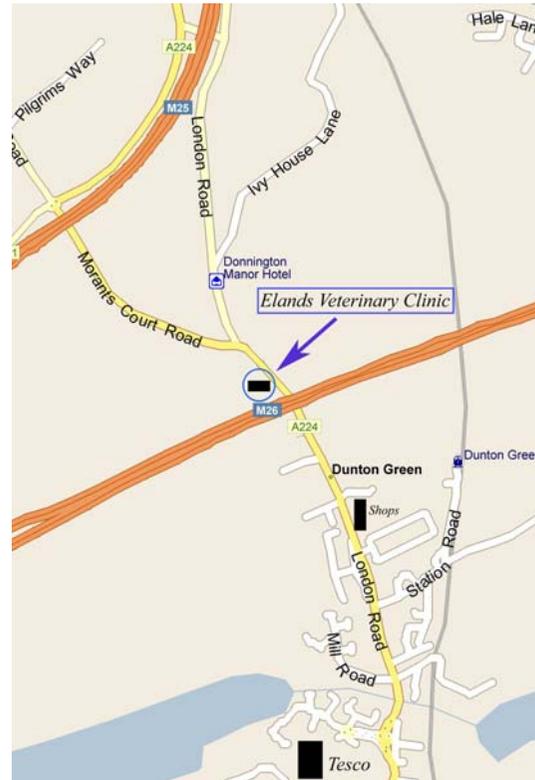


Lifecycle of the French Heartworm



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Just off junction 5 of the M25



- because we care

French Heart- worm

(Angiostrongylus vasorum)



Elands Veterinary Clinic.

St John's Church, London Road, Dunton Green, Sevenoaks, Kent. TN13 2TE (01732) 452333

Angiostrongylus vasorum , The French Heartworm – also known as lungworm

French heartworm is a potentially serious parasite of dogs that is becoming more common in the UK. The definitive host is the wild fox which acts as a reservoir host for domestic dogs.



Dogs are infected by eating slugs or snails which carry the infective larval stage of the parasite. The slug is digested away in the dog's intestine and the larvae penetrate the gut and make their way to the right atrium of the heart.

The adult worms live in the heart and major pulmonary arteries, mating and laying eggs which pass to the lungs. Larvae hatch from

the eggs, breakout into the airspaces, are coughed-up and swallowed to be passed in the faeces. The hatching larvae cause inflammation resulting in clinical signs such as coughing. Onset of signs is usually gradual (months to years) and commonly include chronic cough, breathing difficulties, exercise intolerance, loss of appetite, gagging and weight loss. Dogs of any age can be infected but clinical signs are most common in young dogs under two years of age.

Larvae which have hatched in the lungs are coughed up and swallowed by the dog and



are then passed out in the faeces. Slugs are infected by feeding on infected faeces.

In a few dogs the disease can be serious and even result in death. Although the condition can be treated, it is best caught early and

even better to treat your pet with a preventative medication – especially if you know he has a tendency to eat slugs or snails!



A simple spot on medication is available that not only prevents French heartworm infestation, but also kills other major roundworms as well as fleas, mites and lice. A simple monthly drop on the back of the neck is all it takes to maintain your peace of mind. Ask your vet about heartworm prevention.