

Heartworm

Heartworm is spread by mosquitoes and results in worms clogging up the heart and surrounding major blood vessels, eventually leading to heart failure and early death.



Even if caught early enough to treat, irreversible damage can occur to the heart.



This is a definite case of “prevention is better than cure”. There are many preventatives available on the market, and it is best to start your pet on them at around 12 weeks of age. There are monthly tablets, chewy lollies, and daily tablets available for young dogs. Each is as good as the next so long as they are given properly. Once your dog has reached adult body weight there is a yearly injection available, ideal to give at the time of vaccinations.

There are also “top spot” drugs which are squeezed onto the back of the neck and absorbed into the system. These are a heartworm preventative as well as flea control and are applied monthly for dogs and cats. Cats have a monthly tablet available and there is still much research being carried out into the occurrence of heartworm disease in cats. If your dog has missed its tablets have a chat to Dr Mike about what to do, as it differs depending on what preventative they are on.

A simple blood test can be carried out in the clinic to see if your pet has any adult heartworms.

