

Post heartworm FAQ's...



Q: What is heartworm?

A: It is a disease transmitted from mosquitos to Dogs. The larvae are found all over the body, but the adult worms reside in the heart, lungs and associated blood vessels. As mature adults, the worms mate and the females release their offspring (microfilaria), into the blood stream.

Q: Can my dogs catch heartworm from a heartworm positive dog?

A: No. The disease can only be transmitted via a bite from a mosquito.

Q: How is heartworm treated?

A: Our dogs are all pre treated with Doxycyclilne. This antibiotic kills of bacteria that live within the worm. Our dogs are then treated with 2 shots of Imiticide. This medication is injected deep into the lumbar muscles. If your dog has shaved patches on his/her back, this probably from these injections.

Q: How should I exercise my post heartworm treatment dog?

A: it is absolutely imperative that his exercise is severely restricted for four weeks after both the first and the second treatment (in other words, a total of at least eight weeks). This means no running, jumping, playing, getting overly excited, overheated, or stressed out. He should go outside only for eliminations; if he tends to run wild when outside, he must be taken out on a leash even in his own yard. Although some veterinarians say the dog must be crated, this can be left up to the owner or rescuer in most cases. If the dog is comfortable in his crate and does not cry or bark or try to get out, the crate is the place to be, especially when the owner/rescuer is not home. However, if the crate is stressful for the dog, other arrangements will have to be made. Many dogs are calm enough that they will simply rest when the owner is not home.

Q: What are some post heartworm symptoms my dog may have?

A: To some extent, all heartworm patients will have a slight degree of thromboembolism after Imiticide therapy, but in most cases it is minor and may cause a little coughing and gagging, beginning a few days after treatment. You should not be surprised to note some lethargy and loss of appetite for the first week or two after treatment. Also, the dog will probably be sore over the lower back where the injections were given. Some dogs are very painful and will resent being touched in that area.

Q: My dog came up with Predisone pills. Do I need to give him these?

A: Yes! Predisone is usually used post heart worm treatment to reduce swelling. Please follow the directions on the bottle or package. The dose is tapered over several weeks before it is stopped all together.

Q: What if any symptoms should I watch for in my dog

A: While serious symptoms are rare you should be mindful of listlessness or lethargy, total refusal to eat, a persistent cough especially if it involves the production of mucus or blood, a change in the color of the dog's normally pink gums (to pale, white, bluish, or a deep red), vomiting, or fever (normal rectal temperature is about 99.5 to 102.5 F). Rapid labored breathing and rapid heart rate (feel for a pulse in the chest behind the front leg or in the groin area) are also causes for concern. If you have concerns, please reach out to Sarah at sarah.fostello@bigfluffydgs.com, and let your adoption coordinator know.