Injectable Heartworm Preventive Approved for Dogs
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PLEASE NOTE: As of August, 2004, Fort Dodge Animal Health, at the Food and Drug Administration’s request, has agreed to immediately cease production and recall its heartworm medication ProHeart® 6 from the market as there have been numerous unexplained adverse event reports, some of them severe. To learn more about this topic, please click here.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the first injectable drug to prevent heartworm disease in dogs. One injection provides six months of heartworm protection. The drug, ProHeart 6® (Moxidectin Sustained Release Injectable for Dogs), is an alternative to currently available heartworm prevention drugs that must be given on a monthly or daily basis.

Heartworm disease is a serious and potentially fatal condition of dogs, cats, and other species of mammals. The parasite that causes heartworm disease is *Dirofilaria immitis*. It is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito. The adult stage of the parasite is found in the heart and major blood vessels of infected animals.

Canine heartworm infection has been found in dogs in all 50 states. All dogs, regardless of their age, sex, or habitat are susceptible to heartworm infection. The highest infection rates (up to 45%) in dogs not maintained on heartworm preventative are found within 150 miles of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Coast from Texas to New Jersey, and along the Mississippi River and its major tributaries. Other areas of the United States have lower incidence rates (5% or less) of canine heartworm disease.

Fort Dodge Animal Health, Fort Dodge, Iowa, is the manufacturer of ProHeart 6. The new medication will be available by prescription from a licensed veterinarian. It is approved for use in dogs six months of age and older and also treats existing hookworm (*Ancylostoma caninum*) infections.