



Canine Companions Rescue Center

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Heartworm Treatment

Your dog has recently undergone the first phase of canine heartworm treatment. It consists of two doses of Immiticide injected 24 hours apart in the lumbar muscle. Phase one kills the adult worms that have been living in your dog's heart. Over the next few weeks, these worms will die and break apart. The dead worms must be broken down and absorbed by the dog's body. During this time, usually three to four weeks, your dog must be completely inactive. **No running, jumping, rough play or extreme excitement is allowed.** Your dog must be taken outside on a leash to eliminate. If your dog is too active following the first phase of treatment, the dead worms can become lodged in the lungs and cause serious complications including death.

Please contact your vet if you notice symptoms including unusual lack of energy, coughing, fever, diarrhea, vomiting or loss of appetite in the first few weeks after this phase of treatment. Some decrease in appetite is normal and you may also see some swelling at the site of the injections.

Phase two may differ depending on your vet. The second phase of treatment is required to kill the offspring of the adult heartworms. These offspring are circulating in your dog's bloodstream and can lead to reinfestation if phase two of treatment is not completed in a timely manner. Some vets recommend an oral dose of Immiticide, which is similar to monthly heartworm preventatives such as Heartguard but stronger. The dosage of this medicine must be calculated by a vet, and is given in place of regular heartworm preventative. One month after this (two months after phase one) you will want to start your dog on a regular schedule of heartworm preventative and continue give it year round.

Other vets skip the oral Immiticide and go straight to regular heartworm preventative one month after phase one. You will want to talk to your own vet about which course of action they recommend for your dog. Heartworm preventative is available in oral, injectable, or topical forms. Your vet can help you decide which heartworm preventative is best for you and your dog.

The final phase of heartworm treatment takes place four months after the first phase. At this time you will want to have your dog heartworm tested to make sure all of the heartworms have been eliminated from your dog's system. Usually this will be the case, but occasionally additional treatment may be necessary. It is unlikely your dog will have any long term damage as a result of their heartworm infestation and treatment.

If you have any questions about this disease or the treatment please call us at (248) 834-9419 or call your vet.