



from

All Creatures Veterinary Hospital



509 BENICIA ROAD • VALLEJO, CA 94590

(707) 642-4405

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DOCTOR'S EDITORIAL ...

SPRING 2001

EASY TO REMEMBER

I once heard that the intended use of sticky notes was as a book mark. The story continues that these "book marks" became so popular in the offices of the manufacturer for use a "sticky notes" that someone ultimately figured that since they were popular in their office for this use, they just might be popular in someone else's office. A star product was born!

Personally, I wish that I had a dime for every time I received a sticky note from someone in the hospital. They usually read: "Reminder: meeting at 11:45" or "Remember to order ...". These sticky notes are really handy. If you have a thought run through your mind, write it on a handy sticky note and put at the intended person's work station and it gets done. Most importantly, your mind is cleared of a multitude of miscellaneous thoughts. These things are a easy way to remind us of tasks that have to be done.



It's physically impossible for us to send all of you sticky notes from time to time reminding you of what has to be done. We do send reminder cards however and we strongly urge you not to stick them on your refrigerator and forget them (or get covered by the kid's artwork!). Rather, call us immediately so that we can arrange an appointment for the important medical attention your pet requires. This is one of the most important things you can do for your beloved companion.

This time of year we especially remind you about the perils of heartworm disease and the need to maintain an ongoing guard against the onslaught of fleas. As we've been preaching for years, preventing these problems is always better for you and your pet as well as usually being less expensive.

So if you have any questions about heartworm disease, flea products or any other veterinary concern, please call us. Better yet, write a sticky note that says 'Call Fido's doctor in the morning'. We'll be waiting for your call!

HELPFUL TIPS

Two Diseases That Threaten Your Puppy!

Late spring is a great time to acquire a puppy for the family. The kids will soon be out of school and they can help in the chores required to raise a puppy correctly. We do caution you however, to take steps to ensure that your new puppy is safeguarded against two deadly threats.

Distemper

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, distemper is the “greatest single disease threat to the world’s dog population.” Better than 50% of adult dogs that contract this disease ultimately die from it. For puppies, this death rate is 80%! Puppy owners should know these facts about distemper:

- The virus is spread through secretions in saliva, respiratory passages, urine, feces, and by the inhalation of contaminated droplets from sneezes and coughs. Unfortunately, unvaccinated puppies between the ages of three to eight months are the most common victims of distemper. Unprotected older dogs are also susceptible to this disease.
- The symptoms are usually those we might associate with the onset of a cold or the flu: runny eyes, fever, loss of appetite, and listlessness. In some instances, your pet may also have diarrhea and vomiting. It is important to know that dogs do not get colds or the flu like humans, so if you observe these symptoms, call our office immediately!
- A course of vaccinations to prevent distemper for your puppy is recommended. Older dogs, like humans, vary medically. We are therefore happy to discuss your older dog’s needs on an individual basis.



Parvovirus

This deadly disease attacks the canine digestive system and can kill infected puppies in as little as 48 hours. Parvovirus can survive in the environment for up to 5 months. It clings to surfaces: floors, dog beds, walls, etc. and is immune to various household cleaning agents except bleach.

Puppy owners should know these facts about parvovirus:

- Parvovirus (“parvo” for short) is mainly spread through a puppy’s contact with infected feces.
- Parvovirus attacks the cells lining the gastrointestinal tract as well as the bone marrow, lymph nodes, and heart.
- Initial symptoms are lethargy, loss of appetite, and vomiting followed by a high fever and violent diarrhea. An adult dog may be in intense pain with its abdomen highly tucked. Puppies may only exhibit the initial stages of depression and abdominal pain before dying.
- Test can be performed to determine if parvovirus is present. Parvovirus can be best prevented through immunization.

As you have just read, these diseases are dangerous but, with the correct precautions, we can help your puppy grow into “dog hood” in a happy and healthy way. Please call us if you have any health concerns about your puppy.

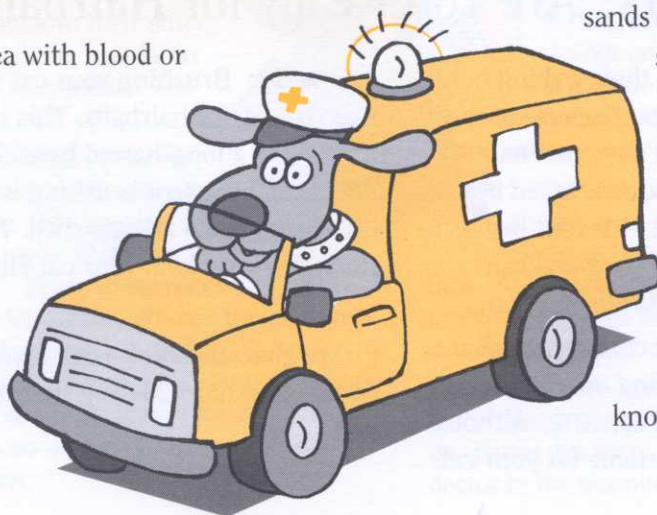
IS IT AN EMERGENCY?

THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS
REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION!

Call us immediately if your dog or cat exhibits any of the following:

- Difficulty breathing.
- Bleeding that does not stop from any part of the body! Apply pressure with a clean cloth.
- Bloated, distended, swollen or painful abdomen with or without vomiting.
- Inability to urinate or move bowels but continues to try or has bloody stool or urine.
- Painful defecation or urination.
- Heatstroke.
- Inability to deliver puppies or kittens. Labor contractions for longer than one hour or more than 15 minutes of labor with the fetus or membrane showing.
- Loss of balance, consciousness or seizure.
- Pain.
- Major trauma from injury, fall, vehicle accident, wounds, fights, etc.
- Signs of weakness, shallow breathing, rapid heart-beat, dilated pupils, collapse, bewilderment.
- Ingestion of poison. Bring a container or the name of the product.
- Penetrating wound.
- Vomiting or diarrhea with blood or violent episodes.
- Lameness.
- Sudden change in temperament or personality.

Call us immediately if you see any of the above symptoms.



FLEA CONTROL: WHAT'S THE LATEST?

As you may be able to tell from listening to and reading all the advertisements, there are a lot of products on the market to control fleas. They all promise to keep your pet "flea-free" thus making their (and your) life more pleasant! There are also a variety of new products that are being discussed in various magazines.

As a pet owner, how do you know which flea products really work? You may not but we do and we can make your search easy. Keep in mind that during the tenure of this practice, we have treated thousands of flea-infested pets. We have truly seen "the good, the bad and the ugly" of flea products. As a result, we are in a great position to advise you on what is best to keep those little pests off your pet and out of your home. So before you spend one penny on those expensive super-market products, give us a call. We invite you to take advantage of our knowledge and experience.

ANIMAL HEALTH NEWS

HEARTWORM PREVENTION IS THE KEY!

Heartworm prevention requires commitment! Prior to administering the preventive medication, a blood test is done to detect the presence of the parasite. Once this test is completed, a drug is prescribed that must be given faithfully by the owner. Relatively speaking, this is a small price to pay to keep your pet protected.

Heartworm microfilariae are transmitted into a dog by the bite of a mosquito. The worms grow and multiply in the chambers of the heart and the first signs of infection may not appear for a year after infection. Ultimately, the pet's initial soft cough worsens. Then the dog becomes weak and listless as he loses weight. His quality of life diminishes as congestive heart failure ensues. He is in mortal danger!

An infected dog can be treated if heartworm is detected. As noted earlier, a preventative that is right for your dog will be prescribed. Your responsibility is to administer the medication faithfully.

If your adult dog has never been tested for heartworm and/or is not on a preventative, please give us a call. Remember, with heartworm, prevention is the key!

Hot Spots

What are they?



If your dog has a raw, open sore on its skin, it is probably suffering from a *pyotraumatic dermatitis* or "Hot Spots". Hot spots are surface skin infections caused when populations of normal skin bacteria grow and overwhelm normal resistance. Dogs susceptible to hot spots are those with:

- heavy coats,
- history of allergies,
- ear infections,
- irritated anal sacs,
- hair tangles and mats.

If your dog is suffering from a Hot Spot, give us a call. We can treat the problem and remove the underlying cause so as to prevent recurrences.

Cat Owners: Are You Ready for Hairballs?

Cause: Cats spend almost 1/3 of their waking hours cleaning and grooming themselves. Because of the tiny, barb-like projections on a cat's tongue, hair becomes lodged on these barbs and swallowed by the cat. Since hair cannot be digested, this hair begins to accumulate in the gastrointestinal tract and can interfere with normal digestion and elimination.

Symptoms: Symptoms include constipation, lethargy, dry cough and even spitting up. They can also cause depression and a loss of appetite. Although rarely fatal, hairballs are uncomfortable for your cat.

Remedy: Brushing your cat daily is the most effective remedy for hairballs. This is especially important if you own a long-haired breed like a Himalayan or a Persian. Consistent brushing is also important during the spring when all cats shed. There are also medications that may help your cat eliminate hairballs.

Please give our office a call if you have any questions concerning hairballs and their treatment.