

RIDDING YOUR DOG OF HEARTWORMS

A complete physical examination is necessary to determine the health status of your pet and the severity of the heartworm disease. Blood tests and radiographs are a part of the complete work-up before treatment.

The heartworm treatment process consists of 4 visits to our office over a 2 month period, with a 5th visit, 9 months after treatment for a final heartworm test. During this time, we will be ridding your pet of both adult and immature heartworms, while preventing newly acquired immature worms from developing. We will be using this extended treatment to ensure a steady and safe elimination of heartworms.

DAY 1: Exam/Bloodwork/Radiographs/Prevention/ Antibiotics/Supportive Care (ex. steroids, antihistamines)

Your pet will be admitted to the hospital for the day. We will perform a physical examination, draw blood for analysis and take radiographs, if not done prior to this visit. We will then administer the first dose of an appropriate heartworm prevention, in the office. This is a heartworm prevention that will assist in the killing of the immature worms in the bloodstream, preventing them from being transmitted to mosquitoes, and other dogs/cats. Your pet will likely also receive steroids, and/or antihistamines to relieve any inflammation or discomfort as well as any other medications to provide the appropriate standard of care for your pet. We will monitor your pet for the remainder of the day for any complications. Your pet will be discharged to you at the end of the day. At this time, you will go home with a 30 day supply of Doxycycline, to be administered as directed by the veterinarian. Recent studies have shown that this antibiotic weakens the adult heartworms by eliminating bacteria, called Wolbachia, that live with the adult heartworm. Doxycycline also decreases the risk of adverse reactions. This allows the next part of the treatment to be most effective. A 6 month supply of heartworm prevention will be dispensed, and is to be given every 30 days. Your pet will go home for 30 days, until the next treatment. During this time, we need you to help care for your pet. THIS PART IS VERY IMPORTANT! Your pet must rest and remain quiet throughout the entire treatment. This is necessary to prevent complications resulting from stress on the heart and lungs. Your pet needs to be kept indoors, cool and calm. Your pet may be leash walked only, when outside. No extra activities, such as running, jumping or swimming, playing with other dogs, or extended walks should occur.

DAY 30: Exam/Melarsomine #1/Steroids

Your pet will be admitted to the hospital for the day. We will administer the 1st of 3 intramuscular injections, aimed at eliminating the adult worms in the heart. At this time, a 60 day supply of steroids will be dispensed to ensure your pet remains comfortable. At the end of the day, your pet will be discharged into your care until the next visit, 30 days later. As long as there are no complications, the monthly heartworm preventative can be given 2 days following this portion of the treatment.

DAY 60: Exam/Melarsomine #2

Your pet will return for the 2nd of 3 intramuscular injections, at which time, we will admit your pet into the hospital for the day for observation. We will discharge your pet at the end of the day.

DAY 61: Exam/Melarsomine #3

Your pet will return for the 3rd and final intramuscular injection. We will admit your pet into the hospital for the day for observation. As long as there are no complications, you can administer your pet's heartworm prevention 2 days following this treatment. The activity restrictions that were required before, will still need to be followed. At the end of the day, your pet will be discharged to you. We are not quite finished...

For the next 30 days, it is still important to keep your pet cool, calm and quiet. At the end of the 30 days, we will call you at home to evaluate your pet's condition. At this time, it will be decided whether or not your pet can resume normal activity. Before the next treatment, in 7 months, your pet's heartworm prevention will need to be refilled.

DAY 335 (9 MONTHS): Exam/Heartworm (Flex4) Test

For this portion, an appointment will be scheduled for your pet to come in for a follow -up exam and heartworm test. This will confirm that your pet is heartworm negative!

PROBLEMS YOU SHOULD WATCH FOR

As the worms within the heart and circulatory system are eliminated, some dogs experience a temporary lack of appetite, upset stomach, coughing, drooling, or panting. Signs of fever, respiratory difficulty, or depression may also occur in response to the presence of dead worms. If these or other signs of discomfort develop, please call our office immediately!

ONCE AGAIN, WE CAN NOT STRESS ENOUGH THAT, ALTHOUGH OUR PART TO RID YOUR PET OF HEARTWORMS IS IMPORTANT, PLEASE REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR PET'S ACTIVITY RESTRICTED. GIVE PRESCRIBED MEDICATIONS AND WATCH FOR ANY PROBLEMS THAT MAY ARISE THROUGHOUT THE TREATMENT PROCESS.

Please feel free to discuss any questions you may have concerning this very important treatment. You can reach us Monday - Friday from 8am - 6pm.

Your next appointment is on:



SAFE HARBOR
ANIMAL HOSPITAL

1161 Mulhensbergia Drive
Mt. Pleasant, SC

(843)648-4787

MT. PLEASANT
ANIMAL HOSPITAL

1217 Ben Sawyer Blvd.
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HEARTWORM TREATMENT

Treatment and Care Instructions