



from

## All Creatures Veterinary Hospital



509 BENICIA ROAD • VALLEJO, CA 94590

(707) 642-4405

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DOCTOR'S EDITORIAL ...

WINTER 2004

### Appreciate Your Pets

Our pets are really members of our family. For many, they are the surrogate children (minus any college tuition costs!!). Pets entertain us and are great company. Most importantly, they love us unconditionally and their companionship keeps us healthy and balanced.

In the spirit of the recent holidays, we suggest you return the favor to your pets by doing the following:

- ◆ *Spend quality time with your pets.* Take them for a routine walk, play with them or simply hang out with your dog or cat during the evening while watching television.
- ◆ *Call our office as soon as you see a problem.* Remember, we're your greatest ally when it comes to keeping your pet healthy and happy. Make sure their shots are up to date; ensure they receive a routine physical and keep their teeth clean.
- ◆ *Feed your pet wisely.* Use only name brand pet foods and don't feed them fatty foods intended for human consumption. Obesity will rob your pet of years of life!
- ◆ *Protect your pets from potential hazards.* Make sure your dog doesn't run loose and risk being hit by a car. Keep Kitty away from strange cats that may be carrying infectious diseases. Update your pet's identification tag if needed.



Your pets give so much and ask for so little in return. Take care of them because our lives are richer for their presence.



## FEBRUARY IS NATIONAL PET DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

For years, we've been preaching the benefits of good dental health. Here's a quick review.

By the time a pet reaches the age of three, 80% of dogs and 70% of cats exhibit some sign of dental disease. Left untreated, serious problems involving the heart, lungs and kidneys can develop. Your pet's bad breath is not something to be ignored nor is the tartar buildup on the teeth and the inflammation along the pet's gum line.



These are all signs of oral disease and clear indications that a dental procedure is required. A pet suffering from the pain of oral disease will display significant behavior changes that can be easily corrected with a cleaning.

If your pet has never undergone a dental procedure or it has been some time since his or her last dental visit, give us a call today to make an appointment. Proper dental health care is one of the most vital things you can give your pet.

### Three Step Program to Prevent Oral Disease

**Oral disease is the number one health problem diagnosed in dogs and cats!**

Your pet should undergo the following:

1. A dental exam and, if needed, a dental cleaning by the doctor.
2. A home dental care routine including regular brushing and a good diet.
3. Routine veterinary check-ups as recommended by our staff.

### BRUSH YOUR PET'S TEETH

*Here are some easy steps to keep your pet's teeth and gums healthy!*

1. If you have never brushed your pet's teeth, start by rubbing your pet's gums, beginning at the front and working to the back, with your index finger. We suggest you first dip your finger into beef bouillon for dogs or tuna water for cats. This gets them familiar to the general idea.
2. Next, obtain from us a toothbrush and specially formulated toothpaste. (Note: Never use human toothpaste as it can upset your pet's stomach.)

Repeat the process you began with your finger by substituting the toothbrush.

3. Keep the sessions short! If your pet becomes agitated, try wrapping him or her in a towel with only the head exposed. Generally, pets get used to the procedure and enjoy the taste of the toothpaste. They think it's a treat!





# PET HEALTH NEWS

## RETROVIRUSES

*These deadly diseases are real cat-killers!*

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) and Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) belong to a group of viruses called retroviruses. The most notorious retrovirus is the human disease HIV which causes AIDS. Simply, retroviruses decrease the ability of the immune system to fight infections.

*Humans and canines cannot contract FIV or FeLV through exposure to these diseases. Only felines are susceptible to these diseases.*

### How Do Cats Contract FIV or FeLV?

The most common way FIV is transmitted is when cats are bitten while fighting. An infected cat's saliva passes beneath the skin of the uninfected cat when a bite occurs thus infecting his victim. FIV is not spread by sharing food or water bowls.

FeLV is spread through contact with an infected cat's saliva, urine or blood.

### How Do You Know If Your Cat Has FIV or FeLV?

Generally, a blood test is the only way to know if your cat is infected with either FIV or FeLV.

*All cats and kittens should be tested even if there is no physical sign of the disease. Cats with Retroviruses often develop illnesses unrelated because their immune systems are compromised.*

### Is There A Treatment?

Unfortunately, there is no cure for either FIV or FeLV.

The prognosis for infected cats depends upon the state of the infection, the severity of any other infections and the aggressiveness of the treatment.

### How Can These Diseases Be Prevented?

1. If your cat comes into contact with other cats it is vitally important that your cat be vaccinated against FeLV.
2. Make sure your cat is never exposed to a FIV or FeLV infected cat.
3. Have your cats tested regularly for FIV and FeLV.

Retroviruses are real cat-killers and their threat cannot be taken lightly. It is vitally important that we test your cats regularly, especially any newly acquired cat or kitten before it joins a multiple-cat household. Please call our office to schedule an appointment for a FIV and FeLV screening.

(Source: AVMA)

## NUTRITIONAL TIPS FOR CAT OWNERS

- *Cats are meat-eaters - vegetarians they are not!* They require high amounts of amino acids to prevent disease.
- *Cats should only eat food intended for feline consumption.* Do not let them raid the dog bowl as dog food does not contain the nutrients cats require.
- *Kittens require special food with an increased level of the necessary proteins for growing muscles and bones.*
- *Cats eat to satisfy their energy needs and then stop.* However, there are obese cats and their requirements need to be established by the veterinarian. (Call our office if you are the proud owner of a "Fat Cat" and would like Kitty placed on a diet.)
- *Many cats eat in cycles.* This is a trait passed down by their wild ancestors who ate depending upon the success or failure of the hunt. These peaks and valleys are often mistaken by cat owners as Kitty's dissatisfaction with their food.



(Source: AAHA)



# PET HEALTH NEWS

## Ear Infections Are A Common Pet Health Problem

*Ear Infections are extremely common in dogs, especially in Cocker Spaniels, Basset Hounds, Miniature Poodles and Schnauzers. Although cats are less prone to ear problems, the Persian breed seems more prone to ear infections.*

*There are two types of ear infections: otitis externa - an infection of the outer ear and otitis media - an infection of the middle ear. Left untreated, ear infections can result in serious damage.*

### Causes

**1. Otitis externa:** Most commonly caused by bacteria or yeast but can be caused by a foreign body lodged in the ear, thick or matted hair in the canal or an accumulation of wax.

**2. Otitis media:** Most usually caused by a spread of an infection from the outer ear canal to the middle ear.



### Symptoms

Ear infections can be very painful and this discomfort causes your pet to shake its head or scratch its ears. Often, the pet's ears emit an offensive odor or discharge.

### Treatment

If you suspect your pet is suffering from an ear infection, call our office and have your diagnosis confirmed by the doctor. An inspection using an otoscope will be conducted to confirm the origin (outer vs. middle ear). Please do not attempt to diagnose ear problems without having it confirmed by the doctor. Not only are untreated ear infections extremely painful but they may cause the infection to spread. Also, your pet risks a potential hearing loss. Ear infections are usually treated with medications but the doctor may recommend that owners, whose pets are prone to ear infections, clean their pet's ears weekly using a cleansing solution.

If you have any questions concerning ear infections or any other medical question concerning your pet, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are here to serve you and your beloved pet.

## PREPARE FOR A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

### What should be in your Pet First Aid Kit?

- 1. Our office phone number.** If your pet is injured or ill, call us immediately!
- 2. Adhesive Tape.** Necessary to keep bandages secure.
- 3. Nonstick Bandages.** "Telfa pads" protect wounds and control bleeding.
- 4. Roll of gauze** to wrap wounds or to muzzle animal.
- 5. Milk of Magnesia to absorb poison.** It is extremely important to get our advice first before inducing vomiting.
- 6. Large syringe without needle.** Great for administering oral treatments.
- 7. Hydrogen Peroxide (3%).**
- 8. Towel.** Needed to possibly wrap and control your pet prior to treatment.
- 9. Stretcher.** A flat piece of plywood, even an old door, will serve the purpose.

(Source: Healthypet)