

## HEART WORM PREVENTION

Heartworms are worms that can live in the heart of an infected dog for as long as **5 years**. Dogs are infected by mosquitoes. In order to keep your pet heartworm free, he or she must be on heartworm prevention. In our area, we consider year-long prevention to be safest and most cost effective way to control this parasite. It takes 6 months for a heartworm to reach maturity from the time of introduction. The most common type of heartworm prevention is a monthly tablet.

Heartworm preventatives are **prescription drugs**. If a patient receives the product and is sensitive-or already infected – an adverse reaction may occur. A prescription drug is one that cannot be dispensed without an FDA mandated doctor-patient relationship. Consultation with one of our doctors can give you information on what is the safest, easiest and most cost effective means to prevent this problem (and control other parasites as well). An annual physical exam is the minimum requirement to meet the doctor-patient criteria. We also test dogs annually for Heart worms, Lyme Disease and Ehrlichiosis to help satisfy this relationship and insure your pet's complete protection. Pills can be missed, spit out, under-dosed or incompletely absorbed. If your pet has acquired an infection, we want to find out in a timely manner in order to eliminate them immediately. We recommend testing for intestinal worms annually as well in order to help determine the most appropriate product for your pet.