

The Range Animal Hospital

E6116 U. S. Highway 2
Ironwood, MI 49938
906-932-3531
1-888-380-6319

* * * * *

Donald C. Martinson DVM

Todd A. Grebner DVM

* * * * *

Advanced
Diagnostics, Medicine
Surgery, Dentistry, &
Trauma Care
for
Large & Small Animals

* * * * *



HEARTWORM DISEASE

Heartworm disease is a debilitating and potentially fatal disease of dogs and cats.

Heartworm, as the name suggests, is an actual worm, which lives in the chambers of the heart. An immature form of the heartworm, termed microfilaria, circulates in the blood stream of an infected animal. It is transferred by the bite of a mosquito. Therefore, direct contact with a sick animal is not necessary to contract heartworm. The microfilaria requires six months to develop into an adult heartworm.

During the adult stage the disease is easily detected by a simple blood test. **If not detected, the disease progresses, eventually causing respiratory and cardiovascular failure.** Unfortunately, there are no symptoms of heartworm disease until the disease is very advanced.

While treatment for heartworm disease is improving, **prevention is preferable.** The first step in the preventive program is a blood test. The ideal time to begin prevention is in the spring and continues through the mosquito season.

After a negative blood test, the animal is given the preventive medication, an

injection, that works for the next six months to prevent infection.

Veterinarians recommend testing for two reasons. First, infected animals treated early in the course of the disease have a better chance for survival. Second, identification and treatment of infected animals eliminates them as a source of infection to others.

During your visit, **we will take a blood sample and run the test immediately.** If the test is negative, we will give your dog **“PRO-HEART 6”** as **an injection.** This one injection will protect your dog **through the summer months** against any heartworm-infected mosquitoes. If your dog should, unfortunately, test **positive**, we would need to treat the disease before beginning the preventive, but we would fill you in on all of those details should that happen.

The incidence of heartworm in cats at this time is very low, but if you are interested we can test your cat too.