

Protect your pets from mosquito bites

A bite from a mosquito can result in annoying itches and more serious parasitic diseases for your pets.



In dogs, heartworm disease is the primary concern.

Heartworm disease

A serious condition that results in severe lung disease, heart failure, organ damage, and death in dogs and other pets.

It is caused by a parasitic worm called *Dirofilaria immitis* which can be spread through the bite of a mosquito.

An infected dog has worms living in its blood vessels and heart, when the dog is bitten by a mosquito the blood withdrawn can contain heartworm offspring.

The mosquito then bites a second dog and the offspring are passed through.

Inside the host, the heartworm can grow into a parasite up to a foot in length.

Symptoms of heartworm disease include:

- Coughing
- Lethargy
- Vomiting
- Difficulty breathing
- Fainting
- Exercise intolerance

Often, a blood test is required to confirm the diagnosis. Treatments are available but prevention and mosquito control are most important.

Mosquito control

The possibility of heartworm infection can be reduced by keeping your pet indoors at mosquito feeding times, especially dawn and dusk, and controlling the mosquito population in your local environment/ backyard.



Mosquito reduction around your home and backyard

- Mosquitoes breed in standing water so remove stagnant water around the house and garden
- Change pet water bowls frequently
- Empty any dog wading pools or 'clam shells' regularly and keep an eye out for mosquito larvae or 'wigglers' in the water
- Avoid walking your dog in swampy areas
- Protect yourself and your pets from mosquitoes by fitting house windows and doors with insect screens
- Protect your dog by using a heartworm prevention program (seek advice from a vet). Heartworm disease can be fatal to dogs and other pets if left untreated.
- Keep your pets inside when mosquitoes are most active (early morning and early evening). The less exposure your animals have to mosquitoes, the less likely they are to be bitten.

Bite treatment

See your veterinarian to treat bites with an antibacterial cream to keep them from becoming infected, especially if the bites do not heal or appear to be getting worse.

Heartworm treatment

Your vet can perform a blood test to rule out heartworm disease before starting your dog on a preventative. Treatment should always be under the direction of your vet.

Controlling the mosquito population around your home can benefit both you and your dog. Additional precaution in the form of a heartworm preventive for your dog is strongly recommended.



★ **FIGHT** *the* **BITE** ★



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