



BVC's Heartworm Preventative Prescribing Policy:

In accordance with the American Heartworm Society and the Companion Animal Parasite Council's recommendations the Burlington Veterinary Center advocates annual heartworm testing. Given the potential for fatal adverse reaction as a consequence of the administration of heartworm preventative medication in the heartworm positive patient The Burlington Veterinary Center will not prescribe heartworm preventative to patients that do not have a history of compliance of heartworm preventative administration without first re-testing to insure Heartworm negative status.

BVC's Heartworm and Rickettsial Testing Guidelines

As of January of 2012 the Burlington Veterinary Center is now screening our canine patients annually for 3 tick-borne (Rickettsial) diseases in conjunction with our annual heartworm testing. BVC's new Heartworm/Rickettsial combination screening assays for the exposure to three common and potentially deadly rickettsial (tick-transmitted) diseases: Lyme disease (Borreliosis), Anaplasmosis and Ehrlichia canis as well as testing for the presence of adult female heartworms. Borrelia and Anaplasma infections have proven to be highly endemic to this geographic region.

Heartworm (*Dirofilaria immitis*) is a nematode parasite that inhabits the right side of the heart and pulmonary arteries of dogs. Left untreated, heartworm infection leads to heart failure, pneumonia, thrombo-embolic (blood clots/stroke) disease, liver failure, kidney failure and death. The Burlington Veterinary Center follows the recommendations of the American Heartworm Society and the Companion Animal Parasite Council in advising our dog owners to test their dogs annually for heartworm infection and keep their pets on monthly heartworm preventative year round.

Facts regarding heartworm and heartworm preventatives:

- In 2002 there were ~ 225,000 cases of canine heartworm reported in the USA
- The Heartworm organism *Dirofilaria immitis* is endemic to this region
- Administration of heartworm preventative medication to heartworm positive dogs can cause serious adverse reactions including death
- The heartworm preventative *Heartgard* also helps prevent infection of the zoonotic intestinal parasites Roundworms and Hookworms. The heartworm preventative medication *Revolution* is effective in preventing Heartworm infection, Sarcoptes (mange), ear mites, fleas and hookworms
- Heartworm preventative product manufacturer warranties necessitate:
 - 1) An active veterinarian/client/patient relationship exists (patient exam within past yr)
 - 2) Documentation of negative heartworm status prior to prescribing heartworm preventative medication
 - 3) Documentation of purchase of heartworm preventative with dating that is consistent with compliance of monthly medication administration