



*from*

## All Creatures Veterinary Hospital



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DOCTOR'S EDITORIAL ...

FALL 2001

## AUTUMN REFLECTIONS

Autumn is upon us! The gaiety of the summer holiday season is behind us while the frantic holiday season looms in front of us. The fall of the year is when, with the children returning to school, our household schedule begins to follow a more set routine. Fall seems a more serious time of the year as we refocus our attention on our work with a renewed vigor. This should also be a time when pet owners focus on the health needs of their companion animals. We have addressed some of a pet's health needs in this newsletter.

As we have illustrated in numerous past newsletters, our pets are exceptionally beneficial to our health!! There is increasing evidence that the presence of pets helps us recover from serious illnesses like heart attacks and pets aid in keeping our blood pressure low and help reduce the stress of our lives. A recent study of nursing home residents found that the use of prescription drugs and the overall cost of



caring for patients dropped in those facilities where companion animals became part of the therapy. Another study found that for persons living at home, those with pets had fewer medical appointments and minor health problems. Additionally, another study found that people with pets have been found to have lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels when compared with people who do not have pets and when matched for weight, diet and smoking habits.

So this autumn, do you and your family a favor, take steps to ensure your pets' good health. Read about their health requirements and give our office a call to make an appointment. After all, having a healthy pet is good for your health as well!!



## HELPFUL TIPS

### *Holiday Shopping Suggestions for your Pet*



If it has not happened yet, your local shopping districts will soon be decked out in all their holiday glory getting ready for the largest shopping period of the year. For those of you who have a stocking to fill for either Fido or Kitty, we would like to offer these suggestions in choosing the safest toys for your pet:

**BELLS:** Cats, dogs and birds love bells because of their movement and sound. Just make sure that the bell toy you select is large enough to prevent your pet from swallowing it.

Also, make sure that the clapper is securely fastened to its shell.

**BONES:** Large, hard beef shank or knuckle bones are a common gift to the dog of the house at Christmas. They satisfy a dog's urge to chew and help to keep their teeth clean. Make sure that your dog does not get any chicken or turkey bones as these can splinter and become lodged in the pet's throat, puncture the intestine, or cause constipation.

**CHEWS:** Chews are a wonderful alternative to bones. Rawhide bones or rubber bones that have a little "give" and hard biscuits are safe products. An old wooden sewing spool is ideal for birds and their beaks.

**SOFT OBJECTS:** Cats especially love to bat things about so select some toys that are light enough for this activity. They should be free of external decorations which can come off and be swallowed. Rubber toys may be able to be torn apart over a period of time and pieces easily swallowed.

**COMFORT ITEMS:** Perches and scratching posts are ideal gifts for the cat in your life while a dog might fancy a new bed or sweater. A good leash is also a wonderful gift idea for both you and your pet. We can all use the exercise that a good walk with our pet gives us - especially after all of those holiday parties and dinners!

*In summary, avoid giving your pet any toy that contains pieces or can be consumed thus causing a blockage of the gastrointestinal system. Persistent vomiting is one of the main signs of an obstruction in cats and dogs. Please give us a call if we can be of any assistance in answering your questions.*

### AMERICA'S TOP TEN MOST POPULAR DOGS

Dog Breed	Number of AKC Registrations
1. Labrador Retriever	172,841
2. Golden Retriever	66,000
3. German Shepherd	57,660
4. Dachshund	54,773
5. Beagle	52,026
6. Poodle	45,868
7. Yorkshire Terrier	43,575
8. Chihuahua	43,096
9. Boxer	34,998
10. Shih Tzu	37,599

(Source: American Kennel Club)



## Proper Health Care For Your Dog or Cat

*To ensure that your dog or cat lives the longest, happiest and most pain-free life, we recommend the following health care procedures:*

### Annual Physical Examination:

Compared to their human masters, pets age very quickly. Remember that each one of your pet's years equals about seven of ours. This is why it is so vitally important for your pet to undergo a physical examination at least once a year! Older animals and pets with special needs may have to be seen more often. During the annual physical procedure, the veterinarian will:

1. Check your pet's vaccination status. Vaccination requirements vary from pet to pet and our doctor will determine which, if any, vaccinations your animal requires.
2. Examine your pet's ears and eyes & listen to internal organ sounds.
3. Check the feet and legs for problems.
4. Check the fur coat and skin. We will check for the presence of parasites like fleas or ticks as well as for any hair loss, itchy spots, matting or skin pigment changes.
5. Review your pet's nutritional status. The doctor may discuss the types and quantities of food the pet consumes, the pet's exercise habits and water consumption.
6. Perform specific blood tests as required by your pet's age and physical condition.



7. Perform any other tests that are deemed necessary.
8. Discuss any behavioral changes with you. Behavioral changes often are symptomatic of the presence of a physical condition.
9. Possibly administer a fecal examination to detect the presence of internal parasites.

**Annual Dental Examination:** Just like their human owners, pets need routine dental care. Left untreated, oral disease can systemically affect the animal's heart, liver, and kidneys in addition to making life miserable from the oral pain that is suffered.

Our trained staff can examine your pet's mouth to determine the magnitude of dental work that must be done. For most pets a simple cleaning is all that is required.

**Heartworm Testing:** Depending upon a multitude of factors, our doctor will determine when or if your pet should be tested for the presence of heartworm. A monthly preventative is often prescribed for pets that are at risk for this ailment. Make sure that you administer this medication as prescribed.

**Senior Pet or Geriatric Screening:** Older pets often have special needs. As with their human counterparts, older pets need to have their vital organs examined more often. Blood tests and other tests should be performed more often to detect the presence of kidney disease, diabetes or other problems which occur more frequently in older animals.

**Flea & Tick Prevention:** Keeping your pet and your home environment free of fleas and ticks is extremely important. Some of these ticks may possibly be carrying dangerous human diseases like Lyme Disease. Not only is keeping your pet flea-free a good idea but this will help keep fleas from tormenting you and your family as well.

**Have Your Pet Spayed or Neutered:** This just makes good sense. It's good for the animal, it's good for you and it prevents unwanted animals from having to be senselessly destroyed.

Keeping your pet healthy is our goal!. You will reap the rewards by having a happier and healthier pet to keep you company throughout the years to come. If our practice hasn't seen your dog or cat recently for any one of the above listed items, please give our office a call today. You will be glad you did.



## ANIMAL HEALTH NEWS

### Question: How can I introduce a new cat to my multi-cat household?

Carefully!!!! First have the new cat tested for FeLV and FIV. If negative, keep the new cat in its own room for a minimum of a week. This allows the cats to sniff each other under the door. After the initial hissings have calmed down, reverse the situation by letting the new cat into your house while keeping your cat in isolation. This allows the resident cat to smell the new cat without having to fight the newcomer. This procedure also allows the new cat to explore the house and become familiar with hiding areas.

The next step is to let them see each other from across a room or through a tall baby gate across the doorway of a room. When they are used to this, allow them out together in a supervised environment. Give them each food in separate dishes on opposite sides of the room. Do this repeatedly so that the cats meet in the same room every day. Eventually they will associate a good thing with seeing each other. The entire process may take as long as six weeks. Remember: Patience!!

(Source: AAHA)

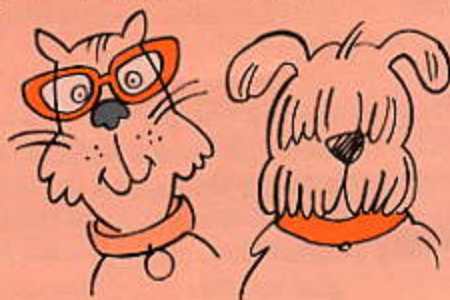


## SPAY AND NEUTERING REMINDER!

Animal shelters throughout the country are forced to euthanize hundreds of thousands of unwanted animals a year! If you have an unaltered pet, please consider having it neutered as soon as possible. To illustrate the pet overpopulation problem, do you know that just one unspayed female cat and one unaltered male cat can begin a progression of births that, after seven years, could produce at least 150,000 kittens! Few of these will find homes. The rest will be destroyed. Please alter your pet now! Call our office for spaying and neutering details.

## SIMPLE PET EYE CARE

Let's face it, your pet's clawed foot was not built to handle the needs of personal eye care! Rather, they are prone to pushing their faces along your carpet or lawn to remove potential irritants from the area of the eye. If you notice a redness in your pet's eyes with a presence of mucus or if your pet squints a lot, this may indicate an eye infection for which our office should be called. Your pet's eyes are just too important!



There are some simple things you can do to lessen the risk of eye problems for your pet. Follow these simple steps to care for your pet's eyes:

1. Keep hair out of your pet's eyes. Cut your pet's hair as necessary to keep the hair from scratching the animal's cornea.
2. Eye mucus can cause harmful infections so keep the eye clear of mucus. Use a sterile wipe to keep the eye free of mucus.
3. Prior to bathing, treat the eye with an ophthalmic ointment to inhibit irritation.