



Thank you for your interest in adopting a puppy or dog. All of the rescues we partner with are in southern states. Louisiana and Alabama is where most of our dogs come from. Typically these dogs and puppies are unwanted and poorly cared for before a rescue takes them in. Prior to rescue, most have never seen a veterinarian, are not vaccinated, and have not received medication for parasite control, such as intestinal parasites and heartworm.

**Heartworm** is a disease that is endemic in the southern states, and is known to occur in New England as well. It is caused when mosquitoes that carry the heartworm larvae (called microfilariae) bite a dog and release the larvae into the dog's bloodstream. The blood test to determine if a dog has heartworm disease only detects the presence of adult female heartworms that are already in the dog's heart. It takes about 6 months for the heartworm larvae to mature to the adult stage such that it is detectable by the blood test. Dogs over 7 months old are tested for heartworm at the southern rescue. Puppies are not tested. The southern rescues give all dogs and puppies heartworm 'prevention' medicine that kills the larvae. The prevention is not 100% effective against 'nearly mature' larvae, that is, larvae that have been growing for close to 6 months and are near the adult stage, but are not mature enough to trigger a positive heartworm test. **Therefore, a dog that tests negative in the south, CAN TEST POSITIVE after that dog arrives in Vermont.** It is very important that you continue giving your dog/puppy heartworm prevention medicine and consult with your own veterinarian as to when to test for heartworm, typically within 6 months of its last test, or for a puppy, its first test at about 7 months of age.

**If you have adopted a dog that tests positive for heartworm after it has arrived in Vermont, it is your responsibility and financial obligation to provide veterinary care to treat heartworm disease.** Note: heartworm disease treatment routinely costs approximately \$1000 in Vermont and involves multiple medications over a 3 month period. <https://www.heartwormsociety.org/pet-owner-resources/heartworm-basics>

**Intestinal parasites** (hookworm, roundworm, canine tapeworm, giardia, coccidia) will be treated by the rescue in the south while the dog is in their care. However, it typically takes multiple rounds of medications over several weeks, to completely eradicate intestinal parasites. After your dog arrives in Vermont, it is imperative that you have a fecal test performed at your veterinarian's office to determine if additional rounds of medications are required. **It is your responsibility and financial obligation to provide veterinary care for parasites.**