

Spay And Neuter Team of Atlanta

Heartworm Treatment Information and Release Form

Heartworm disease is a very serious and fatal disease in dogs. It is one of the most common causes of death in dogs in the South. Heartworms are carried by the mosquito. When an infected mosquito bites a dog, it can inject immature heartworms into the blood stream of the dog. These immature worms eventually find their way to the heart where they mature into adult worms. When there are worms in the heart, the heart can not function correctly. The worms disrupt the flow of blood through the heart and to the lungs, and they also damage the muscles of the heart. The worms present in the heart can continue to mate and create baby worms, or microfilaria. When a mosquito feeds on a dog that has baby worms in it's blood stream, the mosquito becomes infected and the infection is then passed on if that mosquito bites another dog.

There are several stages of heartworm disease ranging from asymptomatic, showing no signs of disease, to full blown heart failure. The most common and first symptom usually seen is coughing which may include the coughing up of blood, nosebleeds, heavy breathing, excessive panting even when cool, and inability to exercise. Severe cases of heartworms will cause congestive heart failure which leads to fluid build up in the lungs and belly.

Testing and physical exam alone can not always determine the severity of heartworms. Most clinics will perform radiographs to look for changes in the heart and lungs which can help determine the severity of the disease. An ultrasound and ECG can also be performed to access the severity of the disease. Blood work is often done to check liver function because heartworm disease can prevent the liver from functioning properly and prevent the liver from producing necessary blood clotting factors. Blood work also checks for proper kidney function. This is important because the drug used to kill adult heartworms can potentially affect the kidneys.

IN ORDER TO MAKE HEARTWORM TREATMENT MORE AFFORDABLE, WE DO NOT ROUTINELY REQUIRE THESE PROCEDURES TO BE DONE PRIOR TO TREATMENT. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT WAIVING YOUR RIGHT TO HAVE THESE PROCEDURES DONE, COULD LEAD TO UNEXPECTED COMPLICATIONS DURING TREATMENT.

Immiticide is the only drug approved for the treatment of heartworms. There are two different treatment protocols that can be done. One treatment type includes giving and injection of the medication into the muscle of the back and then 24 hours giving another injection in another back muscle. This treatment is typically done on dogs that are showing no symptoms of heartworm disease and appear healthy otherwise. The second treatment choice involves giving one injection of medication, waiting 4 weeks then giving another injection, then waiting 24 hours and giving a third injection. This protocol is used for patients that are older or are showing symptoms of the disease. The type of treatment your dog will receive is determined by the veterinarian.

Injections of the medication into the muscles of the back can cause some discomfort and limping. This is why we include pain medication to go home in the cost of the heartworm treatment.

Dogs should be tested for heartworms six months after treatment. This test is to ensure that the treatment was indeed a success. In rare cases, a dog may have to undergo a second treatment to rid the body of all of the heartworms. The cost of this test is included in the heartworm treatment.

Heartworm medication is started after the Immiticide treatment is finished and must be given every month for the rest of the dog's life. Heartworm medication is not included in the treatment cost.

PLEASE INITIAL AND/OR SIGN YOUR NAME BY THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS WHERE INDICATED.

_____(Initial) I understand that no radiographs, ultrasound, ECG, or any type of blood work will be performed on my dog prior to heartworm treatment.

_____(Initial) I understand that these tests are used to access the severity of heartworm disease which helps to determine which treatment protocol is best.

_____(Initial) I understand that without these tests, there is a greater risk of complications.

_____(Initial) I understand that complications include but are not limited to coughing, lethargy, weight loss, and pulmonary thromboembolisms (PTE). PTE results from dead or dying worms breaking off and lodging in blood vessels which obstruct blood flow through those vessels. **Severe PTE can result in death.**

_____(Initial) I understand that if complications do occur, SANTA is not equipped to treat these complications. If complications occur I must take my dog to my local veterinary clinic or veterinary emergency clinic.

_____(Initial) I understand that I will be given a list of very strict Home Care Instructions to follow. I understand that if I do not follow these instructions, complications can occur.

I hereby release the Spay And Neuter Team of Atlanta, the veterinarians, assistants, and all of its officers, directors, employees, and volunteers from any and all claims arising out of or connected with the performance of this procedure. I agree that I have not and will not claim any right of compensation from them, or any of them, or file action by release of such treatment of such animal or any consequences related thereto. Any alteration to this form, written or verbal, will not be accepted and will not be considered legally binding.

Sign

Date

Print Name_____