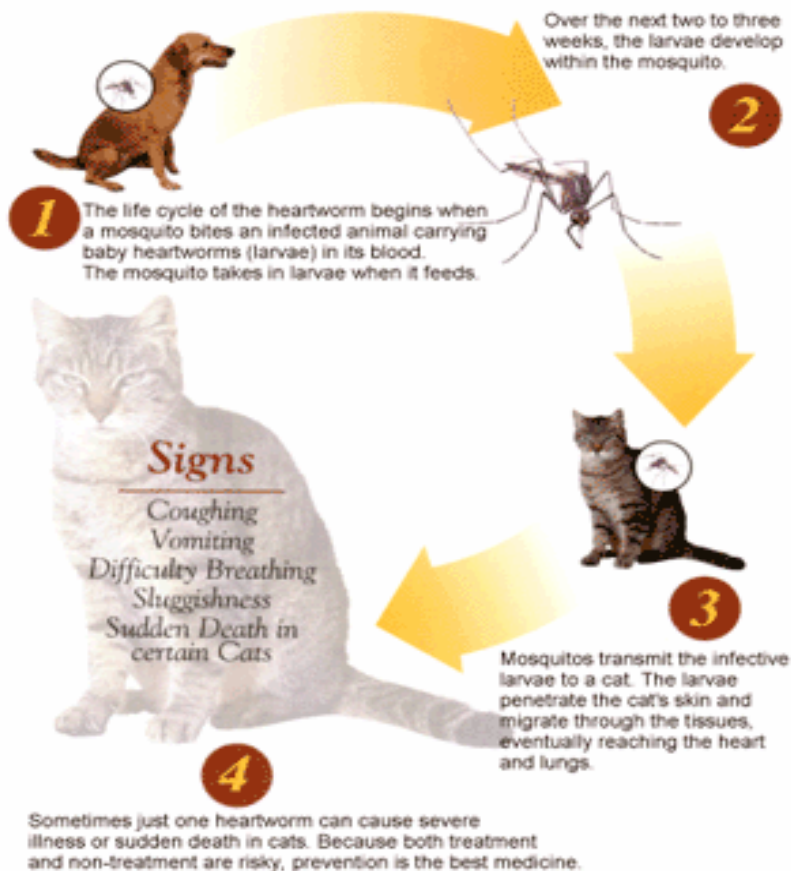


## Heartworm: Cats at Risk

Cats are more resistant to heartworms than dogs, but they are still at risk of infection. Infected cats usually do not have microfilariae (immature heartworms) circulating in their blood, so they rarely transmit parasites to a mosquito; however, this also makes screening for heartworm difficult.



While dogs can have as many as 250 heartworms, infected cats often have fewer than six. The lifespan of the parasite in cats is only two to three years, compared to five to seven years in dogs.

Nevertheless, even a small worm burden in cats is potentially fatal. There is not an approved medication for treatment of cats with heartworm infection. Medication may be prescribed to reduce the inflammatory response, and surgical removal of the worms may be possible.

Symptoms of heartworm disease in cats include coughing, respiratory distress, lethargy, vomiting, and weight loss. Diagnosis in cats is more difficult than in dogs.

There are multiple approved heartworm preventatives for felines.

Please call us to discuss the best preventative medications for your cat.