

**READERS CHOICE AWARD WINNER : Best VET**

**THANKS for your vote !**

Start tick/flea prevention when the temperature is above 4C temp, NOW. 4Dx bloodtest done prior to June 01 on all dogs, screens for both heartworm and lyme disease. LYME DISEASE IS IN NEWMARKET

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**Webstore is available to our clients**

 The veterinary purchasing group has many products that we don’t carry at the clinic routinely which will now be available online. (Our cats love the toys!)You have online access to thousands of products. You can now control when your pet food is in the clinic by having it delivered to the clinic when you need it at no charge. Any orders over 125$ can be delivered free to your door!

After a very confusing winter, spring is finally here! I actually saw ticks and fleas in Dec. A new preventative to help protect dogs against ticks potentially carrying lyme disease is now available. This product is a once every 3rd month pill and should be continued when temperatures are over 4C. It potentially kills ticks within 48 hours, not even allowing the transmission of lyme disease. Lyme disease has been found in Newmarket.

Less than 5% of dogs exposed to lyme disease will develop symptoms. In contrast, 90% of people exposed will become ill with subtle signs. If 4dx screening picks up lyme exposure in your dog, consider that you might have also been exposed while in the same area and seek medical assistance.

Annual Blood testing for heartworm routinely includes screening for some tick borne disease including Lyme disease, Anaplasma and Ehrlichia**. All dogs over 6 months of age should be annually blood tested prior to starting preventative medications for June 1st.** These heartworm preventatives are often combined with internal parasite, flea, and tick control to help keep your family happy and healthy. Please call for an appointment.

**The internet has changed medicine for us all. I have constant internet access to specialists for referrals, advice and the latest in treatments. Please call should you wish information on pet or health related products so that we can provide reliable, safe and up to date resources.**

**CAPC: parasites**

**VOHC: vet oral health council**

**Vetpartners: pet education**

**Cornell and Ohio State University; feline behaviour**

**APLB: assoc. pet loss and bereavement**

**PROVIDE YOUR EMAIL SO WE CAN SEND YOU ARTICLES ABOUT YOUR PET’S HEALTH**

COMMON INTESTINAL PARASITES

-Some parasites can infect people too, be sure to regularly check fecal samples and deworm pets on a regular basis

-many pets can consume eggs after walking outdoors and licking their feet

-leash free dog zones, can have a higher burden of parasites and infectious disease, as many animals are confined in a small fenced in area

-pick up poop immediately preventing the potential infectious stage of roundworms which takes two days to become infectious to other pets and people

-routine

SILENT SUFFERING…We often hear that a pet is “getting old”. Just like us, pets do develop age related diseases, like arthritis. Our pets have evolved to not show pain, or they may get eaten!! That stiffness when getting up, or the hesitation at the bottom of the steps or as they get into the car may be a reflection that they are anticipating pain. Matted hair, especially around the hind end, hiding, Inactivity and sleeping more may also be noted. Some pets may have difficulty getting to and into the litterbox, so “accidents” can happen elsewhere in the house.

Over 90% of cats over the age of 12 have been shown to have some degree of irreversible degenerative joint disease, which has often not been treated or recognised.

Xrays can show us the changes associated with arthritis, and may be recommended.

Blood and urine testing is also often recommended in older patients to help us identify age related diseases early and to determine the dosing and safety of some of the drugs that we use to manage a pets disease and discomfort. Signs of some infectious disease, including lyme disease can mimic arthritis and should be ruled out.

There are a number of products available to help ensure that our pets continue to enjoy a good quality of life. They include diets specifically formulated to help support our pet’s health. These diets work. Kidney disease, hyperthyroidism, Diabetes, constipation and arthritis are amongst the illnesses to which a diet change can mean a better quality of life for our pet. Note that many over the counter drugs like Tylenol, ibuprophen and aspirin can be toxic, especially to cats. Omega 3,6 fatty acid supplements help allergies, arthritis, cognitive function and many organs.

**Rabies:** Over 30 recent cases in Ontario, most near Hamilton. Bats are sources of infection **even with indoor pets.** Vaccine baiting does not address insect eating Bats. Ensure that your pets are up to date on vaccines. Protect your family.

**Coprophagy**, the term refers to the ingestion of poop. There may be undigested fats, which make the stool taste good??and many pets will eat it. These pets are obviously at higher risk to picking up parasite eggs. It is usually not related to any nutritional deficiency. Hookworms, roundworms, and whipworms are some examples of common parasites that are ingested AND infect people too.

**Obesity in pets**

Weight loss or keeping our pets at their ideal body weight means the benefit of having them for years more! The additional weight can put additional stress on all the joints of the body. Some species of long backed dogs like Bassets, Beagles, and Dachshunds are already prone to intervertebral disc disease and the additional weight puts them at higher risk to back injury. Obesity has been linked to diabetes. One in 200 cats will now develop diabetes as a direct consequence of obesity. Tumor incidence, liver, heart and lung disease have also all been linked to being overweight.

To combat obesity, it is important to consider the possibility of underlying disease that may be contributing. Some breeds of dogs have been associated with hypothyroidism. An “underactive” thyroid gland means a pet really isn’t eating much yet, still seems to gain weight. A blood testing can screen for thyroid levels in our pets. Once diagnosed, a very treatable and manageable disease.

 Calories ingested are also an important factor. Especially with multiple pet households, it may be necessary to feed pets separately and/or supervise, and time feed them so that food is NOT left down all the time and we can control who eats what. If using a measuring cup and still not losing weight, consider a kitchen scale may be more accurate. (I often say eating 50 low calorie chocolate bars is not going to help, we need to limit the amount consumed.) We cannot keep cutting back the calories fed on a normal diet and still guarantee that their nutritional needs are met. Weight loss diets have been created to ensure that their weight loss is safe, and gradual. A pet should not be losing more than 2% of their body weight every 2 weeks. Note weight loss is a very common symptom of illness. If your pet does not have an apparent reason to be losing weight, please have them examined. Inappetience, diabetes, hyperthyroid (high levels), and kidney disease can often present as weight loss. Canned food with higher water content can help with weight loss, not unlike us drinking lots of water to accomplish the same. There are even prescription diets that speed up a pet’s metabolism to aid in weight loss.

Just as with us, exercise is an important factor in weight loss. Regular exercise is a necessity. Noting that older animals may be uncomfortable with movement, their arthritis should be addressed first. Treat balls are available to encourage movement and play behavior. Moving the food bowl around, and providing jumping apparatus for cats is also important. My favourite is still the cat dancer, a small wire with cardboard on the end. Check it out on the webstore!

Kitty swearing…

As a consequence of the stress associated with veterinary visits, many cats and their families avoid the vets! It has been my experience, that I often do not see cats until they are very sick. A cat that is not eating will quickly mobilize their fat stores as an energy source, **and can lead to liver disease within several days**.

Cats that show aggressive behaviours such as growling, hissing, lashing out or biting are usually doing so in response to pain or fear. Under normal circumstances cats are animals that run rather than fight. If placed in a carrier, then car, and finally brought into a clinic they have been unable to run anywhere and become quite anxious. Understand that the cat is not “psycho” but stressed and some effort at reducing this can lead to a more positive experience all around.

Try and reduce their stress. At home, consider bringing the cat carrier out early, and have them used to going in and out of it. **Consider spraying the cage with feliway, a happy cat pheromone. While in the car, don’t turn up the radio, creating even further noise.** Upon arrival,bring them immediately into the exam room, away from other pets and people. Allow your pet to wander in the exam room for a few minutes so they realize no one is going to eat them!! Our big windows and fish tank help to divert their attention. We even have a “happy cat pheromone”, the Feliway diffuser plugged into the cat room to help lower their anxiety. We are, of course, not below giving bribes…though admittedly the cats are often not fooled.

PARASITES COMMONLY INFECTING OUR PETS

Common INTESTINAL parasites, note many animals show NO symptoms when infected.

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| **WHIPWORMS** | **INGESTED FROM SOIL** | **DIARRHEA, WEIGHT LOSS, ANEMIA**  |
| **GIARDIA, POSSIBLE ZOONOTIC** | **CYSTS SHED INTERMITTENTLY IN STOOL DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY WITH NORMAL FECAL TESTING** | **MAY SEE DIARRHEA DEVELOP** |
| **HOOKWORMS, IS ZOONOTIC, MOST COMMONLY PEOPLE INFECTED THROUGH SKIN** | **INGEST LARVAE, PENETRATES THROUGH SKIN, THROUGH MILK TO PUPPIES, INGESTION OF INFECTED MOUSE** | **DIARRHEA, VOMITING, WEIGHT LOSS, ANEMIA , BLOODLOSS CAN BE LIFE THREATENING IN YOUNG ANIMALS****-DIFF TO DIAGNOSE, SYMPTOMS SEEN BEFORE SHEDDING EGGS** |
| **ROUNDWORMS, IS ZOONOTIC, ORALLY INGESTED EGGS . IMPORTANT TO PICK UP POOP IMMEDIATELY FROM PETS** | **CAN BE INGESTED , PASSED ONTO KITTENS/PUPPIES FROM MOM THROUGH PLACENTA, EATING INFECTED HOSE** | **POT BELLY APPEARANCE****CONSIDERED THAT MOST PUPPIES AND KITTENS INFECTED**  |
| **TAPEWORMS** | **INGESTED FLEA OR RODENTS** | **INCREASE APPETITE, WEIGHT LOSS, MAY PASS SMALL RICE** |

**FLEAS REMAIN THE MOST COMMON EXTERNAL PARASITE.**

Flea control measures include treatment of ALL of the household pets with a monthly flea control product. Please ensure that you do NOT USE PERMETHRIN CONTAINING OVER THE COUNTER PRODUCTS ON CATS!!!

Veterinary clinic have safe, effective and reliable flea prevention and control products. When used properly, they are guaranteed. If a normally indoor pet is put at risk during boarding, or with visiting pets, try to be proactive and ensure that they do not become infested. Please talk to our staff about preventative products.

We often get calls about potential flea infestations. Some pets are covered with live fleas or flea dirt (blood poop from a flea, which when put onto a wet Kleenex will bleed confirming the presence of fleas) and yet don’t even seem to scratch. Others may develop scabs, hair loss and be incredibly itching and yet no sign of a flea is seen. A flea allergy may be the culprit especially if the pet is scratching near the base of their tail. A flea bites an animal repeatedly looking for a blood vessel, and while doing so injects saliva to which an animal may have an allergic reaction. These poor animals can become quite uncomfortable and need help quickly. Unless the underlying flea infestation is dealt with, the animal will continue to be bitten and react.

NOT ALL ITCHING PETS HAVE FLEAS. Flea baths contain chemicals aimed at killing fleas, they have no residual effect, and fleas will jump right back onto them once out of the bathtub.

In the event that you do have fleas, ask us for help. All animals that reside in the house need to be treated. Vacuum up all carpets and upholstery and discard the vacuum bag. Flea eggs are laid on the pet and fall off, often into their bedding. It should be washed.

Note that fleas live in outdoor cool, shady places like under porches or bushes. They rarely would be found in the middle of a sunny yard. Other pets, wildlife and infested environments can be sources of infestations.

Varying Sizes of Engorged Ticks

**Lyme disease**

Lyme disease has been around for quite a long time, but recently the ticks that can carry this disease have been found locally. If our pets are potentially being exposed, so are you while out walking with them.

If exposed, 80% of people will go on to develop a serious and chronic illness.

 In contrast, less than 5% of dogs exposed to the bacteria will actually become sick. Fever, enlarged lymph nodes, joint swelling and shifting leg lameness have been reported. Weeks to months after exposure, arthritis signs can develop. While a course of an appropriate antibiotic may help to resolve the symptoms of arthritis, some animals will continue to harbor the bacteria or may have permanent joint changes. Severe and long term stimulation of the immune system from the prolonged presence of the bacteria can lead to severe and irreversible kidney disease.

Understanding the life cycle of the host tick helps us to understand the prevention of lyme disease. The tick larva attach to a small host, usually a mouse, which if infected with lyme disease, will expose the tick larvae. Once fed, this larvae will fall off the host and can moult up to a year later into a nymph. Slightly larger, they may attach to smaller hosts, or larger ones including humans or dogs. While feeding, this stage may pickup lyme disease, or infect the host if already carrying the bacteria. As an adult tick, the ixodes scapularis, or “deer tick” can then attach to deer, humans or dogs. As a tick feeds, it will regurgitate an enzyme, which prevents the host’s blood from clotting allowing the tick to continue to feed, and potentially once again infecting its host.

A tick requires about 48 hours to begin the feeding process. There are several effective tick products that kill or ensure that a tick detaches from a host, if this is done within 48 hours, they are potentially reducing both the possibility of exposure as well as subsequent lyme disease.

As older dogs often develop age related arthritis, is it recommended that they be routinely tested for lyme disease which could manifest similarily and be overlooked. The “heartworm” testing carried on on each dog prior to June 01, actually includes the vector borne diseases including lyme disease at no additional charge.