

Robinson Veterinary Services

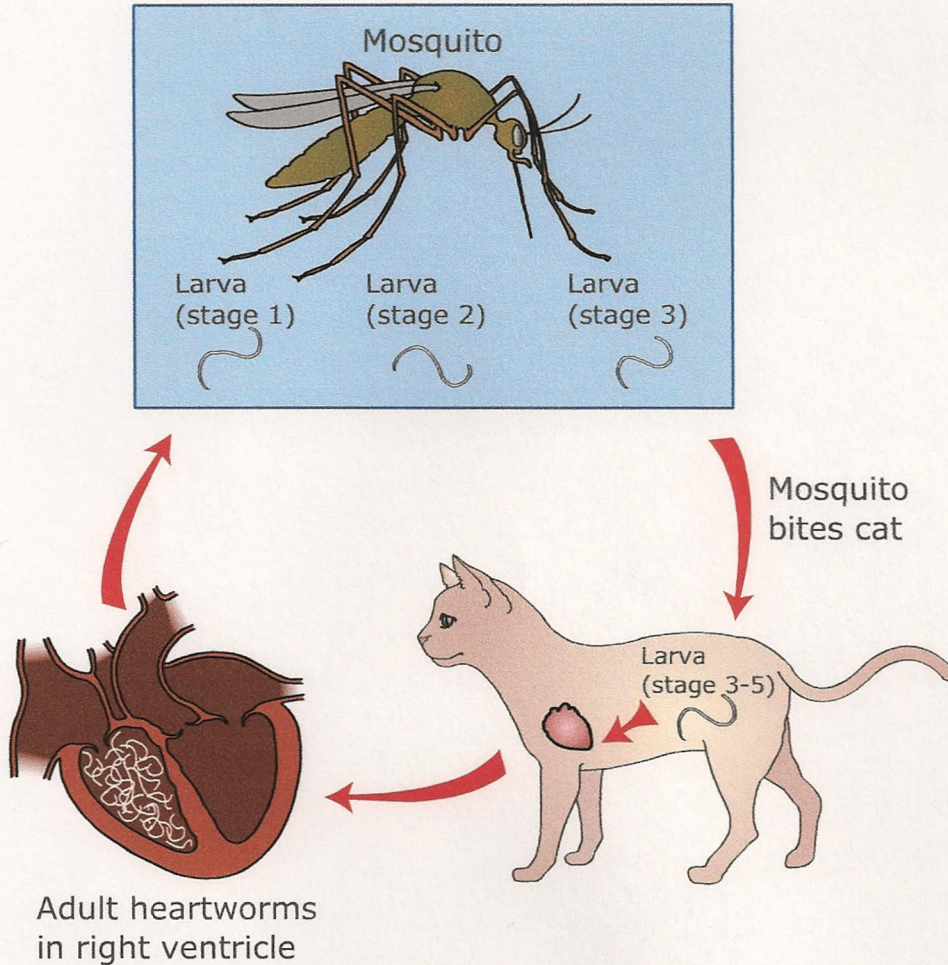
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Heartworm Life Cycle - Cat: Heartworm life cycle in the cat with mosquito as intermediate host.



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Heartworm disease is a parasitic disease that is transmitted through mosquitoes. A mosquito picks up the parasite by sucking blood from an infected dog or cat. This heartworm larva matures from stage 1 to 3 in the mosquito, taking from 10 to 30 days, depending on the temperature. Then, when the mosquito bites another cat, it injects stage 3 larvae into the new host. These larvae mature through stage 5 and become adult heartworms that mate and produce new stage 1 larvae (also known as microfilariae). It takes approximately 6 months for the heartworm larvae to mature into adults and reproduce. Microfilariae cannot develop into adult heartworms without first passing through a mosquito. Because the disease requires mosquitoes for transmission, it is spread during mosquito season. It cannot be spread directly from one cat to another.