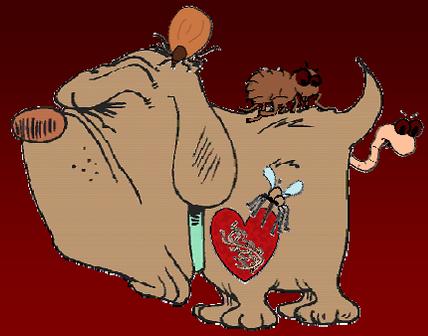


HEARTWORM TESTING AND PREVENTION DURING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC



Tired of COVID 19 yet? We are too! And yet, it's our new reality, at least for the time being. And, it will continue to influence why and how we do things for the next few months, including how we will be managing Heartworm and tick transmitted disease testing and prevention in our dogs.

WHY DO WE BLOOD TEST DOGS IN THE SPRING?

Normally for the months of April and May, veterinarians in Ontario are taking small samples of dogs' blood and running a 4Dx test. 4Dx means 4 diseases: Heartworm disease, Lyme disease, Anaplasmosis and Ehrlichiosis. It is only by testing your dog's blood for evidence of the Heartworm parasite and the three tick transmitted diseases that we can respond appropriately to protect your dog's health. If we don't know your dog has Heartworm disease, we cannot treat it.

HOW IS COVID 19 INFLUENCING HEARTWORM TESTING?

As veterinarians, our job is to care for the health and wellbeing of animals. And healthy pets, need healthy families. Right now, testing so many Ontario dogs will create risk for their humans. So, we need to change our plans.

HOW WILL HEARTWORM PREVENTION CHANGE THIS YEAR?

Starting Heartworm preventative medication before blood testing your dog for the disease is normally against our recommendations, and is considered "Off Label" use. Meaning, the drug manufacturers and disease experts recommend the medication be given only to dogs who have blood tested negative for Heartworm disease. However, we are living in unprecedented times.

For this spring, we are recommending DELAYING blood testing your dog for Heartworm and tick transmitted diseases until there is better control of the pandemic. Notice we are not saying skip the test, that would be imprudent. And, we are still recommending Heartworm disease prevention, beginning on June 1st. For those dogs that we believe to be at low risk of having Heartworm disease, we are recommending that their blood test be delayed until the COVID restrictions have been removed or until your dog is due for other veterinary care, and we do the Heartworm / Tick blood test then.

HEARTWORM RISK ASSESSMENT 2020 - who needs a test now vs later

- 1 Heartworm testing is **NOT REQUIRED** for:
 - a) Puppies born in Canada after October 1st, 2019
 - i) Heartworm preventative medication should begin June 1st.
 - ii) Current body weight with a growing puppy will be required. If you cannot weight your puppy at home, call us to arrange a time when your puppy can be weighed at our clinic or if based on the last known weight, we can extrapolate.

- 2 Heartworm testing can be **DELAYED** and preventative medication started:
 - a) if your dog had a Heartworm blood test (4Dx) in 2019
 - b) if you gave your dog the heartworm prevention consistently from June through November 2019
 - c) if you did not travel outside of Canada with your dog, without he/she receiving Heartworm preventative medication
 - d) Heartworm blood testing will be delayed until COVID 19 restrictions have been removed, or your dog requires other veterinary healthcare services.

- 3 Heartworm testing **IS REQUIRED** before preventative medication is dispensed:
 - a) if your dog was not on preventative medication in 2019
 - b) if the preventative medication was not given as directed
 - c) if you travelled with your dog outside of Canada while not on heartworm prevention
 - d) if your dog was adopted from outside of Canada in the last year.

PREVENTATIVE MEDICATION - helping you make the right choice

There are many medications available, and for most of our dogs we recommend one of three options:

1. HEARTGARD
 - a. Oral beef flavoured treat given once a month, starting June 1st
 - b. Prevents for Heartworm disease
 - c. Does not protect against fleas and ticks
 - d. Least expensive product

2. ADVANTAGE MULTI or ADVANTAGE MULTI DUO
 - a. Topical liquid applied to the back of the neck once a month, starting June 1st
 - b. Prevents for Heartworm disease and fleas.
 - c. Can be paired with Advantix for tick prevention (Advantage Multi Duo).
 - i. Advantage Multi + Advantix (one box of each) = Advantage Multi Duo
 - i. Each month one dose of each product is applied at two week intervals. So your dog is receiving two treatments (one dose of each) per month.

- d. The Advantix product in Advantage Multi Duo is toxic to cats. The household cat should not come into contact with the dog, or his/her bed for 24 hours after product application.
- e. Most ticks will die on contact with the Advantix product, some ticks will bite first and die in 24 hours.

3. NEXGARD SPECTRA

- a. Oral beef flavoured treat given once a month.
- b. Prevents for Heartworm disease and fleas and tick, all in one single dose.
- c. Ticks will bite and die before transmitting Lyme disease.

THE PLAN - what you need to do:

1. Select which risk category your dog fits into: your dog is a puppy and does not need a Heartworm test, your dog's test can be delayed or your dog has not been adequately protected in the past and needs a test now.
 - We can help evaluate your dog's risk.
2. Select which medication is most appropriate for your dog.
 - We can help select the right protection for your dog.
3. Call Mountainview Animal Hospital at 905-702-8822.
 - We will help with your decisions.
 - We will take payment over the telephone:
 - ~ Credit card
 - ~ Interact auto deposit to: info@mountainviewanimalhospital.ca
 - We will arrange for free delivery of the right product.
4. We will do a non-contact delivery to your front porch. Deliveries will occur on Saturdays and/or Sundays for the months of May and first two weeks of June.

LET'S NOT FORGET ABOUT OUR CATS

While cats are generally not a natural host for Heartworm disease, they are just as much at risk of flea and tick bites as our dogs. If your cat spends time outside, please call us to discuss flea and tick prevention for your cat.

Safety Warning: never apply a dog tick prevention to a cat; many products used on dogs are toxic to our feline friends.

Please do not hesitate to call us if you have any questions or concerns:

905-702-8822

We are here to help.