



The Lucky Dog 2-Dose Melarsomine Protocol: Step by Step

Day 1

Diagnosis – antigen and microfilaria test
Confirm diagnosis especially in areas with low incidence
ProHeart 12 at label dose
Start doxycycline 10mg/kg PO SID x 28 days



Day 1-13

Spay/neuter surgery if needed

Day 13

Start prednisone 0.5 mg/kg PO
BID x 7 days, SID x 7 days,
EOD x 7 days



Day 14

Butorphanol 0.4 mg/kg IM
First melarsomine injection
Start exercise restriction (5-10 minute short leash walks 2-3 times a day)

Day 15

Second melarsomine injection
Available for adoption



Day 28 -43

Day 28: Complete doxycycline course
Day 32: Complete prednisone course
Day 43: Complete exercise restriction

Expanding Access to Heartworm Treatment

While the widely accepted American Heartworm Society 3-dose protocol is safe and effective, it is slow and resource-intensive. The Lucky Dog Protocol achieves similar clinical outcomes in dogs with asymptomatic and mild heartworm disease. This makes treatment accessible in shelters and resource-limited community settings.

	AHS Protocol	Lucky Dog Protocol	Difference
Melarsomine injections	3	2	-33%
Days diagnosis to end of exercise restriction	133	43	-68%
Days intake to last melarsomine (adoption-ready)	91	15	-84%
Total days exercise restriction	72	28	-61%
Days on prednisone	56	21	-63%
Total cost for shelter	\$1,099	\$425	-61%

Lucky Dog Heartworm Treatment Study

Common misconceptions with heartworm treatment:



Treatment has to take months
(*standard protocol*)



Dogs cannot be safely
treated in a shelter setting
(*misconception*)



Dogs cannot be spayed/neutered
until months after a successful
treatment (*misconception*)

The Lucky Dog Study was undertaken to address those concerns by testing whether a 2-dose melarsomine protocol, supported by a ProHeart® 12 injection, doxycycline and prednisone, is as safe and effective as a 3-dose melarsomine protocol. 100% of the dogs came from shelters and were treated in a kennel environment, and all unaltered dogs were spayed/neutered in the 2 weeks before melarsomine treatment.

Preliminary Study Findings

The study included 168 dogs, 85 in the 2-dose group and 83 in the 3-dose group.

There were no statistically significant differences between the groups for safety or efficacy

As we hypothesized, there were no statistically significant differences in safety and efficacy between the 2-dose and 3-dose groups. All dogs survived treatment. 97% of the dogs successfully achieved a negative heartworm antigen test result by 9 months after the last melarsomine injection. Watch for the full results in our peer-reviewed paper to be published in a veterinary journal in the next few months.

Other important findings and insights

- There were no heartworm-related complications after spay/neuter in the study dogs.
- Butorphanol ~ 20 minutes before melarsomine injections was effective; ¾ of the dogs did not react to the injection at all.
- There were no significant differences between very high energy and other dogs for all clinical measures.

Caveats and cautions

- This study did not compare our protocols with the American Heartworm Society protocol.
- The study only included dogs with asymptomatic and mild/moderate heartworm disease. We don't know if the Lucky Dog Protocol is safe for dogs with more severe disease.



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