



ANIMAL FRIENDS – CONNIE CLINIC

As a valued partner in animal health care, we are excited to share our latest venture into improving animal's lives and well being! Canine heartworm disease is a very important disease in Texas and we are acutely aware that as caretakers of homeless and rescue dogs, we see an astounding amount of heartworm positive dogs, and would like to give you a financially viable option to extending these pet's lives through curative treatment.

Animal Friends of Washington County is announcing the start of low-cost heartworm treatment at the Connie Clinic. It has been said that the treatment of heartworm infection is somewhat of an art. The important concept that our doctors stress is that treatment of heartworm infection is not a simple, standardized method, and that our standards of care will remain excellent and above the norm. The treatment will be individualized, based on the patients state of health at presentation, and will be tailored to give the patient the best outcome.

Patient Evaluation

Prior to therapy, the heartworm patient is assessed and rated for risk into one of four categories:

- **Class I:** Lowest Risk. Young healthy dogs with minimal or no disease evident on radiographs, normal blood work, and no symptoms of illness.
- **Class II:** Moderately Affected. Healthy dogs with minimal signs as above, occasional coughing, fatigue only with exercise but with radiographs that show definite evidence of heart disease.
- **Class III:** Severely Affected. Dog is suffering from weight loss, cough, difficulty breathing, blatant damage to the vasculature is apparent on radiographs, lab work more severe
- **Class IV:** Caval Syndrome. Dog is collapsing in shock with dark brown urine evident

Sheltered, rescued and fostered animals are typically hard to classify, simply because of lack of clinical history and no lab work or radiographs. At the Connie Clinic, we will make a thorough assessment of the patient with an extensive examination by a licensed veterinarian, and will perform full blood work on the animal in order to determine into which class the animal fits. An appropriate treatment regimen can then be determined.

Heartworm Treatment

The only product currently available for the treatment of adult heartworms is melarsomine dihydrochloride (Immiticide made by Merial). Simply placing a heartworm positive animal on monthly preventative does **not** kill adult heartworms, nor does it slow the effects of the disease on the body.

For high risk dogs (such as patients without a clear clinical history or current chest radiographs), a gradual, two-stage elimination of worms is recommended using a three-injection treatment protocol of one dose initially, followed in four weeks with a two-dose treatment. By initially killing fewer worms and completing the treatment in two stages, the impact of heartworms on severely diseased arteries and lungs can be reduced.

The three-injection alternative protocol is the treatment of choice of the American Heartworm Society and several university teaching hospitals, regardless of stage of disease, due to the increased safety and efficacy benefits and subsequently fewer dogs that require further treatment with melarsomine.

Animal Friends of Washington County is aware of the realities of shelter and rescue medicine, and that holding a pet for four weeks for a second injection, although best for its health, may not be a realistic possibility. For this reason, we will offer the less ideal, two injection protocol (The administration protocol of two injections separated by a 24-hour interval) to dogs with obvious low risk of complications to shelters and registered rescue organizations in order to complete treatment more quickly in the interest of finding forever homes and ending animal homelessness.

Three injections Protocol (recommended)

Day One: Patient is given an extensive exam by a licensed veterinarian to assess clinical status
Blood is pulled for comprehensive lab work
Patient scheduled for treatment the next day

Day Two: After assessment of lab results patient is dropped off for first injection and will be monitored throughout the day for adverse reaction

**** FOUR WEEKS PASS****

Day Three: Patient is dropped off for second Injection and day observation

Day Four: Patient is given third injection and is sent home with heartworm preventative.

Two Injection Protocol

Day One: Patient is given an extensive exam by a licensed veterinarian to assess clinical status
Blood is pulled for comprehensive lab work
Patient scheduled for treatment the next day

Day Two: After assessment of lab results patient is dropped off for first injection and will be monitored throughout the day for adverse reaction

Day Three: Patient is given second injection and is sent home with heartworm preventative.

****All patients should be retested in six months after treatment, regardless of protocol****

Cost Schedule

EVALUATION \$50.00

Dogs 1 - 10 lbs.	\$140.00	Dogs 41 – 65 lbs	\$160.00
Dogs 11 - 20 lbs.	\$145.00	Dogs 66 – 85 lbs	\$180.00
Dogs 21 - 40 lbs.	\$150.00	Dogs 86 – 120 lbs	\$195.00
Dogs 120 lbs & Over		\$200.00	

****Cost includes doctor’s exam, comprehensive blood work (including heartworm test) and Immiticide treatment, regardless of protocol. ****

The cost of ongoing heartworm prevention, as well as a post-treatment heartworm test six months later to assess the efficacy of the treatment, are not included in the immiticide protocol fee.