



I'm Positive!

Sounds great, huh?

But actually it's not because I am **HEART WORM** positive.

Heart worms are a very common disease here in Texas that is transmitted by bites from infected mosquitos carrying the parasite. Any dog CAN get heart worms (even if you NEVER see a mosquito anywhere near your dog.) UNLESS the dog is one of the many and affordable heart worm prevention medications you obtain from you vet. Sadly, pets who end up in shelters may have never even see a vet, much less been given monthly heart worm prevention.

Heart worms is exactly what it sounds like – there are ACTUAL worms growing in the dog's heart which as they grow and multiply, will slowly and painfully kill the dog. But there IS a treatment!

Heart worm treatment is pretty drastic and expensive but also very effective. It usually consists of two shots, 24 hours apart. The shots contain medicine that kills the heart worms. Other medicines may also be prescribed to aid in recovery.

Aftercare for heartworms CAN be challenging. Because there are chunks of dead worms floating around in the cardiac cavity, and the lungs are very close – if the dog becomes too agitated or excited and his heartrate rises he could dislodge one of the dead worms and if it lands in a lung the dog dies right there. So, after treatment, we insist that heart worm positive dogs are kept STRICTLY in a crate while you are away. They can walk on a leash outside to go potty several times a day but must stay calm so they don't raise their heartrate – for 6 to 8 weeks after treatment. Once the dog tests negative for heartworms, he can go back to being a normal dog!

TAKE AWAY

- Heartworms are NOT contagious to other pets as long as those pets are on heart worm prevention.
- Heartworms is FATAL if not treated
- Heartworm Treatment CAN be challenging BUT the joy of saving a dog's life makes it worth it
- Ask the front desk how HSNBA can assist with the cost of treatment if that is a barrier