

Is heartworm prevention worth it?



Heartworm medication is an expense you might not have expected, but it's an important one. Here are answers to common questions to help you think about a single medication once a month—or an injection every six months—to keep your pet safe and sound.

Heartworm medicine can be expensive. Why should I spend my money on it?

While it seems expensive, you get a lot more value for your prevention dollar than you realize. Consider this: You can protect your dog from a fatal heartworm infection for an entire month for what you'd spend on a pastry and coffee at your favorite coffee shop.

Many monthly medications also offer more than just heartworm

protection— some protect against fleas and common intestinal worms, too. That's important to your pet's health as well as that of your family, when you consider that parasites like roundworms and hookworms can be spread to your kids and other household members.

I still don't think I can justify spending money on it

Here are two important facts you need to know. First, preventing heartworms is a lot

cheaper than treating them; heartworm treatment can cost up to \$1,000 in medication and veterinary bills. Second, while heartworm disease in dogs can be treated and the worms eliminated, the damage left by heartworms is forever, and many dogs are left with residual health problems.

I don't think I need it. Heartworms aren't that common around here.

While heartworm disease may not be common in some parts of the U.S., heartworms have been diagnosed in every state in the country. In parts of the country that stay cold for six months or more, there are lots of warm, protected spots where mosquitoes that transmit heartworms can live. In urban areas, radiated heat is stored in concrete and asphalt and is released at night when mosquitoes are active. In rural areas, mosquitoes may find a warm spot in a hollow log or animal burrow to ride out the winter. In dry locales, thanks to sprinkler systems, birdbaths and watering cans, there are pockets of standing water everywhere where mosquitoes can breed.

Think about it this way: You may never have been in a car wreck, but you still put on your seat belt. Would you risk your life by not wearing one? Why would you risk your pet's life by not giving him or her heartworm prevention?

HEARTWORM TREATMENT

- Medications
- + Veterinary fees
- + Post-treatment preventive
- + Lab tests
- + X-rays

\$1,200-\$1,800

HEARTWORM PREVENTION

Twelve months of heartworm prevention

\$70-\$200

