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## FELINE HEARTWORM DISEASE

### **Did you know that Heartworm disease is not just a dog disease?**

It also affects cats; however, cats are atypical hosts. Cats with heartworm disease are affected differently than dogs. Heartworm disease affects mostly a cat's lungs and not just their heart. Heartworm larvae do not need to develop into adult worms to seriously affect your cat's health.

### **What causes heartworm disease in cats?**

Heartworm disease is transmitted through an infected mosquito carrying the parasite larvae (*dirofilariasis immitis*). The larvae enter the cat through the bite and develop in the tissues. The immature worms then enter the blood stream and are carried to the lungs where they cause an inflammatory reaction.

### **My cat is an indoor cat. Do I need to worry about heartworm disease?**

Yes. Mosquitoes can get inside and it only takes one infected mosquito to expose your cat to heartworm disease.

### **How do I know if my cat has with heartworm disease?**

A negative heartworm test does not necessarily rule out heartworm disease; however a positive test is significant. It is difficult to diagnose. Cats typically present heartworm disease with respiratory symptoms such as coughing, difficulty breathing, vomiting, and lethargy. Other symptoms include can include rapid heart rate, loss of appetite, diarrhea, weight loss, blindness, convulsions and sudden death.

### **What can I do to prevent heartworm disease in my cat?**

The good news is that heartworm disease is preventable. All heartworm preventatives are highly effective and easy to administer. We recommend Revolution for cats as a monthly preventative to protect your cat from heartworm infection.

For more information, please refer to the following websites:

[www.knowheartworms.org](http://www.knowheartworms.org)

[www.heartwormsociety.org](http://www.heartwormsociety.org)

[www.avma.org/careforanimals/animatedjourneys/pethealth/feline.asp](http://www.avma.org/careforanimals/animatedjourneys/pethealth/feline.asp)