



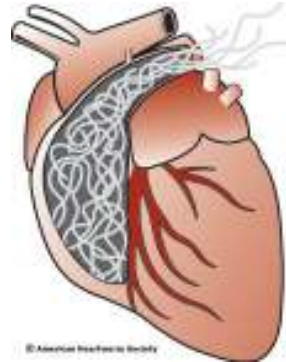
# PET KARE CLINIC

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## Heartworm Disease

### Pet Kare Recommends:

- Yearly testing unless there has been no travel outside of Routt County, then we recommend testing every other year
- Heartworm Test =\$30.00
- Iverhart Max (Heartworm preventative and intestinal dewormer) a monthly tablet given May/June-October/November
- Iverhart Max = \$25.00-\$48.00 for a 6 month supply



### What is Heartworm Disease?

Heartworm disease is a potentially deadly infection, caused by worms (*Dirofilaria immitis*) that may grow to be 14-inch-long adults. These worms live in the right side of the heart and arteries of the lungs. Dogs of any age and breed are susceptible to infection. Heartworm infection can cause serious damage to these arteries, eventually leading to heart failure, and in severe cases, damage other organs such as the liver, kidneys and lungs. In extreme cases, a dog can be infected with several hundred heartworms. Cats are also susceptible to the disease.

### What is the life cycle?

Heartworm disease is spread from animal to animal by mosquitoes. Dogs, cats, ferrets, coyotes, fox and wolves have been found to be infected with heartworms. Adult female heartworms release their young, called microfilariae, into the animal's bloodstream. Mosquitoes then become infected with microfilariae while taking a blood meal from an infected animal. The larvae development then depends on the environmental temperature. The average daily temperature must stay above 64 degrees for approximately one month to mature to the infective stage. (The warmer the temperature, the faster the development)

When the infected mosquito bites another dog or cat, the infective larvae enters through the bite wound. In dogs, it then takes at least 5 months for the infective larvae to mature into adult worms that may live for five to seven years in dogs. In cats, it takes about eight months to mature into adult worms that live from two to three years. **\*\*Microfilariae cannot mature into adult heartworms without first passing through a mosquito.\*\***



Microfilariae(Larval stage)

### How do you detect Heartworm Disease?

Testing for heartworm infection in dogs is done with a blood test for microfilariae or a heartworm substance called an "antigen". A small blood sample is taken and test results are read in 8-10 minutes. Neither test is consistently positive until 6 months after exposure has occurred.

Heartworm infection may also be detected through x-ray and/or ultrasound images of the heart and lungs, although these tests are usually used in animals that are known to be infected.

In Steamboat Springs, we recommend having your pet tested for heartworm disease yearly if they travel (even to Denver) and every other year if they stay in Routt County.

#### How to Prevent Heartworm Disease?

Heartworm disease is prevented by using products, either topically or orally, once a month. The medication is used to kill the larval stage of the heartworm that has infected the pet the previous 30-45 days. This prevents the larval stage from developing into adult heartworms. Pet Kare Clinic recommends giving medication for prevention the months of May through November.

The product Pet Kare Clinic carries has an additional dewormer to kill intestinal parasites, which includes, roundworms, hookworms, and tapeworms.

#### What about cats?

We recommend preventing heartworm disease in cats by applying Revolution, a monthly topical product. We do not test for heartworm infection because if they are infected they do not always test positive due to the smaller worm count. Most cats will only get 2-4 adult heartworms and a low number of microfilariae. (Dogs can have hundreds of adult heartworms) This can still cause heart failure or sudden death.



#### Why does Pet Kare Clinic recommend this now?

Heartworm disease has not been a problem in Steamboat Springs yet, but heartworm disease in dogs has been seen as close as the Front Range, Grand Junction and Laramie, Wyoming. Pet Kare Clinic would like their clients educated and their pets protected from this dangerous disease.



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