**COMMON MYTHS ABOUT HEARTWORM PREVENTATIVE**

***My dog stays indoors and is not at risk.***

**Myth**: Heartworms are spread by mosquitoes. One mosquito bite is all it takes for a dog to be infected. All dogs are at risk, even if your pet does not go outside because mosquitoes can still get into your house.

***My dog only needs to be treated with heartworm preventative during mosquito season.***

**Myth**: Pets should be treated with a year round heartworm preventative, regardless of where you reside. Mosquitoes only need a temperature of 45 degrees to be out and looking for their next meal.

Heartworm preventatives do not actually prevent mosquitoes from infecting your dog with heartworm larvae. These preventatives actually kill different stages of heartworm larvae that already have infected your dog. Therefore, heartworm preventatives can have different schedules of administration and are recommended year round.

Not only does it help prevent heartworm disease but preventatives, like Heartgard Plus, give your pet protection against some intestinal parasites. Heartgard Plus helps prevent heartworm disease, and treats/controls roundworms and hookworms.

***My dog does not need to be tested for heartworm disease because I keep them him/her on heartworm preventative.***

Myth: There are several reasons that dogs need to be tested every year for heartworm disease. First of all, monthly administration of heartworm preventative is generally easy. However, dogs can vomit up/spit out the chewable tablets or owners can forget to give the chewable tablet monthly, leaving the dog unprotected. Another great reason to test your dog yearly is if there has been product failure (i.e. you have given heartworm preventative every month and your dog is diagnosed with heartworm disease), some companies that produce heartworm preventatives have a guarantee on their product and will pay for any treatment necessary for your dog. Without this yearly heartworm test you may not be eligible to use the guarantee if your pet turns up positive for heartworm disease.

***Treatment for heartworm disease is just as easy as preventing it*.**

**Myth:** Treatment requires arsenic-based injections to kill the heartworms living in a dog’s lungs and heart. In comparison to heartworm prevention, the treatment is expensive and can be traumatic and risky to your pet’s health.

It is much easier to prevent heartworms than to treat them.

***Puppies are born with natural immunity to heartworms***

**Myth**: Any dog of any age can become infected with heartworms, if bitten by a mosquito carrying infective larvae. Preventative should begin in puppies at 6-8 weeks of age and continued monthly year round for life.

**If your pet is not currently on a heartworm preventative, please call and make an appointment to have you pet seen and started on a heartworm prevention program.**