

# Barrie Veterinary Barker

## Official Hospital Newsletter

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HEARTWORM SEASON  
OFFICIALLY BEGINS ON  
APRIL 15<sup>th</sup>!

Barrie Veterinary Hospital would like to inform you of the important reasons why you should protect your pet each year from this potentially fatal disease.

## JUST THE FACTS...

HEARTWORM AFFECTS NEARLY 50 MILLION DOGS  
THROUGHOUT NORTH AMERICA EACH YEAR!

Heartworm is a serious disease that can affect any dog. Heartworm is a large parasitic worm of the roundworm family that thrives in a dog's heart. It feeds on nutrients in the blood stream and can grow up to 15-30cm. In severe cases up to 500 worms can infect a dog! If left untreated heartworm can permanently disable your pet or result in death.

Mosquitoes transmit heartworm disease. When a dog infected with heartworm is bitten the mosquito takes up immature baby worms, (*microfilariae*), as well as blood. Over 10 to 14 days these worms grow into infective larvae and are transmitted to other dogs during subsequent blood meals. The larvae eventually travel to the new dog's heart where they mature and complete the life cycle by producing new microfilariae.

Heartworms usually cause no outward signs until the disease is advanced. Typical signs of the disease are: chronic cough, laboured breathing, premature fatigue, lack of energy

and heart attack after exertion. A simple blood test conducted by your veterinarian can quickly determine whether your pet is infected. If the dog is not infected a preventive program should be initiated as soon as possible. A lengthy treatment program could be necessary if tests reveal an infestation.

Should your pet develop heartworm disease, treatment can be dangerous and costly, so prevention is far more desirable. A program of medication or a single injection can protect your pet during the mosquito season. Prevention can also halt the development of any infective heartworm larvae that have been passed on by mosquito bites, effectively breaking the heartworm life cycle. No maturing larvae means no further production of microfilariae, eliminating the source of mosquito transmissions to other animals.

\*INFO TAKEN FROM VARIOUS HEARTWORM PREVENTION PAMPHLETS THAT ARE AVAILABLE IN HOSPITAL

**Planning a trip?  
Thinking of boarding your dog?**



Most kennels require that your pets be protected against "Kennel Cough", a respiratory virus that is highly contagious amongst dogs. *Bordetella* is a vaccine given to prevent kennel cough and can be administered on it's own or with your pet's annual vaccinations. Ask your veterinarian about the bordetella vaccine today!

# WHY BLOODWORK IS A GOOD IDEA

The health and safety of your pet is our foremost concern. Because your pet cannot describe symptoms to let us know what may be wrong we recommend blood tests to give us the answers we need. Results of these tests will establish an overall blood profile and determine your pet's readiness for surgery. Geriatric animals or animals who have been put on long-term medications should also have regular blood testing done.

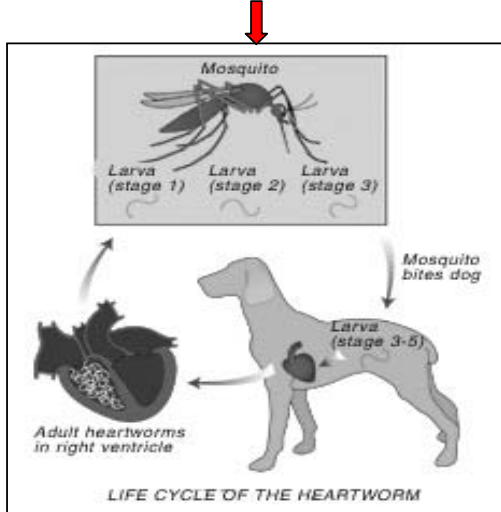
*Blood chemistry* tests provide an inside look at your pet's vital organs. We can evaluate the status of his or her liver and kidneys, which is important because these organs process and filter the blood of medications as well as anesthesia. *Hematology* tests provide an inside look at the blood itself. Blood is composed of different types of cells. Red blood cells, (*RBC's*), are responsible for carrying oxygen throughout the body and white blood cells, (*WBC's*), are the body's primary means of fighting infection. *Platelets* play a significant role in blood clotting and are critical in helping the body to stop bleeding. A complete blood count, (*CBC*), provides detailed information on

RBC's, WBC's and platelets. These tests can indicate the presence of inflammation, stress and inability to fight infection. As with your own regular health check-ups testing on a regular basis will allow us to monitor your pet's health over his or her lifetime and enables us to detect any potential problems early on. What better time to run a blood profile on your dog then while he or she is in for heartworm testing this season! Call and book an appointment for blood work today to ensure the overall well being of your life-long friend!

## Continuing Education

This month some of our staff members attended a seminar on **LIFE LONG DEWORMING**. This seminar outlined the importance of deworming to keep our patients and their families healthy. A review of *zoonoses*, (animal diseases that can be transmitted to humans), *mites*, *fleas* and *heartworm disease* was all covered.

### LIFE CYCLE OF THE HEARTWORM



**Just for laughs...**  
Hey...did ya hear about the dog who wouldn't get weighed? He was afraid of "dog pounds"!

### WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM OUR DOGS

- When loved ones come home always run to greet them.
- Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joyride.
- Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure ecstasy.
- When it's in your best interest - practice obedience.
- Let others know when they've invaded your territory.
- Take naps and stretch before rising.
- Run, romp and play daily.
- Thrive on attention and let people touch you.
- On warm days stop to lie on your back on the grass.
- When you're happy dance around and wiggle your entire body.
- Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.
- Eat with gusto and enthusiasm-stop when you're full.
- Be loyal.
- Never pretend to be something you are not.
- If what you want lies buried dig until you find it.
- When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by and nuzzle him or her gently.
- Make your life one of pure and unconditional love.