



## Adopting a Dog with Heartworm

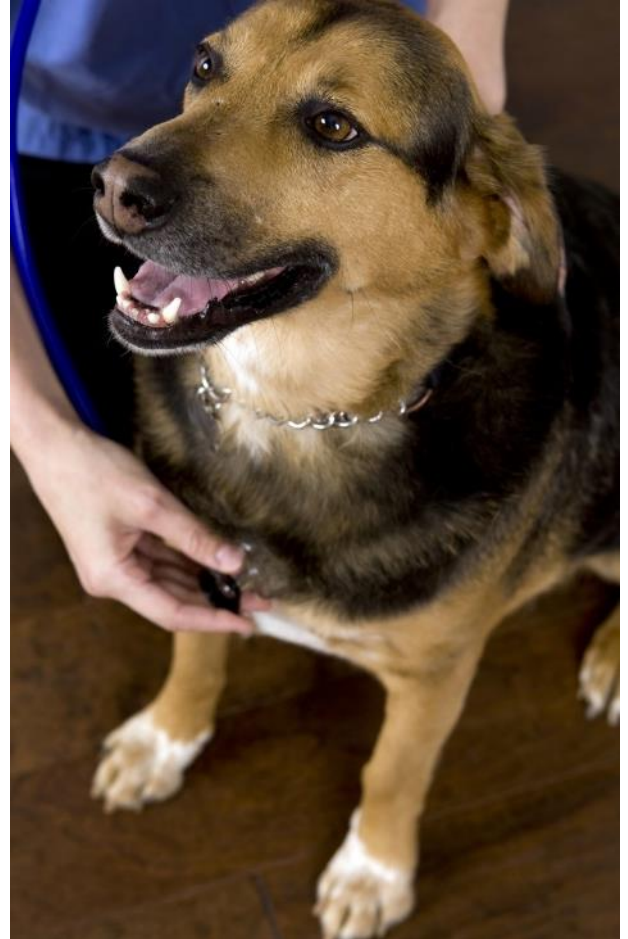
Heartworms are worms that live in the heart and lungs of infected animals. Heartworm larvae are spread via mosquito bites, and heartworm disease can lead to lung damage and heart failure if untreated. Heartworm disease is easy to prevent with preventive medication available through your veterinarian. Once infected, however, elimination of heartworms is a lengthy process.

ARF treats dogs with heartworm disease, and in some cases adopts dogs out during the treatment process.

The four month course of treatment consists of:

1. 30 days of an antibiotic to weaken heartworms and “baby heartworms” (microfilaria).
2. Three injections of a medication that kills adult worms – one dose is given, then 30 days later two doses are given, 24 hours apart.
3. Eight weeks of exercise restriction following the last injection.

During this entire time period, exercise restriction is crucial. If a dog is overly active, especially during the 10 days following each injection, pieces of dying worm can obstruct the blood vessels in the lungs, with serious consequences. The vast majority of dogs treated for heartworm do well and lead completely normal lives.



**Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation**

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