

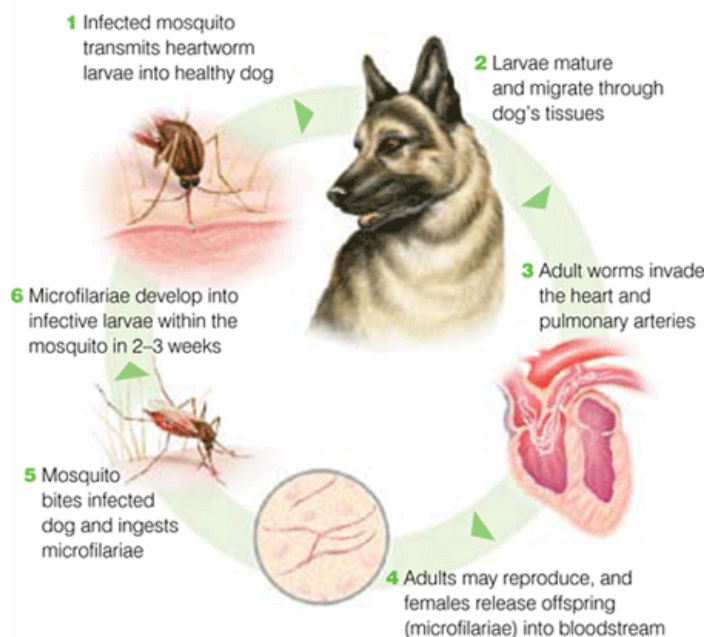


Animal Clinic of Michigan City

Canine Heartworm Disease

Heartworm disease in dogs is a seriously deadly and common parasite of dogs. It is also one of the only diseases in veterinary medicine that is virtually **100%** preventable (current data indicates approximately 98.5%). Heartworm disease has many stages and the signs can sometimes be hidden (asymptomatic heartworm disease). That is why it's important to have your pet on heartworm prevention year-round and tested yearly.

Mosquito-borne disease life cycle



Heartworms are carried and transmitted by mosquitoes. All it takes is for one infected mosquito to bite a dog once for infection to occur. Contrary to popular belief, heartworms can be transmitted in the dead of winter. The mosquitoes that carry heartworms can, and often do, come inside in the winter. As long as the temperature remains above 60 degrees, the mosquitoes can still transmit heartworms. For this reason, heartworm prevention **needs** to be maintained every month throughout the year. In fact, **60%** of the heartworm positive dogs treated at the Animal Clinic of Michigan City were on heartworm prevention throughout the spring, summer, and fall months; but not in the winter months.

If not detected early, severe heart and lung disease can occur. Besides heart failure, heartworms can cause scarring of the lungs and life threatening emboli (blood clots). Symptoms of heartworm disease are coughing, difficulty breathing, weight loss, decreased energy, and heart murmurs. With yearly heartworm detection, though, infections can be diagnosed and treated before any signs and permanent damage can occur.

At the Animal Clinic of Michigan City, we currently use a test that tests for heartworm infection as well as Lyme disease and Ehrlichiosis. We also recommend annual intestinal parasite tests (stool samples). After such testing, We recommend monthly heartworm prevention such as Interceptor and Heartgard to prevent heartworm disease and as a monthly intestinal parasite prevention. The broad spectrum parasite prevention is paramount to the health of your family member, which is the goal of the staff and doctors.