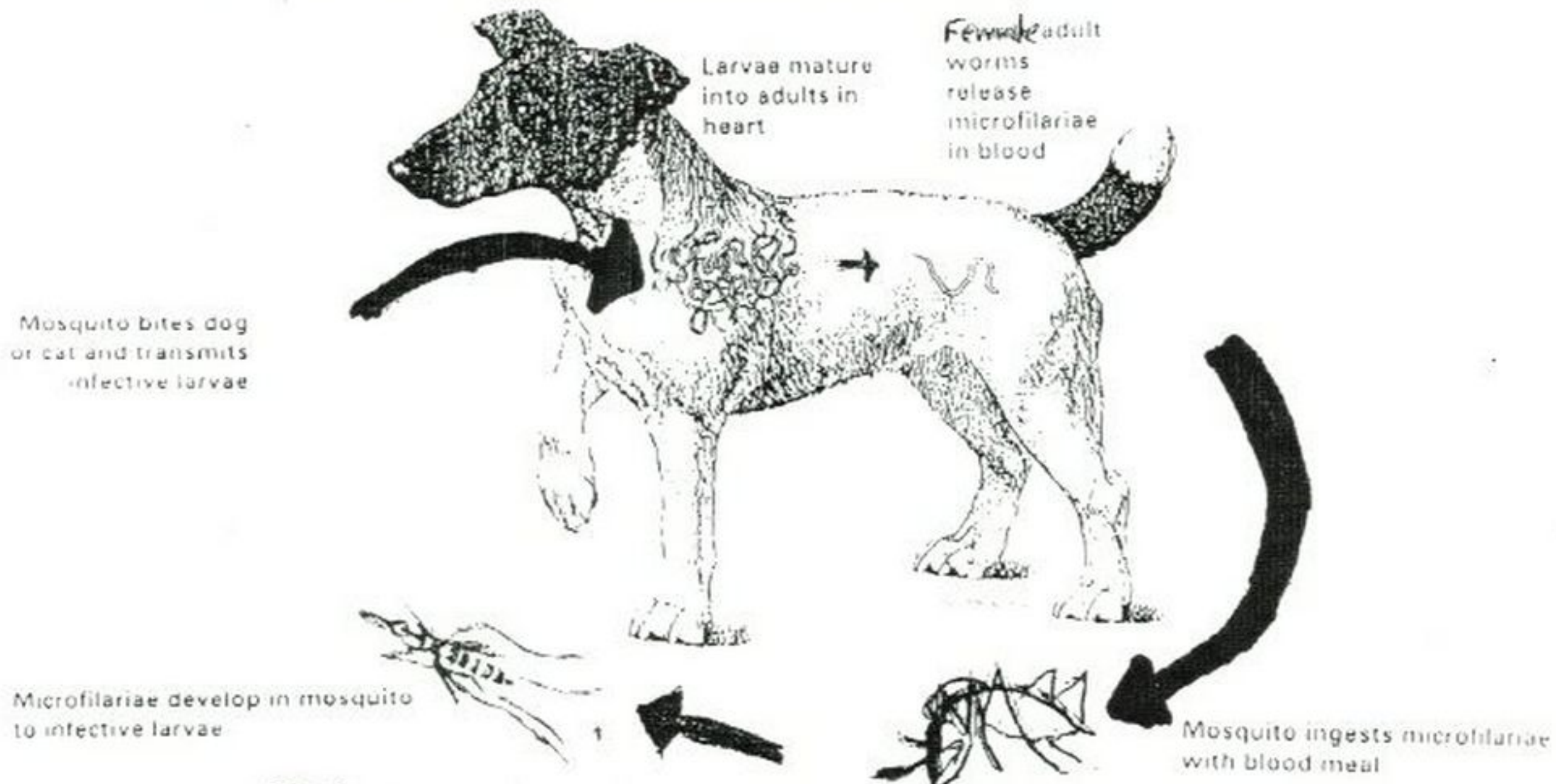




HEARTWORMS

Heartworm disease is becoming increasingly more common. Several cases are diagnosed each year. Microfilaria, or "baby heartworms", are ingested by a mosquito biting an infected dog or cat. After living in the mosquito for 1-2 weeks, the microfilaria are injected into another dog or cat when the mosquito feeds. It takes about six (6) months for the heartworm to reach adulthood after infecting the pet (see heartworm life cycle below)



The important thing for you as a pet owner to remember is that a great deal of damage can occur before any obvious signs are noticed.

The signs of heartworm disease which you are most likely to notice include coughing, sluggishness, rapid tiring, and labored breathing. Diagnosis is made by testing a blood sample. It will be 6 or 7 months after exposure before any microfilaria can be detected in the blood. Pets are infected with heartworms when bitten by a mosquito carrying the immature heartworm larvae and there is obviously **NO WAY** to keep your pet from being bitten by mosquito! Delayed treatment may result in heart failure and/or permanent damage to the liver, lungs, and kidneys and eventually result in death.

If your pet is under 6 months of age, a preventative medicine that destroys "baby heartworms" can be started immediately. This medication can be given on a monthly basis for dogs. If your pet is over 6 months of age, a simple blood test must be performed to ensure that your pet is not already infected, then medication can be started.

You may think your pet is safe from heartworms if he/she is indoors, *it only takes one (1) mosquito to transmit this fatal disease!* Heartworm prevention protects your pets so that they can enjoy a longer and healthier life.