

# THE FIRST 48 HOURS AFTER A HEARTWORM DIAGNOSIS

What matters now.

What can wait.

What comes next.

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## Read this first

A heartworm diagnosis creates urgency — but urgency is not accuracy.

In the first 48 hours, most mistakes happen for one reason: **people try to solve the entire journey at once.**

This document exists to stop that.

It will tell you exactly what to do now, what *not* to do yet, and why the next step requires more structure than a short guide can provide.

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## Before you read anything else, pause for one moment

Ask yourself:

**Is my dog hurting or emotionally distressed right now?**

**Are they meaningfully different than they were yesterday?**

If the answer to both is **no**, then nothing urgent has changed — and slowing down is the correct next step.

This moment of clarity matters more than any decision you could make today.

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## What the first 48 hours are for

The first 48 hours have **one job**:

## **Prevent panic-driven decisions while you stabilize the situation.**

They are **not** for:

- choosing a treatment path
- changing your dog's lifestyle
- starting supplements
- committing to a plan you don't fully understand
- researching every opinion available online

Trying to do those things now does not make later decisions easier — it makes them harder.

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## **What you should do immediately (non-negotiable)**

For the next two days, do **only** the following:

- Keep daily routines unchanged
- Avoid excitement, exertion, and stress spikes
- Feed and hydrate normally
- Let your dog rest
- Write questions down instead of researching endlessly
- Schedule veterinary follow-up (do not rush it)

That's it.

Anything else right now adds emotional or physical risk.

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## **What can wait (and should)**

You can safely wait on:

- fast-kill vs. slow-kill decisions
- medication opinions
- diet changes
- supplements
- second opinions
- long-term planning

Heartworms develop over months.  
You are not late.

Waiting here is not avoidance — it is a reasonable pace given how heartworm disease develops.

This pause allows you to observe your dog clearly before making longer-term decisions with your veterinarian.

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## When to act immediately

Contact your veterinarian **right away** if you observe:

- labored or rapid breathing
- collapse or extreme weakness
- persistent or worsening coughing
- anything that feels urgent or alarming to you

If none of these signs are present, slowing down is appropriate and responsible.

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## Why people get stuck after this point

Once the initial shock fades, new questions emerge:

- How do I choose a treatment path without fear or regret?
- What does activity restriction look like day to day?
- How do I protect my dog emotionally over weeks or months?
- How do I stop second-guessing every decision?

Most people stall here because:

- information online is fragmented
- advice is contradictory
- fear resets decisions again and again
- there is no single reference point

Without structure, people loop.

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## What this document cannot do

This guide is **not meant to carry you through the full heartworm journey**.

It cannot:

- guide treatment decisions
- support activity restriction over time
- help you recognize emotional stress patterns
- carry you through weeks or months of recovery

That work requires continuity and structure.

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## What the Heartworm Healing Guide does differently

The **Heartworm Healing Guide** exists for what comes *after* stabilization.

It provides:

- calm, clear comparisons of treatment paths
- practical, realistic activity management
- emotional support for both dog and guardian
- a structure you can return to when fear spikes
- a way to move forward without re-deciding everything

It does not rush you — but it **keeps you moving**.

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## The next step (direct and honest)

If this First 48 Hours guide helped you regain steadiness, the next step is not more searching.

It is structure.

[Heartworm Support Guide for Dogs and Caregivers | howzuribeatheartworms.com](https://www.howzuribeatheartworms.com)

→ **Move ahead with the full Heartworm Healing Guide**

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# Close

You do not need to do everything today.  
But you *do* need a way forward that is not driven by panic or guesswork.

This is how you start correctly.

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