



gorhamanimal.ca

# Gorham Animal Hospital

Veterinary Services

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852 Gorham Street, Newmarket, ON L3Y 1L8

## Spring Newsletter 2018

Veterinary medicine has changed dramatically since I graduated. We have been trained in many areas of medicine including surgery, dentistry, behavior, anesthesia, radiology as well as internal medicine. As well, we studied different species from fish to elephants. It is quite apparent that a commitment to continuing education is important to ensure that our veterinary staff remains aware of the most current diagnostic, preventative and treatment options. Dr. Sime and our registered veterinary technicians, Mikayla and Jaime, as well as Kerri, our receptionist, are members of the Toronto Academy of Veterinary medicine. They offer once monthly lectures to ensure that our staff help our families make informed decisions on their pets care.

The Internet has clearly also benefited medicine. We are members of the Veterinary Information Network offering access to over 180 specialists online, recent journal articles and drug directories. Our vets regularly consult with internal medicine specialists when interpreting blood or urine results on your pet.

**We are fortunate that our own health care costs are covered and the extent of these costs are largely unknown to us. To enable our pets to have the same quality of care specialized trained staff and equipment are required. The quality of veterinary care continues to improve. We are fortunate to have mobile specialists available for ultrasounds, endoscopy, cardiac workup and orthopedic surgery. They come to us for convenience, and often reduced costing. Referral practices have veterinarians specialized in behavior, neurology, oncology, ophthalmology, internal medicine, dermatology, surgery, internal medicine and physiotherapy. How cool is that??**

**When more advanced diagnostic technology (C/T scanners, MIR) is required we can refer you to a specialty referral clinic ensuring that the best care is always at the forefront of decisions made. This level of care unfortunately can escalate veterinary costs.**

**Consider pet insurance in the event of unplanned emergency accident or illness coverage.**

[www.gorhamanimal.ca](http://www.gorhamanimal.ca)  
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### **Webstore**

*Did you know that you can order food and other products online and have it delivered to the clinic or right to your doorstep? Ensure you never run out!*

### **Flea and Tick Prevention**

**-lyme disease is in our area**

**-prevention should be carried out when temperatures reach 4C (NOW)**

### **Heartworm/internal parasites**

**-All dogs over 6 months of age require a bloodtest**

**-Prevention June-Nov unless travelling outside our area**

**“HEARTWORM “ TESTING IN OUR CLINIC IS ACTUALLY A PANEL THAT ALSO INCLUDES TICK BORNE DISEASES INCLUDING LYME DISEASE SCREENING.**

## Pet Insurance

Gorham Animal Hospital utilizes the services of several board certified veterinarians that are mobile. This includes an orthopedic surgeon, internal medicine specialist (including ultrasound) and a cardiologist.

Pet insurance can help families make the best choices for the care of their pet without the financial stress. It should be obtained, like all insurances PRIOR to any illness, or the insurance will disqualify pre-existing conditions.

Pet insurance has been available for a number of years, recently the Ontario Veterinary Medical association has offered pet insurance, created by veterinarians. They are currently offering a Healthy start 4 week trail for pets between 8 weeks and 4 years. (pre-existing conditions not covered) For more information go to [www.ovmapetinsurance.com](http://www.ovmapetinsurance.com) or call 1844-744-6862



## **Why a Healthy Body Weight Matters?**

Pet obesity in both dogs and cats has been estimated at 40% of dogs and 25% of cats, the latter becoming more prevalent with the healthy choice of bringing them indoors. In an attempt to make pet foods more palatable, more fat and protein has been added. Pets instinctively eat when food is available, and will overeat given the opportunity. I equate less active diet with eating 50 low calorie chocolate bars, they are meant to be measured and for maintenance, not weight loss.

Establish healthy eating habits from a young age. Feeding predictable amounts at regular times will help. The ideal body weight is generally when we can easily feel ribs but not see them from a distance. Dogs and cats should have a waistline, not sausage shaped. Dogs can learn to steal food to supplement their diets, and cats can become quite insistent upon being fed.

Unfortunately, the stress of the additional weight on joints can significantly lower both the quality of a pet's life with arthritis, as well as the length of their life. Type 2 diabetes is linked with obesity in cats, now approaching 1 in 200 cats. Cats are producing insulin, but with obesity, they become insulin resistant. With a controlled diet, weight loss and insulin supplementation, many of these cats are able to revert to a non-diabetic state. High blood pressure, combine with heart or kidney disease become significant health problems as well.

It may be more accurate to invest in a kitchen scale for accurate food measurement. Our technicians can help you calculate your pets required caloric content for both weight loss and ultimately maintenance.

## **Fatty Liver Syndrome**

Cats that are not meeting their metabolic caloric requirements start to mobilize their own fat stores as an energy source. The fat is transferred to the liver faster than it can be utilized. This process can lead to fatty liver syndrome in cats. They develop potentially fatal liver disease. **PLEASE ENSURE CATS THAT ARE NOT EATING obtain immediate medical assistance.** Similarly, obese cats with a large store of body fat are prone to develop this condition if not eating as much as required or they are losing weight too rapidly. Again, please seek medical help in having them loose weight safely.

Weight loss diets are formulated to ensure that a pet's nutritional requirements are met, while the caloric content of the food is reduced. We generally recommend regular weigh ins, and expect 1-2% body weight loss over two weeks.

Some medical problems can contribute to obesity in pets, including hypothyroidism, and Cushing's disease. Veterinary staff may suggest blood testing to screen a pet's overall health prior to a weight loss program. Our staff are happy to help with palatable weight loss solutions, by calculating the amounts your pet should be fed.

Encouraging activity can start with moving a food bowl to different locations, and 20-30 minute daily walks for dogs. My favorite toys for my own cats are laser pointer and cat dancer to keep them moving. The Ohio State University indoor cat initiative has some great ideas on environmental enrichment for indoor cats. They have the benefit of being both more active and happy.

Some dog breeds seem to be more prone to obesity including the beagle, golden retriever. Zelda is particularly brilliant in supplementing her own diet as the staff can attest to... many a lunch has gone missing.

### **Pet identification.**

Unfortunately, our pets can become lost. To ensure their prompt and safe return it is important that they have some way of identification.

#### **A collar with phone number, or I.D tag**

This one may seem pretty simple, but since I have worked for Gorham there has been a few little escapees come into us with no tag at all. Or the tag has been scratched so badly its illegible. These tags are simple to get at local pet shops or even order through us.



**A Microchip** is an electronic chip placed just under the skin in the neck area of cats and dogs. When presented to a shelter, or veterinary clinic the pet is scanned, and can be quickly returned to their home. **NOTE IT IS IMPORTANT TO ENSURE THAT IF YOU MOVE THIS INFORMATION IS UPDATED.**

**Rabies Tag.** Each vaccinated pet receives an individualized number which can identify a pet at our clinic. There is also a website address on the tag – where you can register the tag in a database. Should the tag be lost, please come in for a replacement tag.

Pet tattoos have largely been replaced by microchipping. They often fade and become illegible.

**OFF LABEL WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?** Recently we have been asking owners to sign an OFF LABEL waiver for some medications. When drugs are researched and studied for FDA approval, they are done in controlled settings and within ONE SPECIES. If this drug is compounded in any other way, or used in another species, not within the study it is considered off label. This is usually an economic decision, as the approval process is costly. We will always use an FDA approved drug when available, and in some cases we have been using drugs for years that have established safely through use. Anything produced by a compounding pharmacy is inherently off label. This may often be required to achieve appropriate dosing with the size of our patients. The waiver is for ensuring informed consent.

## **Car Safety**

It is that time of year to gently remind families that our pets do not sweat. Generally they have to pant to expel heat from their bodies, which puts them at risk for overheating in cars. Even with open windows, an outside temperature of only 20C can be fatal.

If travelling in a car, it is obviously not recommended to have them on the drivers lap, and they should be restrained for both their safety as well as for the safety of other passengers within the car. With sudden stops, they are at risk to being thrown about risking injury to both themselves and their family. Further, a pet, just like a small child is at risk for injury in the front seat from air bags.

## **Dental Disease in Pets**

One of the more common findings in our physical examinations is periodontal disease. Pets have evolved to not complain. One of the procedures that quickly improves the quality of a pets life is having a thorough dental procedure done. We often hear the a pet is more active, chewing things that they haven't been doing in years!

Signs of periodontal disease can include fascial swelling, rubbing or pawing at the face, halitosis, excess salivation or inappetence. Some pets have no outward obvious symptoms recognized despite severe disease.

We are unfortunately seeing pets in more advanced stages of dental disease, often requiring teeth extractions. A tooth that is moving, fractured or shows sign of root damage with digital dental xrays needs to be addressed immediately. As with other areas of veterinary medicine, root canals and crowns, even dental braces are available in referral dental centers. Dental procedures should never be carried out in a facility without the ability to perform dental xrays. We have seen a number of cases in which the teeth appear healthy, and yet xrays reveal pathology beneath the gumline.

In an ideal word, families would budget for routine dental procedures. Dental homecare, including brushing should be started routinely. The VOHC website can help educate families on other products available to aid in dental health. I see substantial improvement on hills T/D diet, we are happy to provide a free bag if this diet is appropriate for you pet to try. I also see further improvement with tartar softening products like healthy mouth available both as a water additive as well as a toothpaste like gel.

I often say, if you don't want to be hit in the knee with a toy, it is likely too hard. Antlers and bones are marketed for pets, both break teeth.

Take the time to look in your pets mouth. A red inflamed gumline is a sure clue that something is both painful and needs to be addressed. Early identification means saving teeth instead of extracting them!

How do pets chew without teeth?? Unfortunately some pets have had very extensive dental extractions or full mouth extractions. The teeth are painful and non functional , so the pets have already learned to eat without them. Periodontal disease, as with people leads not just to bone and tooth loss, but is a

source of bacterial spread to other organs in the body, including heart valves. Diabetic animals are especially at risk to kidney and bladder infections with the high level of glucose already present.

Thanks for the continued referral of friends and family, it is the greatest compliment and appreciated.

I am especially proud of the veterinary team at Gorham Animal Hospital. The empathy, compassion and caring nature of my staff is obviously apparent to not only myself, but our patients as well. Thank you to those who have reached out to show appreciation for the care given, and for those who have taken the time to comment online.

Now that the warm weather is finally here, I hope your family is able to have a safe and enjoyable spring. If you have any questions pertaining to your pets health, please feel free to call or email us. Note emails responses are returned as soon as possible, usually within 48hours. If you require more immediate response, please call the clinic directly.

