

HEARTWORM

Heartworms are parasitic worms that live in the heart and are transmitted from pet to pet by mosquitoes. It is most prominent in dogs but cats are at risk too. It is a fatal disease if left untreated. Heartworms can cause coughing, exercise intolerance, labored breathing, and heart failure. Pets with mild infections may show no signs at all. Heartworm disease is diagnosed with a blood test, also heart and lung changes can be seen on an x-ray.

Treatment for heartworm disease is expensive and has many side effects associated with it, including death. Pets must be hospitalized and monitored very closely.

The best treatment is prevention. There are many kinds of heartworm preventatives on the market. It is typically a once-a-month chewable tablet. Your pet must be tested to ensure that they are negative for heartworm prior to starting on the preventative. Blood tests are required yearly to ensure they remain negative. We recommend that pet's are on the heartworm preventative year round as it also prevents roundworm (see article on zoonosis).

May through October brings out fleas and ticks. These little creatures can carry disease and be very uncomfortable for your pet. Prairie dogs are hosts to fleas. They can carry bubonic plague, which could be transmitted home to you. We carry Frontline Plus to help protect you and your pet, call us for more information.