

**VETERINARY HEALTH CENTER at KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
OFFICIAL PROTOCOL**

**HEARTWORM TESTING AND PREVENTATIVE**

I. Prescription Protocol

Desk personnel will set up appointments for heartworm (HW) tests. At the time the appointment is scheduled, the client should be advised that if test results are negative, the attending clinician will write a prescription for the patient. This may be for a 6 or 12 month supply depending on prior prevention history. Patients must be re-tested yearly in order to have heartworm preventive prescribed by VHC clinicians.

Heartworm preventive can be prescribed if a client has a documented heartworm test from a licensed DVM within the last 12 months and proof of previous heartworm purchase (when indicated). The animal must be a current patient of the VHC to obtain the prescription. This can be done **ONE TIME ONLY**. After the initial prescription, the patient must be re-tested at KSU-VHC every 12 months in order to receive continued prescriptions for heartworm preventive at the VHC.

A Pet Health Center clinician may make an exception for KSU CVM students whose pets were treated by a veterinarian at their home and need heartworm preventative while they are in school. The animal must be a current patient of the VHC to obtain the prescription.

There is a code (K1496 Heartworm Test - Outside Source) in VetStar that does not have a charge associated with it. If a client shows proof of a negative heartworm test as outlined above, this password protected code can be entered by Pet Health Center personnel.

II. Testing Protocol

A. Dogs < 7 months of age:

Initiate heartworm preventative therapy and perform occult heartworm test 6-12 months later, depending on age, time of year and prevention history.

B. Dogs ≥ 7 months of age, never been tested:

OHW test prior to dispensing monthly heartworm preventative.  
Repeat OHW test in 6 months; then every year.

C. Dogs ≥ 7 months of age, *OHW test at KSU-VHC within previous 12 months:*

Dispense monthly heartworm preventative if no more than 3 months have elapsed from the time of heartworm test until purchase of heartworm preventative. Supply/refills shall not exceed re-test date by more than 4 months. Dogs must be re-tested in 6 months if there is a lapse in administration. Dogs who are tested negative and on year-round prevention the year prior to testing can receive up to 12 months of heartworm preventive.

- D. Dogs  $\geq$  7 months of age, documented OHW test at another DVM within previous 12 months:

Dispense monthly heartworm preventive if not more than 3 months have elapsed from time of heartworm test until purchase of heartworm preventive. If more than 3 months have elapsed the owner must provide proof of a heartworm preventative prescription at time of testing. Supply/refills shall not exceed re-test date by more than 4 months. Dog must be **re-tested by KSU-VHC** at least every 12 months and in 6 months if there is a lapse in preventive.

- III. The American Heartworm Society recommends at a minimum, performing a heartworm test before switching to a different brand of monthly preventive. While not required by us, it is highly recommended. This should be repeated again in 6 months to ensure manufacturer product efficacy warranties if the owner desires to do so.

**CATEGORY** Clinical Sections, Dispensary, House Officers and Students

**APPROVED** 10/24/12, VHC Administrator