



## ALL IT TAKES IS ONE BITE

### IS YOUR PET PROTECTED?

With the coming of spring, so do all the insects and parasites along with it. Those include mosquitoes that carry the heartworm disease. Heartworm disease is a serious and potentially fatal disease in pets. It is caused by foot-long worms (heartworms) that live in the heart, lungs and associated blood vessels of affected pets, causing severe lung disease, heart failure and damage to other organs in the body. Heartworm disease affects dogs, cats, and ferrets. Because wild species such as foxes and coyotes live in proximity to many urban areas, they are considered important carriers of the disease.

Dogs are a natural host for heartworms, which means that heartworms that live inside the dog mature into adults, mate and produce offspring. If untreated, their numbers can increase, and dogs have been known to harbor several hundred worms in their bodies. For this reason, prevention is by far the best option.

How is heartworm disease transmitted from one pet to another?

The mosquito plays an essential role in the heartworm life cycle. Adult female heartworms living in an infected dog, fox, coyote, or wolf produce microscopic baby worms called microfilaria that circulate in the bloodstream. When a mosquito bites an infected animal, it picks up these baby worms, which develop and mature into “infective stage” larvae over a period of 10 to 14 days. Then, when the infected mosquito bites another dog, cat, or susceptible wild animal, the infected larvae are deposited into the animal.

Centennial Animal Hospital recommends annual testing for all our canine companions over the age of one. Puppies under 7 months of age can be started on heartworm prevention without a heartworm test until the age of one. Annual testing is necessary, even when dogs are on heartworm prevention year-round, to ensure that the prevention program is working. Heartworm medications are highly effective, but dogs can still become infected. If you miss just one dose of a monthly medication or give it late – it can leave your dog unprotected. Even if you give the medication as recommended, your dog may spit out or vomit a heartworm pill. Heartworm preventives are highly effective, but not 100 percent effective.

We recommend and carry Interceptor Plus not only protects against heartworm disease it also helps to protect your pets against Tapeworms, Hookworms, Roundworms, and Whipworms.

Tapeworms – Fleas can carry the tapeworm’s larvae or babies. Most pets get tapeworms from the actual ingestion of the fleas.

Roundworms – are most common in puppies who get them from their mother milk. Older dogs can get them if they eat another animal’s poop, or if they eat mice or other small animals that are infected.

Hookworms – are intestinal parasites that are common in dogs. The eggs are passed in the feces, dogs can become infected directly by licking the ground, or grooming themselves. They can also migrate through the skin, usually through the belly or paws. Puppies can also be infected by the larvae present in the mom’s milk.

Whipworms – one of the four most common intestinal parasites dogs become infected by swallowing eggs in the soil or other substances that may contain dog feces.

Partnering with you for complete personalized care for your pet, The Doctors & Staff of Centennial

Animal Hospital