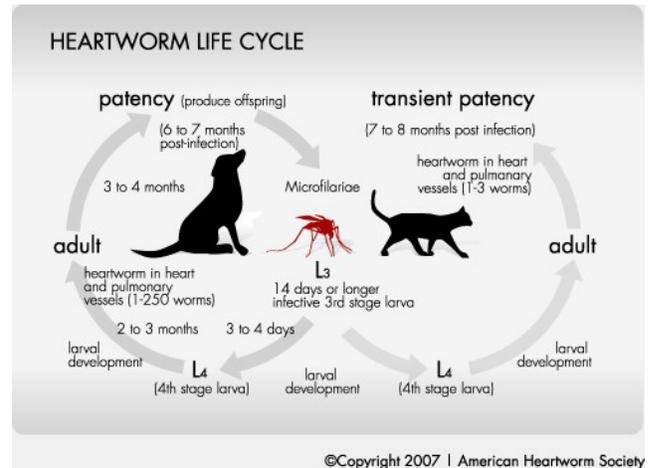


## HEARTWORMS— ARE WE LOSING THE BATTLE?

At a time when there is more information than ever available to veterinarians and pet owners, the American Heartworm Society reports that the number of cases of heartworm disease is increasing and the sales of heartworm preventives are declining.

It has been postulated that the poor economy is responsible, and that may very well be part of the equation. Sometimes it is that people are busier and more distracted in this fast paced society, and the monthly heartworm dosing is simply forgotten. Many people are purchasing monthly FLEA prevention products elsewhere and believe that this product protects their pet from heartworms too. Also, there are many “knockoff” products being sold through the internet and in retail stores that simply do not prevent disease.



*Understanding the life cycle of the heartworm is critical to the battle of prevention:*

*Heartworm larvae are “susceptible” to heartworm preventions only for a period of time after they enter a dog’s body and while they are moving through the dog’s circulation. This “susceptible time” is more than a month, but less than 2 months of time. Dosing on the same day each month is essential to kill the larvae before they progress into other stages of their life cycle. **A MISSED DOSE CAUSES A WINDOW OF VULNERABILITY TO HEARTWORM***



The American Heartworm Society strongly recommends year round prevention for all pets. In addition, even when compliance is perfect, regular annual tests are crucial in the battle against heartworms because pets that are on heartworm prevention occasionally become infected. The vast majority of these infections are due to human error in the proper administration and timing of the preventative medication.

Keeping up with the latest information on heartworm prevention, testing, and treatment—and applying that knowledge in our practice at Richland Animal Hospital— is one key to the battle against heartworms. Client education to ensure that you, as pet owners, understand our rationale behind our recommendations is the other important aspect.

**RESPECTFULLY, WE ARE REQUIRING ANNUAL HEARTWORM TESTING FOR ALL PETS WHO RECEIVE MONTHLY HEARTWORM PREVENTION AT OUR HOSPITAL.**

*Your Pet. Our Commitment.*