



## SPRING/ SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2019

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### Tick Preventative Recommended Year Round

Please call for an appointment for Annual blood testing for heartworm and tick borne diseases. This test is added to blood profiles at no additional charge. Preventative blood testing is recommended yearly to help evaluate a pet's overall health and identify disease in the early stages (page 5). This is especially important in elderly pets (over age 7).

Tick and Flea preventatives are now recommended for 12 months a year. Heartworm preventatives should be given June until Nov. If you are travelling with your pet talk to us about individual recommendations for your pet.

Ticks become a problem at 0 celsius and above, even in the winter months.

Tick Prevention products:

- Nexgard Spectra (ticks, fleas, heartworm and internal parasites)
- Nexgard (ticks and fleas)



Jaime's cat Tumble

### My Cat Won't Eat!

By: Dr Jongkind

Most of us have probably met a picky cat at some point. You know the type: the cat that turns his/her nose up at everything except for the one or two foods that she/he seems to like. Introduce any other food and the picky cat will simply walk away. Yet how do we know if a cat is simply being "picky" or if he/she won't eat for some other reason? It can be very difficult to notice a cat is ill, especially in a multi-cat household. There are a few clues that might help you decide:

- A cat may be ill if he or she refuses food they used to eat without a problem.
- A cat may be ill if he or she has other signs of disease, such as vomiting, diarrhea, drinking and urinating excessively or weight loss
- A sick cat does not usually follow his or her daily routines. He or she may be hiding or sleeping more than usual. They may also have behaviour changes.
- A cat may be ill if it is unusual for them to skip a meal or eat less than they normally do.
- A cat may be ill if they aren't using their litter box as they normally would. Straining, blood in the urine, going to the litter box more often might also be clues.

If you aren't sure if your cat is ill, a trip to see the vet is in order. Just remember: **when in doubt, check it out!** Cats that don't eat can get a liver disease called hepatic lipidosis from not eating. When a cat's calorie intake drops off, they mobilize body fat reserves to feed themselves. This fat must be processed in the liver and can clog it up, impairing its normal function. A cat with hepatic lipidosis will not be eating, will probably be lethargic and may have a yellow colour to their skin and to the white of the eye. To avoid this problem, it is important to keep cats eating, particularly if they were overweight before they became sick. While testing is being done to determine the underlying problem, we may be able to improve your cat's calorie intake. Appetite stimulant medications, special diets and, in some cases, putting in a feeding tube for force feeding may be appropriate for your cat. These measures can help prevent hepatic lipidosis from setting in and help to reverse the disease process.

What do you call a pile of kittens?

National Tick Month is devoted to educating people about ticks, prevention and treatment. There are videos available at [ticktalkcanada.com](http://ticktalkcanada.com). We also recommend the Companion Animal Parasite Council (<http://capcvet.org>) for accurate and up to date information on parasites.

There are over 40 species of ticks in Canada. The most common species here are the blacklegged deer tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) and the brown dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*). Some ticks carry bacteria and viruses that lead to illness in pets and humans. They are various sizes depending on their life stages. They can only crawl. They prefer wooded areas, hiding under moist leaves (deer tick), or tall grass (dog or wood tick). They can also be found in urban parks and green spaces.



**Ticks become active at zero degrees Celsius.** This includes mild days during the winter months. **Tick and flea prevention is now recommended 12 months a year.** The highest risk season is April to October. Lyme disease is caused by a bacterium *Borrelia Burgdorferi* and is transmitted through the bite of a

Blacklegged or a Western Blacklegged tick. Lyme disease transmission is on the rise. Screening our pets has led to the awareness of the presence of Lyme disease in our area.

To check a pet for ticks check under their collar, in the groin area, under the front legs, under the tail, between the toes and in and out of their ears. If one is found it should be removed without touching the tick's body. Using a tick remover or tweezers, gently pull on the mouth parts close to the skin and pull straight out.



10 % of dogs exposed to Lyme disease develop clinical signs, as opposed to 90% of humans. Clinical signs that can develop in dogs can include fever, lameness and rarely kidney disease. These can occur weeks to months after infection. It is important to educate yourself on this life altering disease.

### Tick Lifecycle

A female deer tick lays 2000 eggs in the spring. The nymph attaches to mice, dogs and humans. It feeds, then drops off the pet to lay dormant until late summer when it moults into an adult. While feeding, a nymph or adult can pick up or transmit the Lyme bacterium.

If a tick is carrying the bacteria, the adult tick can transmit the Lyme disease to a larger host like dogs, deers and humans. While the tick is feeding it regurgitates enzymes into the host to prevent blood clotting, that is when transmission occurs. The process happens a minimum of 48 hours after the tick attaches to its host. If the tick is removed within 48 hours, theoretically, lyme disease can't be transmitted.

There are a number of tick prevention medications available through veterinarians. These can either be in a chew format or as topical drops. These medications kill or allow the tick to drop off the host within 48 hours.



Vaccinations for Lyme disease are recommended in endemic areas for higher risk dogs. Blood testing should be done prior to considering the vaccination. A recombinant vaccine contains part of the Lyme bacteria surface protein leading to protective antibodies. When a tick bites a vaccinated dog, the antibodies affect the bacteria within the tick. It kills the disease in the tick preventing it from passing it on. Ask us!

Hairballs are overrated. If your cat is vomiting an occasional hairball, or food, only 2-3 times a year, this may not be of great concern. However, if your cat is vomiting more frequently there may be something else going on. It is not normal for a cat to continually vomit. It is likely a symptom of an underlying illness.

Reasons your cat may be vomiting frequently include (but are not limited to):

- 1) Parasites
- 2) Pancreatitis
- 3) Inflammatory bowel disease
- 4) Cancer
- 5) Food allergy
- 6) Foreign body obstruction
- 7) Metabolic disease (hyperthyroidism, diabetes, kidney and liver disease)
- 8) Toxins (plants, etc)

## Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) refers to a condition where cells involved in inflammation and the immune response move into the lining of the stomach and intestines. The infiltration of these cells thickens the bowel lining and interferes with its ability to absorb nutrients, contract and move food along.

The symptoms of IBD depend on which part of the bowel is inflamed. Chronic vomiting may occur if the inflammation is in the stomach or in the higher areas of the small intestine. Diarrhea with weight loss results if the inflammation is in the lower part of the small intestine. A mucous diarrhea with fresh blood (colitis) may occur if the inflammation occurs in the large intestine. There may be a combination of signs if the entire gastrointestinal tract is involved.



To diagnosis this disease, we start with a minimum data base including biochemistry, complete blood count and urinalysis. This is important to rule out metabolic diseases like kidney disease, diabetes, liver disease, and hyperthyroidism as a cause of the vomiting. If your cat is at risk of being exposed to parasites, a fecal analysis and board spectrum dewormer may be suggested. Cats that go outdoors or who live in multi-cat households are at higher risk for picking up parasites.

Cats with IBD may not display any abnormalities in their blood work since the disease is localized to the gastrointestinal tract. Blood changes such as elevated white blood cells or reduced protein may be present due to increased leakage through the gut. Other subtle changes may be preset as well.

Abdominal ultrasound can be done to observe inflammation/ thickening of intestines and rule out any underlying masses/ abnormalities within the abdomen. An intestinal biopsy will give definitive diagnosis for IBD.

Treatment includes a board spectrum dewormer, and a hypoallergenic diet trial as certain foods can cause flare ups of IBD. Depending on the severity of the disease, an anti-inflammatory dose of steroids are required to settle the inflammation. An antibiotic for the intestines may also be required to help resolve diarrhea related to IBD.



## Vaccinations

By: Jaime

Puppies and kittens receive natural immunity from their mother's milk (colostrum) during the first few days of life. This immunity wears off at the age of 6 to 9 weeks of age. Vaccines are started at 6 to 8 weeks of age to continue their protection against highly contagious diseases.

Core vaccines are vaccines that every dog and cat should have regardless of lifestyle and exposure to other pets. Non-core vaccines may or may not be necessary depending on your pet's risk.



### Canine Vaccinations



#### Core vaccines:

DAPP (Distemper, Hepatitis, Parainfluenza, and Parvovirus)

- Puppies need 3 boosters at 8,12, and 16 weeks
- Adults need one booster at 1 year after last booster as a puppy and then every 3 years.

#### Rabies

- Puppies given at 16 weeks
- Adults 1 year after last booster then every 3 years

#### Non-core vaccines:

##### Bordetella (Kennel Cough)

- Protects against some contagious bronchitis
- Given to dogs going to boarding facilities, grooming, dog parks, dog shows, obedience classes and around large groups of dogs.
- First vaccine is given as soon as 12 weeks with booster 3-4 weeks later. It then becomes an annual vaccine.

##### Leptospirosis

- Contracted from contaminated ground water, soil and animal urine including wildlife.
- Zoonotic disease meaning humans can get it.
- First vaccine is given as soon as 20 weeks with a booster 3-4 weeks later. Then becomes an annual vaccine.

##### Lyme

- Ticks transmit the bacteria during feeding
- Should be given as soon as 20 weeks then boosted 3-4 weeks later. The becomes an annual vaccine.

### Feline Vaccines

*Core Vaccines - given to both indoor and outdoor cats*

#### FVRCP (Feline Viral Rhinotrachitis, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia)

- Kittens need 3 boosters given at 8,12, and 16 weeks.
- Adults need a booster 1 year after last booster as a kitten, then every 3 years.

#### Rabies

- Kittens get this at 16 weeks of age
- Adults need a booster 1 year after last booster as a kitten, then every 3 years.



## Feline Non-core Vaccines

### Leukemia (FeLV)

- Can get disease with contact with infected cats by means of bite, wounds sharing litterboxes and food dishes. Kittens can get it in utero or from mom's milk.
- First vaccine given as early as 12 weeks then boosted 3-4 weeks later. Then becomes an annual vaccine.

## Preventive Care

By: Jaime

Pets can't tell us how they are feeling. You might notice behaviour changes (hiding, unhappy), changes in eating habits, vomiting or diarrhea, and lethargy. Even when they are well it is important to do regular physical exam and blood work. This will help in the early detection of disease to slow progression and to help them live a happy and healthy life.



### Bloodwork - What does it tell us?

#### Complete Blood Count (CBC)

- identify's infection, inflammation and anemia

#### Blood Chemistry

- Liver, kidney and pancreas function, electrolytes, and other body functions such as glucose levels and hydration.

#### Urinalysis

- Infection or inflammation of the urinary tract, and early detection of kidney disease (specific gravity)



#### Thyroid Function

- Detects if thyroid is functioning properly.

#### Fecal Testing

- Intestinal parasites

#### Infectious Disease Screening

- Parasitic disease, tick-borne diseases, heart worm and other infectious diseases.

## Veterinary Myths

By: Dr. Sheri Sime

**Hairballs in cats are overrated as a cause of vomiting.** A cat that spends the day grooming, will likely vomit hair. It is important to investigate the cause of the vomiting in any cat vomiting more frequently than once monthly.

1) *There is a bewildering number of pet foods available.* While food sensitivities and allergies do exist, there is not one protein, normal pet food or ingredient they will all react to. Paying more money does not guarantee the quality of a diet, nor are organic or grain free diets necessarily better diets. The pet food store staff is not the best source for diet recommendations.

2) *My "certain breed" requires special vaccinations or anesthetics.* Veterinarians take anesthesia protocols seriously and will fine tune drugs and protocols used for the individual patient.





We ensure not only recovery, but comfort of our patients. Vaccines are chosen based on both the individual need, risk and least frequent schedule to ensure protection of your pet. Over the years, we have chosen vaccinations that have been demonstrated to have fewer negative side effects and for your pets safety. We use the Purevax line of cat vaccines, that have been shown to have a ten fold DECREASE in the incidence of tumours at the injection site.

3) *No matter the age of a pet, unexplained weight loss indicates an underlying disease.* They are not just getting old. Kidney disease, diabetes, hyperthyroidism, cardiac and intestinal disease can all present as weight loss in patients. Some of these are age related, and more likely found in the elderly pet.

4) *On-line forums are great places for cheap/free veterinary advice.* Veterinarians and their staff have devoted years of study to accumulate

knowledge. The best medical advice should come from those trained to do so.

5) *Dentistries are too expensive, and offer no benefit.*

Inflammation of the gums and abscessed teeth are not only a source of pain, but cause potential systemic bacteria leading to disease in both people and pets. You know how much discomfort we feel from one tooth, imagine a whole mouth! When a proper dentistry is performed it is with confidence that we are improving a pets quality of life. We choose the safest anesthesia protocol and do full mouth x-rays to ensure we are doing all the work required while they are under an anesthesia. Imagine your dentist waiting until your teeth just need to be extracted. About 40-50% of dental lesions are not seen on examination, but require identification through x-rays. Not all veterinary clinics carry out dental x-rays routinely or have acquired additional training to do so. Few procedures we preform improve an animals well being so much as a dentistry.



6) *My dog was upset with me so he peed on the floor.* Cats and dogs with inappropriate urination are indeed telling you something, they are not doing so out of spite! An animal that has been housetrained and is now having accidents, is telling you that they are experiencing stressors or have a medical condition. Cats are prone to urinary tract disease that can lead to them going outside of the box.



7) *If I just wait a few days...* We have repeatedly stressed the need to have cats that are not eating come in immediately to avoid the development of liver disease. A cat that is straining in a box seemingly unable to urinate or is constipated can not wait. A dog or cat having difficulty breathing, is vomiting or having difficulty walking is a medical emergency. Reality is that our pets are able to become sick on any day of the week, or time of the day, and may not coincide with a regular veterinary clinic hours. The emergency facilities are always available to provide emergency care, and the pets can be transferred back to your regular veterinarian.

Next time you have a pet related questions, ask the professionals to ensure that you are getting accurate information.

Quiz Questions Answers:

- 1) Meowtain
- 2) You get poodles

