

VT MUSHES

NEWSLETTER

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cover photo by: iSkiVermont.net

HEARTWORM IN VERMONT

The snow has melted, the breeze is warm and the temperatures are starting to get hot. Along with summer, comes the high pitched whine of female mosquitos in flight, looking for a blood meal so they can reproduce. Not only are these Vermont mosquitos the unintended carriers of West Nile Virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, but also Dog Heart Worm (from the Vermont Department of Agricultural website).

How does a mosquito pick up heartworm? The mosquito must first bite an infected dog, cat, coyote, or fox. The worm then gets introduced into another animal when the mosquito bites again; however, the worm must go through several stages while in the mosquito, which takes around eight days. (While the worm can be transmitted to humans, it cannot survive long in our bodies.)

The worm, once in a dog, starts to grow. In six months, the larvae will have grown into an adult worm. The adult worms can live up to seven years in a dog, reproducing all the while, living in your dogs' heart and causing damage.

Dogs typically don't display many signs of infection, until the worms have spread, quite possible a year or more after the initial infection. At that point, per the American Heartworm Society 'the dogs may have a mild persistent cough, a reluctance to exercise, fatigue after moderate activity, a decreased appetite and weight loss due to the decreased appetite'. Possible symptoms if left untreated: excess fluid in the abdomen so the dog appears to have a swollen belly. And the worse symptom of all, heart failure.

How can you protect your dog?

- 1) The Centers for Disease Control suggests getting rid of standing pools of water, since this is vital to mosquito eggs. If you don't change your dogs' outside water every day, then you need to change it at least twice a week to discourage

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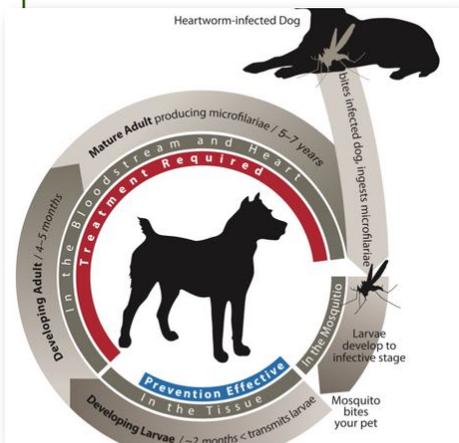


image from American Heartworm Society

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Heartworm cont.

mosquitos using the water as a nursery. (The same applies to any other outdoor animals you may have.)

2) Mosquitos are most active during dawn and dusk, so if you can have your dogs inside then, their chances of getting bit lessens. Mosquitos also are weak fliers, so a fan circulating air in the dogs' kennel area may keep these tiny beasts away.

3) You can also get your dogs' blood drawn at least once a year to test for heartworm. Unfortunately, the common test will not detect heartworms until the worms are at least seven months old. As a preventative measure, your vet will most likely push expensive heartworm medicine for six to twelve months out of the year. However, if your dog does test positive for heartworm, the treatment plan is entirely different. Think confirmation tests, bedrest, possible lengthy treatment plan, possible complications and additional tests to see how the treatments are working.

By now, you may be thinking you need to run to the vets office and buy some heartworm medicine immediately. Hold on:

Per the American Heartworm Society website, the cases of heartworm in Vermont have not increased enough to change the 2013 Incidence Map from the 2001 Map (see page 3). (They have not uploaded any maps newer than 2013.) I asked my vet earlier this month and, on average, she sees one case of heartworm a year. One case a year. The dog that tests positive has some history with southern USA, either as a rescue from down South or was in a vacation area prone to southern visitors.

Vermont has a fairly short mosquito season and if there isn't already an infected animal in your area, the likelihood of your dog getting heartworm isn't very high. (Per www.OnlyNaturalPet.com, the only month

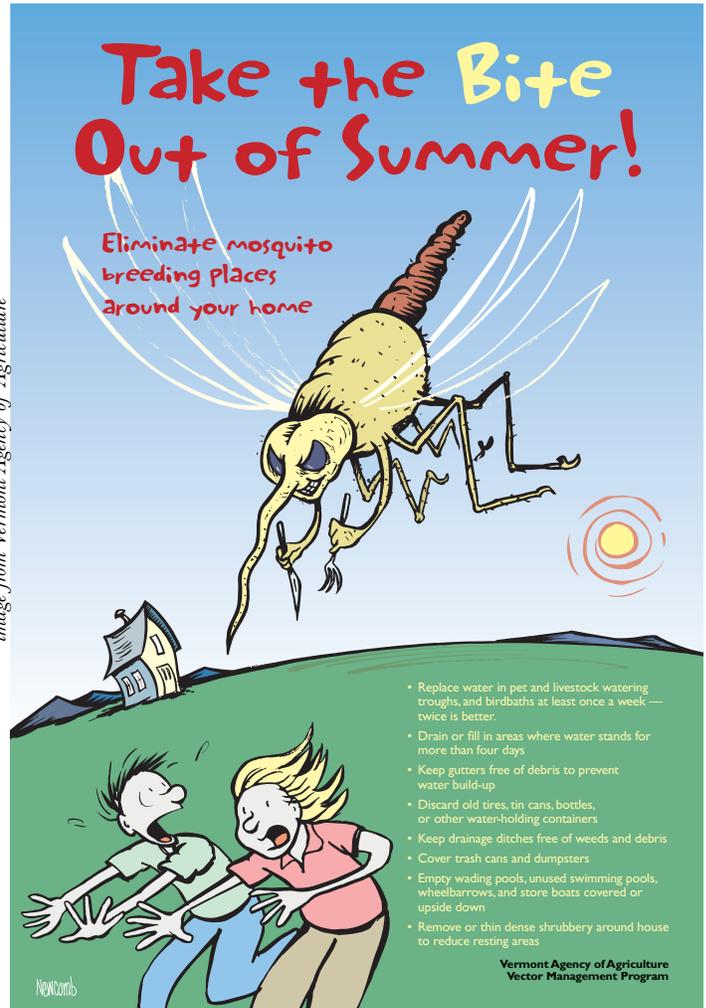


image from Vermont Agency of Agriculture

we need to worry about infection is July.) Most mosquitos, per the American Mosquito Control Association, can only fly between one to three miles. And most mosquitos can only fly one to one-point-five miles per hour. Yes, mosquitos can be caught in an updraft and be sent miles from their original location, but since most mosquitos fly less than 25 feet off the ground, this seems like it would be a rare occurrence.

The monthly preventative heartworm medicines: ivermectin, milbemycin, and selamectin come with their own problems. Some possible side effects in using these drugs monthly are: depression, balance and unsteady walking issues, blindness, not to mention the possibility of diarrhea, vomiting, muscle tremors, anorexia, lethargy, salivation, and rapid breathing

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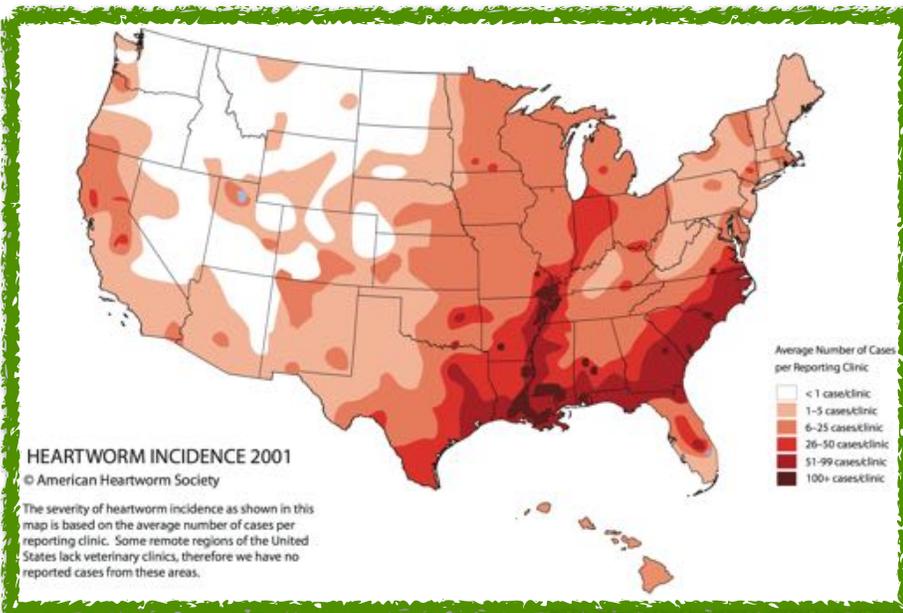


Heartworm cont.

(some breeds have even worse possible side effects). Only Natural Pet continues by saying, 'Another serious and growing problem is resistance of heart worms to these drugs.'

Our dogs do not need a super worm to fight. And the biggest kicker? Heartworm medicine doesn't even prevent heartworms invading your dog, it kills heartworm larvae, that's already in your dog's system, if your dog has any.

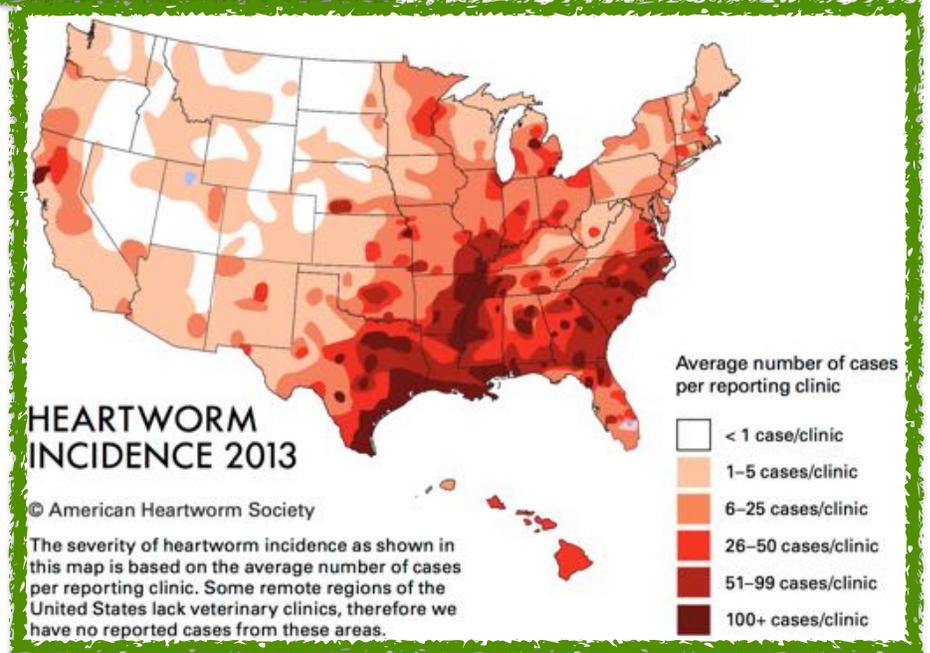
Obliviously you have to do what you feel is best for your dog. At a minimum, get your dog tested yearly for heartworm. After that, if the dog has a strong immune system, nature may take care of the rest.



My vet did say that she has seen a great increase in tick related diseases over the last year, specifically anaplasmosis. Something to be aware of and check for. The test for anaplasmosis should be the same blood test as for heartworm and lyme.

image from American Heartworm Society

image from American Heartworm Society



Everyone thinks they have the best dog. And none of them are wrong.

~W.R. Purche

VT MUSHES



**KEEP
CALM
AND
RUN
SOME DOGS**

ODE TO SNOW

Photos by Kathy Bennett



VT MUSHES



FUGITIVES

UNLICENSED DOGS



Vermont State Statute: 20 V.S.A 3581

A person who is the owner of a dog...more than six months old shall annually on or before April 1 cause it to be registered, numbered, described, and licensed on a form approved by the Secretary for one year from that day in the office of the clerk of the municipality wherein the dog or wolf-hybrid is kept...The owner of a dog...shall cause it to wear a collar, and attach thereto a license tag issued by the municipal clerk. Dog...owners shall pay for the license...for each neutered

dog..., and...for each un-neutered dog... If the license fee for any dog...is not paid by April 1, its owner or keeper may thereafter procure a license for that license year by paying a fee of 50 percent in excess of that otherwise required...

When: by April 1, 2017

Where: Your Town

More Info: <http://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/20/193/03581>