may want to do further tests to better understand your dog's individual disease as heartworms can affect each dog differently. These may include more blood tests, a urinalysis, radiographs (x-rays) or an echocardiogram (ultrasound of the heart).

After that, your veterinarian will start your dog on a schedule for treatment. Heartworm treatment is administered through a series of injections, along with other medications that can help decrease complications.

Treatment will help not only this dog but it will also prevent him or her from passing the infection along through mosquitoes to other dogs in your neighborhood!



**The American Heartworm Society has a convenient app to plan a heartworm treatment schedule: [www.HeartwormToolkit.com](http://www.HeartwormToolkit.com)**

### What will heartworm treatment be like for my dog?

Dogs with heartworm disease can live high quality lives as long as they are given appropriate care. Without treatment, however, heartworm disease will worsen and can lead to more serious illness in your dog's heart and lungs, even heart failure.

While heartworm treatment is very effective, it requires patience as treatment takes place in stages over several months. Cage rest is a very important part of heartworm treatment, so you will have to plan to keep your dog quiet but entertained throughout the treatment period. One method of entertainment is to slow down feeding time by feeding in a food dispensing toy. Visit [www.heartwormsociety.org/battlingboredom](http://www.heartwormsociety.org/battlingboredom) for more ideas. Walking on a leash is necessary when your new dog goes outside and will enhance bonding with the new family.

### Will you pay for the dog's heartworm treatment?

As much as we would like to treat our shelter animals for all of their conditions, we simply cannot afford to do so. We are grateful to you for partnering with us to save this dog's life! All medical expenses for testing, necessary treatment, and prevention are the responsibility of the adopter.

The veterinarians listed below understand the reasons for our testing policy, and are happy to see recently adopted dogs. Please make an appointment today.

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

**Please make an appointment today.**