



from

All Creatures Veterinary Hospital



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DOCTOR'S EDITORIAL ...

FALL 2003

"When Daily Events Tend To Get You Down..."

This has been quite a summer. It seems that every day the national news informed us of one area of the country's record heat, another's record rains or an entire section without electrical power. Many parts of our nation continue to experience ongoing economic problems and interest rates seem to be creeping up. The international news remained rather bleak with continued troubling news from Iraq, the Middle East and Africa. As a result of this seemingly endless litany of negative news, psychologists report an increase in anxiety related problems across our country.

As pet owners, we are luckier than most. When we feel a little anxious about varying events, our pets provide us a little security. When Kitty is purring on your lap or Fido is looking lovingly in your eyes while you pet and scratch, our anxieties tend to vanish. It is not uncommon for pet owners to occasionally talk to their pets, telling them of their anxieties thus releasing their inter-most fears. Yes, pets are really good for our physical and mental health and there is a ton of research to support this claim.

So, as the burden of daily events tends to get you down, leave some time in your busy schedule to interact with your pet. You'll feel better for it! But please, don't forget about your pet's medical welfare. Our pets give us so much and ask for so little. Make sure you have their physical needs addressed with a routine physical exam and proper dental care. When you see something that doesn't look normal about either their behavior or their physical condition, give us a call immediately so that treatment can be rendered before problems begin.



IMPORTANT PET ISSUES

WARNING SIGNS OF CANCER

EARLY DIAGNOSIS IS THE BEST DEFENSE!

Veterinary health professionals are witnessing an increase in cancer diagnoses across the country. According to a Morris Animal Foundation study, 47% of dogs die from some form of cancer while the number for cats is 32%.

An animal suffering from cancer may exhibit some of the following symptoms:

1. Lump or swelling that continues to grow
2. Inexplicable weight loss
3. Sudden loss of appetite
4. Non-healing sores or lesions
5. Labored eating and/or swallowing
6. Prolonged lameness
7. Trouble urinating or defecating
8. Abnormally foul odor - especially oral
9. Disinterest in physical activity

Solutions:

Unfortunately, there is no cure for cancer. The best defense against the scourge of cancer remains early diagnosis and a routine physical examination by your veterinarian is considered the most effective diagnostic tool available to properly detect cancer. Nothing can replace the value of routine screenings, especially as your pet ages, and the prompt investigation of any symptoms you may observe during your daily inaction with your pet.

Additionally, lifestyle changes are helpful in preventing some forms of cancer. A more nutritious diet, increased exercise and neutering are three things that are helpful.



First Aid Suggestion For CHOKING

You can tell if your pet is choking by observing gagging, excessive salivating or attempts to paw the mouth. If you witness this, do the following immediately:

1. You must keep the mouth open. The best way to do this is by gently pushing on the pet's cheeks.
2. If you see a foreign object lodged in the throat, carefully remove it with your fingers or a pair of tweezers.

NOTE: SOME OBJECTS THAT CAUSE CHOKING - LIKE STRING - MAY EXTEND FAR INTO THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM SO DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REMOVE THESE OBJECTS. CALL OUR OFFICE IMMEDIATELY FOR INSTRUCTIONS.

3. If the object is not visible, call our office immediately.
4. If your pet is not breathing, perform the Heimlich Maneuver by placing your pet's back toward you, put both hands - one on top of the other - beneath the animal's ribs and forcefully lift up attempting to eject the object choking your pet.

NOT ALL ANIMALS AGE AT THE SAME RATE

Just like their human owners, with proper care, our pets can live longer, happier lives!

Older pets become increasingly susceptible to medical conditions like obesity and periodontal, kidney and heart disease. The more you know about your aging pet's needs, the more you can do to keep them happier and healthier. Starting your older pet on routine screenings is the best way to ensure good health!

Primarily because of breed, not all of our pets enter their senior years at the same time. For example, the chart below shows what a pet's human age equivalent is when the pet has reached 7 years old.

<u>Animal Size</u>	<u>Human Age Equivalent</u>
Large Breed Dog (over 55 lbs.)	65 Human Years
Medium Breed Dog (26-55 lbs.)	58 Human Years
Small Breed Dog (up to 25 lbs.)	49 Human Years
Cats	45 Human Years

As you can see, a Great Dane at age 7 is well into his senior years while a Jack Russell is still enjoying middle age. Regardless, the doctor will tell you when is the best time to start your pet's senior screening program based on your pet's breed and medical history.

WHAT WE WILL LOOK FOR DURING A SENIOR SCREENING

During the screening, medical problems are often found in their early stages which allows us to treat them before they become a major health issue. In a screening we will look for signs of:

- Urinary Tract Disease
- Heart Disease
- Kidney Disease
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Periodontal Disease

QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ANSWER PRIOR TO YOUR PET'S SENIOR SCREENING

Answer "Yes" or "No" to the following:

- Does your dog or cat ...
- have difficulty urinating or defecating?
 - desire to urinate more frequently?
 - pant after exercise?
 - experience difficulty seeing?
 - have different sleep patterns?
 - want to have less interaction with others?
 - suffer from severe bad breath?
 - experience recent weight gain or loss?
 - drink more or less?
 - seem to be losing hair?



SUMMARY

The bond between you and your pet is very special. As our pets mature, their continued happiness depends more and more on proper medical care. If your pet has reached his or her senior years and has not undergone a senior screening, please give us a call to arrange an appointment. You'll be glad you did.

(Source: AVMA)

Thank you for the ongoing referral of your friends, family and neighbors to our practice.

Your recommendations are greatly appreciated.

ANIMAL HEALTH NEWS

Kidney Disease in Pets

Kidney disease occurs when the kidneys fail to filter and remove circulatory waste materials and regulate body fluids. This deadly disease affects more than one million pets annually and is a leading killer of dogs and cats. Kidney disease often results from poisoning, shock, blood loss, infections, drugs and other causes like age, nutrition, and breed or genetic tendencies. Annual blood and urine tests can help diagnose advancing kidney problems. Once identified, the doctor can prescribe the method of support that is right for your pet.

The usual physical signs of Kidney Disease are:

- Loss of appetite
- Increased thirst
- Depression
- Frequent or no urination
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Poor hair coat

If you have any questions about kidney disease, please give us a call. We are happy to help you and your beloved pet. (Source: Hills)

Top Ten Pet Names

According to a leading manufacturer of pet name tags, the top ten names for pets are:

1. Max
2. Maggie
3. Buddy
4. Bailey
5. Jake
6. Sam
7. Molly
8. Nicky
9. Coco
10. Sadie



Ten Tips To Make Your Pet's Golden Years Enjoyable

1. Regulate activity level and food intake to prevent obesity.
2. Keep all living areas warm, clean, and dry.
3. Regularly check your pet's mouth for reddened gums or unusual swelling.
4. Thoroughly groom and inspect your dog regularly.
5. Avoid rearranging furniture or other familiar objects unnecessarily.
6. Note irregular bowel movements and urination difficulty.
7. Take your dog for periodic senior screenings.
8. Feed your dog only the food your veterinarian recommends.
9. Implement a regular, gentle exercise routine.
10. Continue providing the affection and attention your companion deserves.