

## Heartworm Testing Waiver

Heartworm disease is caused by a blood-borne parasite that is transmitted by the bite of a mosquito. When a mosquito collects its blood meal from a host animal, such as a wild or domestic dog or cat, as well as the California sea lion, the mosquito can release larva into your pet.

In dogs, the heartworm larva (microfilaria) molts and travels to the lungs, where they develop into adult heartworms. After a 6 month life cycle to maturation, the heartworms will live in the pulmonary artery of the heart. The microfilaria can travel the circulatory system of the dog, and cause inflammation to other organs of the body, such as the kidneys and skin. The adult female heartworms release a substance that is irritating to that arteries and lungs. This can cause stiffening of the arterial walls leading to circulatory compromise. If the burden of the adult heartworms becomes too great, heartworms can migrate to the vena cava, which is the major blood vessel for blood to return from general circulation to the heart. This can result in alterations to blood flow and damage to red blood cells. Death of heartworms in the circulation can cause obstruction of blood vessels and increased inflammatory reactions.

If left untreated, heartworm disease leads to death. Since the consequences of heartworm disease can be fatal and even treatment can be harsh, and not guarantee survival, prevention is key. Coronado Veterinary Hospital is recommending heartworm testing and prevention for all dogs.

The protocol is to start all dogs on prevention after the heartworm testing. For puppies over 6 months of age and adult dogs, a blood test is required before starting the preventative. This is because using prevention on a positive dog can cause adverse reactions. The blood test is sent to the lab, and results are available the next day. Testing should be done every 2 years, as long as the preventative is kept current. If more than 2 doses of medication have been missed, a re-test will be needed to start the prevention again.

**Please do not hesitate to ask if you have any question!**

**By signing below I have read and acknowledged the above information. I understand that by declining heartworm testing, my pet could have a possible reaction the heartworm prevention. I release Coronado Veterinary Hospital from any liability should my pet have an adverse reaction this medication due to having heartworms.**

**Owner Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_