

# Downers Grove Animal Hospital & Bird Clinic, P.C.

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## Canine 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, even before outward clinical signs are detected by the owner.
- Advanced signs include difficulty breathing, coughing, tiring easily, listlessness, loss of weight, and fainting.
- Heartworms are found throughout the United States and Canada.

## 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, shorthaired and longhaired, inside-dogs and outside-dogs. Heartworms also are known to infect cats. Diagnosis of Heartworms is by a blood test. **Treatment is very SUCCESSFUL when the disease is detected early.**

## HEARTWORMS 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<sup>®</sup>), which also aids in the prevention of other internal parasites. Heartgard<sup>®</sup> should be given year round. Routine testing for heartworms once each year is suggested for all dogs!