

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2017



Gorham Animal Hospital

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The warm winter means higher tick and mosquito counts are expected this year. It is now time to ensure all outdoor pets have flea/tick preventatives!!

Gorham tested 4 positive lyme disease dogs, 2 of which were presumed infected in Newmarket.

Did you know the heartworm testing(4dx bloodtest) recommended each spring is actually a profile that includes tick borne infections, including lyme disease,ehrlichia, anaplasmosis screening at no additional charge? Please call for an appointment to have your dog blood tested prior to starting heartworm preventatives.

The costs of specialized referral centers with advanced diagnostics and treatments can escalate veterinary costs. See the OVMA WEBSITE UNDER PET INSURANCE. Consider pet insurance prior to the development of any illness to prevent exclusions.

Spring check list

- 1.Tick/flea preventative should be started now for all at risk, outdoor pets.
2. Prior to starting heartworm preventative, a negativeheartworm blood test should be obtained prior to June 01. Call for an appointment.
3. Geriatric blood/urine screening includes the tick/heartworm screening at no additional charge

Ticks and lyme disease

Transmission of a given pathogen is usually restricted to a particular tick species. The Ixodes genus, or deer tick is now present in our area, and carries lyme disease. With our warm winter, specialists are expecting higher numbers of both ticks and mosquitoes this year. Please educate yourself on this risk to your family. The CAPC website ideal reference for protecting your family and understanding this disease.

Most tick borne diseases are acquired when the tick feeds on a host. This can happen during several stages of a ticks lifecycle. The feeding time required for Lyme disease transmission is 24-48 hours which is why the newer tick preventatives, in addition to killing ticks, can potentially prevent infection. They should be started NOW.

Less than 5 % of dogs infected with lyme disease are later recognized to have clinical symptoms or illness. Symptoms include fever, arthritis in multiple joints, enlarged lymph nodes and inappetence. In the most severe cases, chronic immune stimulation leads to kidney failure.

In contrast, 90% of humans become ill after exposure. Regular screening of your pets to lyme disease exposure can help you recognize your family risk to this disease. The deer ticks are most commonly found in leaf litter in natural wooded areas frequented by wildlife. Last year Joker's Hill property had positive ticks found with lyme disease.

Ticks attaching to a host can cause local irritation and pruritus, and in severe infestations potentially anemia. It is important to not squeeze the body of a tick while removing it, potentially forcing contents through the mouthparts and into the host. Using a tick remover (pick one up at the clinic and put in in your first aid kit) with gentle backwards pulling while wearing gloves is recommended. I often have used alcohol on the tick first, waited, and then when "drunk" the tick appears to be easier to removed. If mouth parts are left behind, local inflammation/irritation can result.

Canada has historically not had the tick borne diseases anaplasmosis, and ehrlichia, we have recently seen a number of dogs brought in from other countries by dog rescue groups. They are potentially bringing a tick borne disease into Canada, one of which can potentially infect not both pets, but people . Apparently our current legislation does not prevent this practice. Ensure they are on tick preventative s year round.

Prevention of lyme disease is aided by the use of oral tick/flea products ,ensuring grass is clipped, brush piles and leaf litter are removed, and selecting plants that do not attract deer .Consider wearing light coloured clothing to aid in visualizing ticks on clothing, and ensure skin is covered while hiking. Ask us how to safely prevent and remove ticks.

Hepatic Lipidosis

Cats, especially obese ones, are prone to the development of liver disease if they are not eating enough to meet their metabolic requirements. During periods of inappetence, fat stores are taken to the liver to be converted to an energy source. The deposition of fat in the liver occurs faster than it can be used, resulting in impaired liver function.

Why would a cat stop eating? The cat may be ill or stop eating from a stress or social upset. Natural pet anti-anxieties are available in sprays, collars, plug-in diffusers and even diets. The pheromone anti-anxiety for cats now is available with two versions for inter-cat relationships as well as the original version. If bringing home a new pet, or expecting a change to the normal routine consider reducing your pet's stress with one of these items and be sure to monitor their eating habits..

UNEXPLAINED WEIGHT LOSS IS NEVER A GOOD SIGN IN A PET! We rarely see cats a little sick, often by the time they have stopped eating anything, the disease is well underway.

A cat in liver failure can become yellow (jaundiced), or may present with vomiting, be lethargic and not eating well. The yellow colour can first appear in hairless areas like the ears, or "white" of the eyes. Further information about specifics of liver disease can be obtained through blood and urine. More specific function tests, an ultrasound, or fine needle aspirates or biopsies of the liver may also be recommended. Prognosis will also be influenced by identifying any concurrent illness and how quickly underlying disease is diagnosed and treated.

The cornerstone of treatment for fatty liver involves identifying and addressing the underlying cause of inappetence, and providing aggressive nutritional support, often for weeks to months. The recovery from hepatic lipidosis is over 90%, for these cases to be successful, the cats will often require the placement of a feeding tube and a very committed family providing the necessary homecare.

We recommend blood and urine testing both preventatively and to identify diseases in the early stages. As age-related diseases including thyroid, kidney and liver disease can occur, these tests are recommended during the annual wellness exam especially in pets over age 7 or those with unexplained weight loss, or changes in drinking, urinating, eating or behaviour.

Leo, thanks for providing some "yellow" cat perspective below. His family knows well the commitment required to help these cats. They require prolonged nutritional support.



Leo demonstrating jaundice or yellowing and his feeding tube and sassy style.

HAIRBALLS ARE OVER RATED!

If a cat spends their day grooming they may vomit hair. The hair is not necessarily the cause of the vomiting. There are a number of conditions in our pets that can commonly lead to vomiting. Intermittent vomiting, or progressively more frequent vomiting is abnormal. For a pet that otherwise appears quite healthy; foreign bodies, pancreatitis, and inflammatory bowel disease would be amongst the most common causes.

We have seen pets eat GI Joe heads, green plastic turtles, fentanyl patches, and more recently an expensive dental mouth guard. If the pet is able to pass a foreign body we may see vomiting or diarrhea as a consequence of the bowel or stomach inflammation caused. If the foreign body has not passed through it may be stuck somewhere. Continued vomiting, lethargy, inappetence and pain may result. This is an emergency situation. Seek veterinary help immediately. X-rays or other detailed diagnostic imaging may be warranted.

WEBSTORE

The webstore has thousands of products available on line ranging from toys and diets to life jackets and harnesses. The webstore will help you ensure that you have the products available for you when you need them.

Please go to Gorham Animal Hospital website and find the link. If you need help registering or have any questions, please call us!

Although we expect deliveries to arrive on the next business day, we are finding over weekends, and holidays the orders are taking longer to receive so please plan accordingly.

Orders over 125\$ sent to your doorstep or ANY order sent to the clinic includes free delivery.

GASTRIC DILATATION AND VOLVULUS

Large chested dog breeds have ample room to allow for their stomach to rotate 180-360 degrees leading to "bloat". This is a medical emergency. The gases, fluid and food have no escape route. Prompt medical attention is required.

This is a surgical condition, with potentially life-threatening post-operative complications. During surgery, the stomach is rotated back into a normal position and attached to the body wall to prevent recurrence. The spleen or compromised intestine may also need to be removed.

Preventative measures include feeding smaller, frequent meals, never exercising a pet immediately after a meal, and avoiding foods that cause gas production in your pet.

We don't recommend teaching a pet to roll over!

FELINE UROLOGIC SYNDROME

Cats straining are often thought to be constipated. This can be one of the signs of a cat unable to urinate as a consequence of stones, or blood/mucus within the urinary tract. **THIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, AND THEY REQUIRE PROMPT MEDICAL ATTENTION.** Other symptoms include blood in the urine, inappropriate urination, licking penis area, vomiting and lethargy.

ALLERGIES

Not all itchy pets are created equal. If you are not actually seeing fleas, consider that the pet could be itching for another reason. Some animals are particularly sensitive to the bite of just one flea, and since they spend 90% of their life cycle off the pet, it may be difficult to see them on the pet. We refer to these pets as having flea allergy dermatitis, often chewing the area immediately above their tail.

Pets with allergies may present with generalized itchiness, recurrent ear infections, dragging their bum, or chewing and licking their feet. Pets may have food or environmental allergies, most often having a combination of both. Use common sense with them. If possible avoid the allergen. Easier done with food. It would take 3 MONTHS of an elimination diet to see a potential improvement in a pet with food allergies. It takes that long to eliminate residual ingredients from their system. Avoid plastic bowls and eliminate all treats. Do not feed anything else to the pet during a food trial, especially with medication. If you are having difficulty administering medications, please talk to us!

Pets with allergies benefit from t shirts which act as a barrier to environmental contaminants. There are also new sprays that can similarly provide a protective layer on the skin to lessen the allergic reaction. Regular medicated shampoo bathing with cold water greatly improves many of the pets with air borne allergies.

We occasionally see itching as a consequence of mange, or skin infections as well. Dogs that frequent leash free dog areas are of increased risk to these infections.

Please note, if fleas are the culprit, invest the time and money in the safer and guaranteed products sold through veterinarians and seek out our medical expertise. Please call for assistance!! Over the counter products are often more toxic, and ineffective.

This is our RVT's Jaime's cat Rumble showing off his t-shirt. Rumble has severe allergies to both environmental factors.



TRAINING BASICS

Positive reinforcement should be given immediately after they have demonstrate the desired behavior. The opposite of positive reinforcement is not punishment but often involves ignoring the undesirable behavior altogether

Praise and treats are commonly used to reward desired behavior.

The two second rule: Pets associate reinforcement with whatever behavior happened within the last two seconds.

With house training, they require 100% supervision. When they perform the desired behavior reward them right away. Improvement over time means house training is successful, but they may have an occasional accident. Very young animals do not have good bladder control. When they are nervous or excited they may urinate. Do not punish these pets.

Crate training is highly beneficial. This should never be used as a form of punishment. The crate provides a safe and secure environment for short periods of time. Dogs are sociable animals and the crate should be located on the main floor during the day and in a bedroom near people at night.

It is critical to socialize puppies and kittens to people, other pets and potentially scary situations. Potentially expose them to dogs that are immunized, healthy, have sociable temperaments and receive regular veterinary care. Avoid areas where you have no control over what animals your puppy may encounter. A negative experience will have to be diluted out with many more positive ones! Playing thunderstorm noises in the background, at a low volume, and slowly increase volume if pet is ignoring it. You can do this with other scary noises to get them used to them.

Expose your pets to people of different ages, sounds such as cough, sneezing and appearances. The pet is to learn that most experiences with humans are safe. It is very important that pets have positive experiences with young children, so these sessions need to be closely supervised.

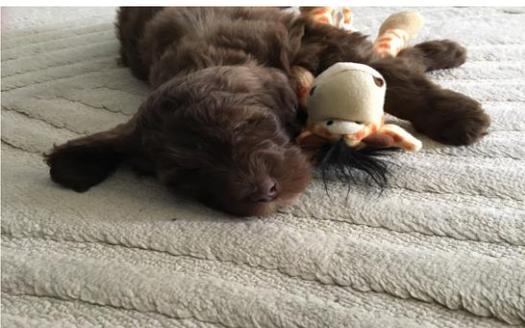
Introduce restraint, bathing and regular handling of a puppy/kittens mouth , ears, and feet at a young age.

Carriers, cars and veterinary hospitals can be associated with negative experiences, so it takes some effort to ensure that a negative association is not built. IF you are in the area, pop in to the clinic just for a treat and praise. It is important to let them freely explore the clinic and weight scale and to realize no one is going to eat them.

When arriving at the clinic, reduce stress by immediately having your pet placed into an exam room. This allows them to explore and settle. We have been known to bring out a few treats during the stay with us. ..

Positive pheromone sprays for both dogs, and cats have allowed for a less stressful veterinary visit.

A pet will pick up on your emotion/body language; you might inadvertently train your pet to become nervous around a situation because you are.



NEGATIVE ENFORCEMENT OR PUNISHMENT IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGGRESSIVENESS IN PETS.

Despite your best efforts at socialization, some pets may still encounter situations to which they are still prone to caution or nervousness.

Anti-anxieties in the form of neuroceuticals, natural pheromones and even diets are available and may help.

Pets showing signs of anxiety are suffering and need our help.

The loss of a pet

Grief is a normal and healthy response to a loss. There is no magic cure or process of healing. Hopefully over time, your feelings of sadness will diminish, and eventually we can think back on the many good memories shared with this important family member.

As with the loss of any family member, denial, guilt, anger, sadness, and pain are commonly felt. If your feelings impair in your ability to engage in family, social or work functions, you may wish to reach out for support. This can be in the form of family, friends, or in reaching out to a pet loss support group or hotline or talking to a trusted counselor. The Ontario Veterinary College (ovc.uoguelph.ca/petloss) offers grief support and the association for pet bereavement(www.aplb.org/) is a wonderful resource. See our website article on pet memorials for links for bereavement as well as for aftercare.. Let us know how we can help.

When the entire family has had sufficient time to deal with their grief, bringing home a pet to share their home and love with can be considered. If done too early, guilt and resentment can be directed towards the new family member. As each pet has a unique personality, we are not replacing the lost pet, but welcoming a new one to a loving home. It is important to consider what pet best suits your home. Visit www.beforeyougetapet.com for tips.

The Pet Trust Fund donations go towards research to improve the health and well being of our pets.



THANK-YOU!

A special thanks to my staff , usually many steps ahead of me!! I appreciate their commitment to educate our families to ensure that they make informed decisions specific to them. Both Jaime and Mikayla are attending the Toronto Veterinary Academy continuing education lecture series.

We are privileged to be a part of your pet's care and appreciate the continued referral of friends and family. A huge compliment, thank you.



Recommendations for parasite prevention

- start outdoor cats and dogs on flea and tick preventative now-
- Tick and flea prevention should be started when the temperature is at 4 C and above. We recommend giving prevention approximately 9 – 12 months of the year.
- pick up poop immediately
- fecal sample checks at least annually
- 4dx blood testing prior to June 01, and start heartworm preventatives
- talk to us if travelling with your pet outside of Canada for recommendations
- Ask us about parasite prevention products.

1. Wash your hands well after contact with an animal.
2. Do not allow children to put dirt in their mouths.
3. Pick up dog and cat waste from your yard daily, especially in areas where both children and animals play.
4. Cover home sandboxes to protect them from fecal contamination.

<http://www.petsandparasites.org/about-capc/>