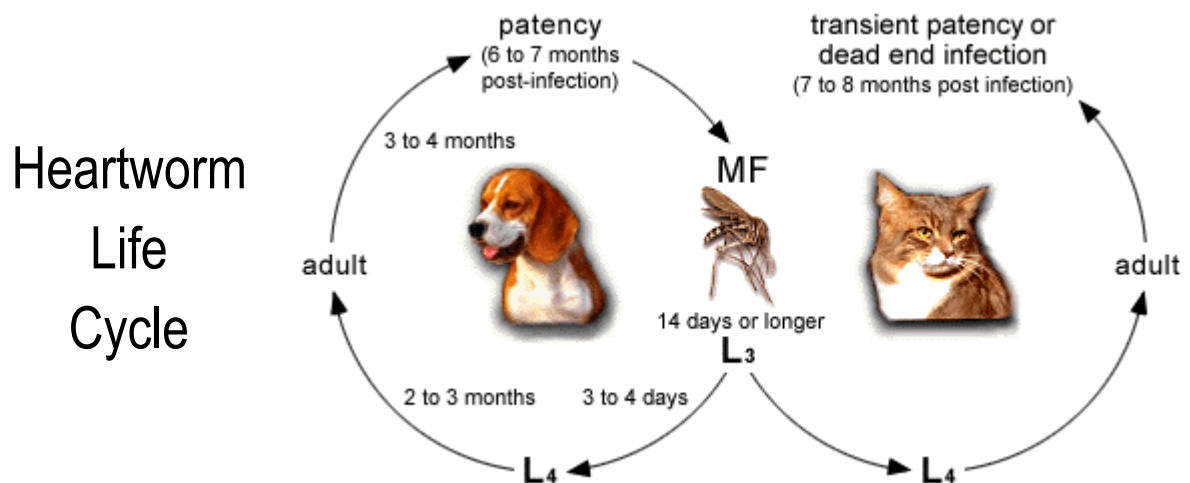


# Heartworm Disease

Heartworm is serious and potentially fatal parasite that primarily infects dogs, cats, and a variety of wild animals. The good news is, heartworm disease is preventable.



## Transmission

Heartworm can only be transmitted by mosquitoes. When a mosquito bites an infected animal the “baby” heartworms (microfilariae) enter into the mosquitoes system. These baby heartworm develop within the mosquito into larvae and then can be transmitted to another animal when the mosquito takes another blood meal.

Within the infected animal these larva will mature into adult larva in approximately six months. These adult worms cause damage to the animals blood vessels, which reduces the hearts pumping ability , resulting in sever lung and heart disease. The adult worms can reach the length of 14 inches.

## Prevalence

All dogs and cats are susceptible to heartworms regardless of sex, age, or living environment. Geographically heartworms can be found in every state.

## Testing

There are several different types of tests available for detecting adult heartworms. Most commonly in dogs a simple blood test is done that detects adult heartworms, this is called and antigen test. Diagnosis in cats is more difficult.. A series of different tests may be required to determine if a cat has heartworm disease. In dogs, heartworm testing should be done annually to be sure your dog is receiving the accurate dosage of prevention and to make sure your dog doesn't subsequently become infected with heartworm.

## Prevention

The good news is heartworm disease is almost 100% preventable. There are several approved medications for dogs and cats that when given as directed are extremely affective. Discuss with your veterinarian which prevention is the best for your pet.