



FALL/ WINTER NEWSLETTER 2018

(905)895-4552
clinic@gorhamanimal.ca

We wish you and your family a fantastic holiday Season!

Holiday Hours

Dec. 24 - 8-1pm
Dec. 25 - CLOSED
Dec. 26 - CLOSED
Dec. 27 - 7:30-7pm
Dec. 28 - 8-5pm
Dec. 29 - 9-12pm
Dec. 31 - 8-1pm
Jan. 1 - CLOSED
Jan. 2 - 8-6pm

Last day to place food and medication orders before Christmas; Dec. 21 before 12pm. The next order will be placed Dec. 27.

Before New Years - Dec. 27.
Next order will be placed Jan. 2

Webstore orders available! Order your pet food and toys online and have it shipped to your home. To register please call us or go to our website.



Grain Free Diets and Heart Disease

By: Dr. Jongkind

In recent years we have seen a rise in the number of pet foods available that are marketed as “grain free”. The marketing behind these diets implies that grain free diets are healthier for our pets, but is this really true?

Pet food needs a certain amount of carbohydrate (starch) component to the food in order to manufacture it in kibble form. Instead of getting this starch from grains (the seeds of oats, wheat, corn, and other grass-like plants), manufacturers of grain-free diets put potato, sweet potato, peas, beans, lentils or other forms of non-grain starch in the food instead.

Recently, veterinary cardiologists began to notice an unusual rise in the number of cases of a heart disease called dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM). This disease is known to be inherited in certain breeds of dogs but they were seeing it dogs where it was not usually found. Investigating further, the cardiologists discovered that the affected were eating grain free diets, often made by small “boutique” manufacturers. Some of the dogs had low blood levels of an amino acid called taurine which is critical to maintaining normal heart muscle function. Legumes (peas, beans and lentils) can potentially block an animal’s digestion and absorption of the taurine normally found in adequate amounts in the diet. This could potentially lead to taurine deficiency in the body and eventually to heart disease. The picture is more complicated than that as some DCM patients do not seem to be taurine deficient. Veterinary researchers are currently looking into possible connections between grain free diets and heart disease. As more information becomes available, recommendations for feeding grain free diets may change.

Until grain free diets are determined to be safe, the veterinary cardiology community is recommending not to feed them to normal, healthy pets. If the dog must be on a grain free diet for some reason (like a food allergy), come and talk to us for current recommendations.

What do you call a dog magician? - A Labracadabradoodle

Urinary Obstruction in Cats

By: Dr. Nicole Srebot

Some cats, especially males may be predisposed to an issue called Feline Urinary Tract Disorder (FLUTD). This is a disorder that may be triggered by a number of factors that may lead to a medical emergency in which their urethra may become obstructed. The plug that stops the flow of urine may often be from bladder stones, a matrix of mucus and protein or even tumours. There is no single reason or cause for a cat to become obstructed. There can be a multitude of predisposing factors. These factors include stress, lack of water access, obesity, diet, indoor lifestyle, infection and many others.

Cats that become blocked often show the following signs:

- Straining repeatedly in the litter box (often mistaken for constipation)
- Crying or howling
- Licking at the genitals/below the base of the tail
- Hiding

If you noticed any of these signs, head to your veterinarian or closest veterinary emergency clinic immediately.

When the urethra becomes blocked, urine builds up in the bladder and then the kidneys (depending on the duration). This can lead to rupture of the bladder and permanent kidney damage. If urine flow has stopped for more than 24 hours toxins and electrolytes contained in urine may build up leading to systemic illness in your cat. You may notice your cat becoming lethargic, vomiting and weak. Death may occur within 48 hours of blockage.

Managing an obstruction can be a complicated process. First pain relief may be given to make your kitty more comfortable. Then your kitty may put under general anesthesia to quickly and safely place a urinary catheter through the urethra to remove the blockage and empty and flush the bladder. Systemic corrections of deadly potassium build up, elevated renal values and severe dehydration can lead to days of hospitalization and fluid therapy. Once your kitty is urinating on his own, blood levels and dehydration have been corrected he may be sent home for close monitoring.

Once your kitty is home there is a risk they may become blocked once again. It is important to make extensive lifestyle changes to avoid becoming re-obstructed. This usually includes putting them on specific wet food diets, medications, reducing stress and triggers in the home, making life style changes specific to your kitty's needs. Regular veterinary checkups will be needed.



Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy

By: Rumble and Jaime

Hi my name is Rumble. I am 8 and a half year old Maine Coon Mix. My Mommy fostered me at just 4 weeks old all with my sisters and brother. A month later she found my sisters and brother new homes and adopted me. I was so happy. My mommy is now a vet tech at Gorham Animal Hospital. She seems to take me to work all the time. I have a disease called Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy. This means my heart muscle is abnormally thickened and doesn't work properly.

My cardiologist checks my heart with an ultrasound and ECG every so often. She shaved the fur off my chest and now I have a big bald spot. Good thing I have long fur so nobody can see it! Thankful it will grow back.

I had my recheck ultrasound a few days ago. I don't like the things they tape to my feet much. But I have accepted the wired sticking things. My mommy holds me so I don't move or chew the cords. I love chewing cords; they feel so nice on my teeth. I get to watch TV while my doctor does my ultrasound. I get to see my heart beating. It's so cool! As soon as the sticky things are off, I get into my mom's arms. I don't like the metal table but they do put me on a warm towel. Then they took to the basement where they took pictures of the inside of my chest. They use the biggest film I have ever seen.

My Normal Heart - Early



My Enlarged Heart - Progression



This time my cardiologist said my left ventricle is enlarged, I also have thickening of my heart muscle. She recommended I start taking a new medication to help my heart. My cardiologist loves me and says that I am her best cat patient. She wants to see me again in 6 months to check my heart again.

My mommy gives me my medication every morning before breakfast. I let her cause I know it's going to help me and I figure she feeds me so I'd better be good. I love to eat especially my wet food in the morning. It's the best meal of the day!

Lyme Disease

By: Mikayla

Lyme disease is caused by the bacterium *Borrelia Burgdorferi* and is transmitted through the bite of infected Blacklegged ticks. Lyme positive cases are on the rise this year. We have had 9 positive cases at our clinic this year. All were living in Newmarket and surrounding areas. Newmarket has become an endemic risk area. What does this mean? Endemic risk areas are places where Blacklegged ticks have been found and where humans have the potential to come into contact with them.

We are recommending treating our canine companions 12 months of the year with flea and tick prevention such as Bravecto or NexGard. When putting them on prevention you are also protecting them against other tick-borne disease such as Ehrlichia and Anaplasmosis. We are recommending this due to our milder winters and mid winter thaws. When the temperature rises above 4 degrees Celsius, ticks are active, even if it's just for a couple of hours. Small or giant, adventure or home dogs, hiker or sidewalk walker, they need to be on prevention.



We are now offering a vaccine to protect against Lyme disease. The vaccine is given once and then again 3-4 weeks later. After the initial two boosters, it is given annually. The Lyme vaccine should always be paired with tick prevention as ticks carry more than just Lyme disease.

Ways to protect your family: avoid high risk areas, remove tall grasses and leaves, do daily tick checks and use a tick preventative medication on your pets. You can also wear long sleeves and pants, tucking your pants into your socks to keep ticks out.

Abbey, my 8-year-old Leonberger, was diagnosed with Lyme disease this spring. She was only off prevention from December 31, 2017 and then was restarted late February 2018. During this time in the middle of winter, there may have only been a couple of days where the temperature was above 4 degrees Celsius. Recall that ticks come out to feed above this temperature!

Abbey had multiple blood and urine tests done. She was placed on doxycycline for 30 days and needed to take 6 pills every 12 hours. All in all she ended up taking 360 pills!! Abbey was not impressed by the end. She will need to be on flea and tick prevention for the rest of her life to prevent further exposure and transmission of the bacteria "*Borrelia Burgdorferi*" through a tick bite. She will need annual blood work and her urine checked every 6 months from now on to monitor for any progression of her disease.

If there is H₂O on the inside of a fire hydrate, what is on the outside?

K9 Pee

Fatty Liver Syndrome in Cats

Dr. Sheri Sime

Hepatic lipidosis, or fatty liver is the most common liver disease in cats. Even without any concurrent illness, cats that have stopped eating or are not eating much can develop this life threatening liver condition. Obese cats are more prone to this disease. Any weight loss program should be gradual and be closely monitored. We would normally not recommend more than a 2% body weight loss within a 2 week timespan.

When not meeting their caloric requirements, cats will mobilize fat stores to the liver quicker than they can utilize it. This results in large fat deposits that can cause dysfunction in their liver.



Sheri's Cat Finn

As with many conditions in cats, they are great at hiding their illnesses and their diseases are often quite chronic or advanced before being brought to us. As the disease progresses they may become lethargic, vomit, and/or become dehydrated. Eventually a yellow colour to their skin, eyes and urine will become evident. It is important that any changes in a cats behaviour and appetite are monitored and veterinary assistance is sought out immediately. Within days; a cat eating 50-75% of the normal amount of calories will have started to store fat in their liver. Early detection prevents the disease progression.

One of the many functions of the liver is ridding the body of by products, and wastes. Jaundice develops when bilirubin, a build up of a byproduct of normal red cell turnover that accumulates within the body. Liver disease is suspected whenever a pet is presented with jaundice. Note rapid red cell destruction can also lead to high bilirubin levels as the liver can't remove it quick enough.

Blood tests are used to aid in the diagnosis, as well as in identifying concurrent illnesses. In some cases social interactions with other pets, renovations or even a move can affect their appetite and lead to liver disease. Work at identifying stressors in advance and try to minimize them. The indoor cat initiative project associated with the Ohio State University is a particularly helpful website. Feliway diffusers, a "happy" cat pheromone is often helpful as well.

Most cats do not respond well to force feeding, a stressor in itself, and require feeding tube placement.



Once a cat has developed fatty liver, they require 6-8 weeks of aggressive nutritional support. The prognosis is excellent with an over 90% recovery. Early detection of inappetence can prevent the progression of liver disease and substantially lower veterinary treatment costs. Please consider pet insurance for those unexpected accident or illnesses. The Ontario Veterinary Medical Association has recently created a pet insurance. The proceeds go towards helping in the research and treatment of our pets.

The take home message: if your cat is not eating, eating less than his or her normal amount or have unexplained weight loss they need to be seen by a veterinarian immediately. If you can foresee stress that may affect your pets, be proactive in relieving or supporting them through stressful times.

Gorham Events

Nov. 17/18 - Santa Claus Parade - Our first year in the Parade!
Dec. 8/18 - Holiday Pet Photos

Thank you for you all your donations and Support for Melissa and Jaime's Ride for Farley! We raised \$1135.55! They are looking forward to riding next year.



