

heartworm DISEASE

Heartworm is a serious, life-threatening disease of dogs and a major cause of heart disease in cats.

It is due to the presence of the adult stage of the parasite, *Dirofilaria immitis*, in the pulmonary arteries and right ventricle of the heart. It is found almost everywhere in the continental United States.

heartworm LIFE CYCLE

1 MOSQUITO BITE

When a mosquito bites, it injects the microfilariae into a new dog.

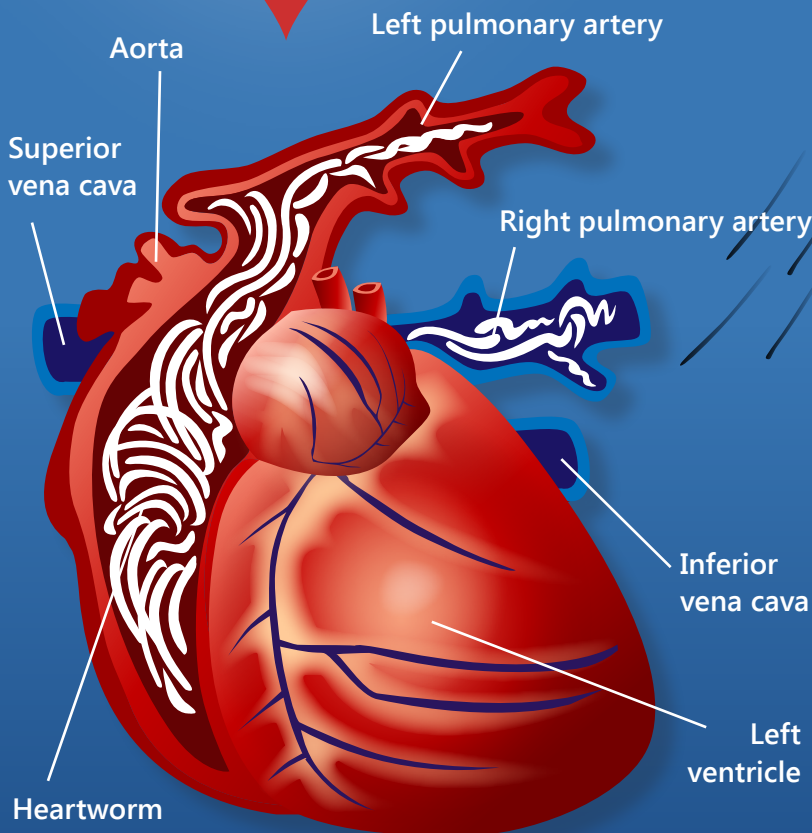
2 MIGRATION

Small, microscopic worms migrate under the skin and eventually enter the dog's blood stream. About 6 months after the initial mosquito bite, the microfilariae arrive at the heart.

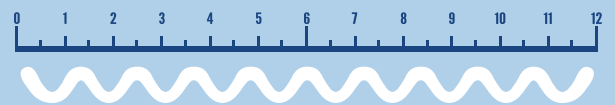
3 MATURATION

The adult worms live in the pulmonary arteries and right side of the heart, where they can survive for seven years and eventually mate.

The female releases large amounts of small, microscopic "microfilariae" into the bloodstream.



**ADULT HEARTWORMS
GROW OVER
12 IN. LONG!**



70 SPECIES OF MOSQUITOS
ARE CAPABLE OF SPREADING
HEARTWORM DISEASE