

Heartworm Disease

Congratulations on your new family member! Your new dog tested previously tested positive for heartworm and has since been treated while in the care of CCRC. We want you to be as informed as possible regarding the causes and treatment of heartworm.

A heartworm is a parasitic worm (*Dirofilaria immitis*) that lives in the heart and pulmonary arteries of an infected animal. Animals are infected when a mosquito carrying the disease bites them. The worms travel through the bloodstream—harming arteries and vital organs as they go—ultimately completing their journey to the vessels of the lung and the heart chamber about six months after the initial infection. Several hundred worms can live in one dog for five to seven years. Heartworm disease is serious, and can be fatal.

While heartworm treatment can be difficult, we successfully treat many dogs each year. Treatment includes injecting a drug, called an adulticide. It is important that during treatment, and for several weeks after that, the treated dog be kept quiet and exercise be reduced to a minimum and limiting their activity will reduce the risk of clotting. We recommend only allowing leash walks during that full recovery period.

All CCRC dogs are on a preventative protocol which is the very best way to ensure your dog never gets heartworm disease again. Please continue to provide a heartworm preventative for the duration of your dog's life. These preventatives can be purchased from your veterinarian. Following these simple instructions will help to ensure that your new best friend lives a long and happy life in its new home!

If your dog appears to be lethargic or stops eating, please contact CCRC immediately at 248.834.9419 - prior to contacting one of our vets, if at all possible.

If your dog needs to go to the vet, **ONLY pre-approved visits to OUR participating vets** will be covered. If you do not get prior approval or choose to take your dog to another vet, CCRC will not be responsible for ANY costs from the visit.