

**Cypress Square Animal Clinic**  
**11183 Huffmeister Rd.**  
**Cypress, TX 77429**  
Dr. John R. Russell  
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**Heartworm Infection, Prevention and Treatment**

**How are heartworms transmitted?**

Immature heartworms are transmitted through mosquito bites. The parasite moves into the tissues of the dog first and gradually move to inhabit the heart. Here the parasites mature and begin reproduction. The immature worms produced are released into the bloodstream and are then transmitted to mosquitoes when they bite the dog.

**What happens to a dog when they become infected with heartworms?**

Heartworm disease is serious. The blood flow from the right side of the heart to the vessels serving the lungs is compromised. Without treatment, heartworm disease leads to congestive failure of the heart and other organs. It also reduces the quality of life for your pet and is ultimately fatal.

**What are the symptoms of heartworm disease?**

In the beginning, there are very few symptoms of infection. Once the parasites mature they are able to cause increasing damage to your dog. Typically, dogs with heartworms are listless and tire easily after becoming excited. They may also develop an occasional or persistent cough, and become anemic. In prolonged infections dogs often suffer from congestive heart failure. The liver and kidneys can also develop complications. The blood supply to the lungs and other major organs may become blocked.

**How can I prevent my dog from becoming infected?**

Preventing the infection of heartworms is relatively simple and only takes a few moments of your time once a month. Heartworm prevention costs typically range from \$5.00 to \$18.00 per month depending on the dog's size and if flea prevention is included. Feel free to contact us at 281-469-9633 with any questions about the products available to you that prevent heartworms.

**What can I do if my dog has heartworms?**

Once your dog has been diagnosed with heartworms there are a few things that must occur before treatment starts. First, your pet will need a series of bloodwork and x-rays to ensure that your pet is healthy enough to undergo treatment. Depending on the laboratory results a treatment schedule will be provided. When your pet is healthy enough to undergo treatment an appointment will be scheduled for the two injections of immiticide. ***Throughout treatment your pet must stay very quiet and is not able to exercise freely.***

***This is essential to your pet's recovery.*** As long as everything goes well during the appointment your pet will be able to return home on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day.

**How soon can my dog return to normal activities?**

Every pet's recovery is on an individual basis. If adequate rest is not implemented your pet will have complications from stress on the heart and lungs. For most dogs staying indoors is enough restriction. However, more active dogs may need to be confined to a kennel. The veterinarian will let you know when it is safe for your pet to return to normal activities.

***Even after heartworm treatment it is essential to your pet's health to provide them with proper protection to prevent them from getting heartworms again.***

Please contact us if you have any questions in regards to the prevention, testing or treatment of heartworms.