

Life Cycle of HEARTWORMS

1 MICROFILARIAE (BABY HEARTWORMS) IN THE BLOOD

- Infected animals (dogs, coyotes, foxes) carry microscopic baby worms (microfilariae) in their bloodstream.
- A mosquito bites the infected animal and ingests the microfilariae.

2 DEVELOPMENT INSIDE THE MOSQUITO

- Inside the mosquito, the microfilariae mature into infective larvae over 10-14 days.
- The mosquito then transmits these larvae when it bites another animal.

3 LARVAE ENTER THE NEW HOST

- The larvae enter the pet's bloodstream through the mosquito bite wound.
- Over the next 2-3 months, they travel through the body, maturing into juvenile worms.

4 MIGRATION TO THE HEART & LUNGS

- By day 70-90, the worms reach the heart, lungs, and blood vessels, where they continue growing.
- Around 6 months after infection, they become fully mature adult heartworms, measuring up to 12 inches long!

5 REPRODUCTION & SPREAD

- Adult heartworms mate and produce more microfilariae, which circulate in the blood.
- The cycle repeats when another mosquito bites the infected pet.



WHY PREVENTION IS CRITICAL

- No symptoms appear until heartworms reach the heart—by then, damage is already severe!
- Monthly heartworm preventatives stop larvae before they mature.
- Regular vet check-ups and blood tests catch infections early.



Cliffdale Animal Hospital
6416 Brookstone Lane
Fayetteville, NC 28314

MEOW OR
WOOF US!

cliffdaleanimalhospital.com
@ CliffdaleAnimalHospital
910.487.5013

COPYRIGHT © 2024 CLIFFDALE ANIMAL HOSPITAL