



from

All Creatures Veterinary Hospital



509 BENICIA ROAD • VALLEJO, CA 94590

(707) 642-4405

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 306
Vallejo, CA

DOCTOR'S EDITORIAL ...

SUMMER 2001

Food For Thought...

At the time of this writing, Mother's Day is still part of our recent history. One can not help but marvel at the complexity of the role contemporary mothers play in our lives. According to national statistics, the overwhelming majority of mothers work outside of the home pursuing a full time profession to help meet the financial burdens of raising a family in the new millennium. Regardless of these professional pursuits, a mother is still called upon to perform her traditional duties of organizing the family's activities like soccer practice and tennis lessons, food shopping and preparation, housecleaning, washing clothes and so on. Because of its overwhelming importance, at the top of this list is ensuring that each and every

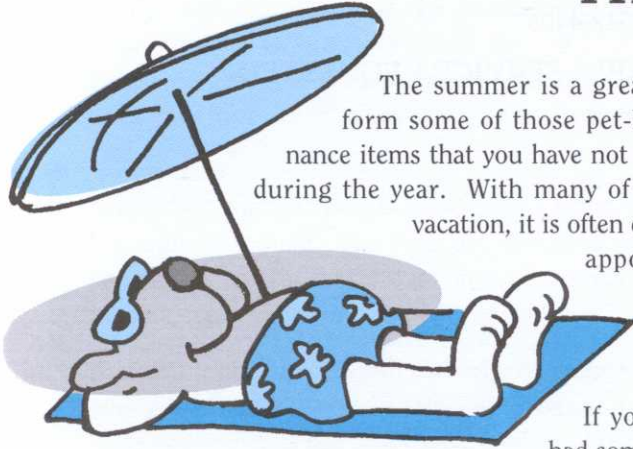
member of the family is physically well and in good health.

Since our pets are so much a part of our family, their care is often delegated to Mom. In the spirit of a belated Mother's Day wish, we would like to thank all of those mothers that have entrusted the care and well-being of their family companion to this practice. Your trust in us is greatly appreciated! If you feel we can do something to make your life easier while also providing the best possible care to your pet, we would like to hear from you. Your comments would be greatly appreciated.



HELPFUL TIPS

WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU (AND YOUR PET) THIS SUMMER!



The summer is a great time to perform some of those pet-health maintenance items that you have not been able to do during the year. With many of our clients on vacation, it is often easier to get the appointment time that best suits your busy schedule.

If your pet has not had some of the following vital health issues addressed during the year, now is a great time to have them done.

Dental Procedure: February is National Pet Dental Health Month but your pet's dental health is important every month. Your pet requires professional dental care - just like you! In order to provide the proper care for your pet, the American Veterinary Dental Society recommends that pet owners follow three basic steps:

1. *Take your pet to the veterinarian for a dental exam & cleaning.* Our trained staff can examine your pet's mouth to determine the magnitude of dental problems and do what is necessary to make corrections.
2. *Begin a dental care program at home.* The main thing a pet owner can do to safeguard a pet's dental health is to begin brushing the pet's teeth on a routine basis.
3. *Schedule regular veterinary checkups.* Regular dental visits are an important part of your personal dental health care. The same is true for your pet.

Annual Physical Examination: Our pets travel the time line from adolescence to middle age to geriatric so quickly that waiting two or three years between our animal's physical examinations would cause us to miss decades of their human age equivalent. In short, missing annual physical examinations can deny your pet the chance of having a potentially serious problem diagnosed early and puts your pet at greater risk. *The primary purpose of an annual physical examination is to identify problems when they are still minor and provide you with options that will slow the progression of any diagnosed ailment and, if possible, cure it.* Early diagnosis and prevention just makes good medical sense and it all begins with an annual examination!

Heartworm Disease: Heartworm disease is a serious and potentially fatal condition of worms residing in the heart and major blood vessels of dogs. (*Note: Heartworm has also been found in cats. Please see the article in this newsletter for further information on Feline Heartworm.*) Heartworm disease is easily spread when a mosquito bites an infected dog for a blood meal thus inadvertently ingesting *microfilariae* (infant heartworms) which are then passed along to the next animal the mosquito bites. These microfilariae then travel through the animal's blood stream until they develop into an adult form of the worm. Final development usually occurs in the pet's heart, pulmonary vessels, or lungs where the heartworm continues its life cycle - all the while causing the host pet considerable damage!

If you have been putting off those vital tests and procedures required to keep your dog's tail wagging or your cat's motor purring, now is a great time to schedule an appointment. Remember, preventing disease is always better, and usually less expensive, than treating a problem. So please don't delay, call our office today!! You'll be glad you did!!

Flea & Tick Prevention: Fleas and ticks can be a real summertime nuisance and may pose a threat to your pet and to your family. If your dog or cat is scratching or you detect tracings of flea dirt, your pet is probably infested with fleas. There are flea prevention products that can be administered orally and there are others that are dispensed topically. We can recommend which is best for your companion. So before you run out and buy those expensive grocery store products, visit us first. With our experience, we can recommend the products that will keep your pet flea free.

The same goes for tick prevention products. We are happy to suggest only those products that our experience indicates are best. Not only will this save you money but it will help better protect your pet as well.



PET MATTERS

Physical & Mental Health Benefits of Pets

Because we think pets are so great, it is wonderful to brag about the health benefits of pet ownership. For example, did you know that recent studies indicate that pets:

Reduce medical appointments & minor health problems: A study revealed that the use of prescription drugs and the overall cost of caring for patients in nursing homes dropped in those facilities where companion animals became part of the therapy.

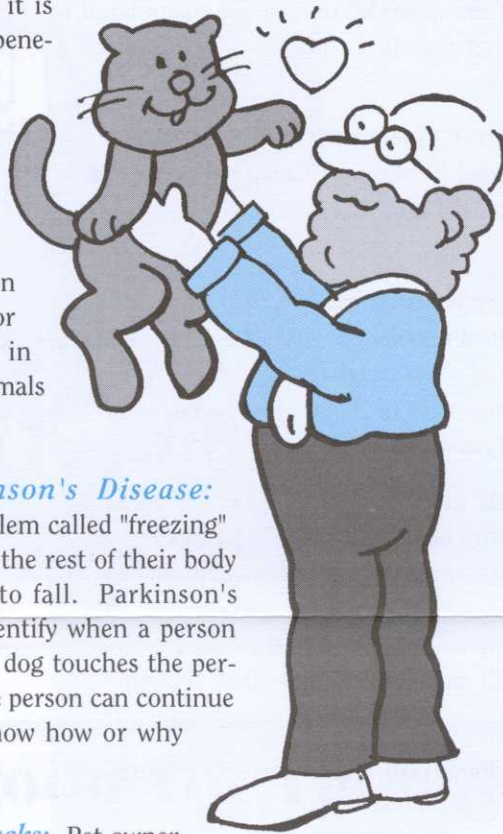
Control "freezing" in Parkinson's Disease: Parkinson's patients often face a problem called "freezing" where their feet freeze in place while the rest of their body keeps moving causing the person to fall. Parkinson's helper dogs have been trained to identify when a person with Parkinson's is "freezing". If the dog touches the person's foot, it breaks the freeze and the person can continue walking. Medical experts do not know how or why this works.

Increase longevity after heart attacks: Pet ownership increases the odds for survival in persons who have had a heart attack from 1 in 15 to 1 in 87!

Lower cholesterol and triglycerides: Persons with pets have been found to have lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels when compared to people who did not have pets, even when matched for weight, diet and smoking habits.

Decrease blood pressure and reduce stress: Studies in women undergoing stress tests have demonstrated the presence of a dog had more effect on lowering blood pressure than the presence of friends. Similarly, children who had a dog present during their physical examination showed lower heart rate, blood pressure, and behavioral distress than when the dog was not present.

Pets help us maintain our good health so it just makes sense that we should maintain their good health as well! As stated on the previous page, your pet requires a level of care for his or her proper health maintenance. Please call us to arrange for an appointment for any one of these services.



A WORD ABOUT HEARTWORM & CATS

Heartworm Disease affects cats differently than it does dogs. For one thing, the number of infective larvae developing into adults is significantly higher in dogs than it is in cats. Also, the number of worms found in an infected cat is dramatically lower than in dogs and the lifespan of the heartworm in a cat is considerably shorter.

There is a fairly easy blood test now available to test cats for Heartworm Disease. Unfortunately, there is no safe treatment to kill a cat's heartworms.

Readers of advertisements in some leading consumer magazines are aware that there is a heartworm preventive medication for cats. We suggest that, because heartworm affects cats differently from dogs, your cat's needs should be discussed with the veterinarian to determine if this preventative is best for your pet.

Please give our office a call if you have any questions about heartworm and your cat.

(Information on heartworm disease was obtained from the American Heartworm Society.)

ANIMAL HEALTH NEWS

COMMON FELINE FEEDING PROBLEMS

1. **Overfeeding can cause the number-one nutritional disease - OBESITY!** Excessive body weight can increase the risk of liver disease, heart disease, respiratory problems, and constipation. Pet food manufacturers have formulated diets that have fewer calories per gram that may be helpful in treating obese cats.
2. **Feeding dog food to cats is a common error, especially if dogs and cats are in the same household.** Dog foods are developed for the nutritional needs of dogs, not cats! There can be serious consequences if a cat's diet is deficient in protein, taurine, niacin, vitamin A, and fatty acids.
3. **Overdosing with vitamin and mineral supplements has been known to cause severe medical problems in cats.** Physiological imbalances caused by excess vitamins and minerals can lead to the binding of other nutrients. Overdoses of vitamins A and D are more common than deficiencies of those vitamins because of unnecessary supplementation of an already balanced diet.
4. **Exclusively feeding meat or fish results in an unbalanced diet and causes related nutritional diseases.** Diets containing large quantities of fish can cause yellow-fat disease (*steatitis*), a result of vitamin E deficiency. Nutritional secondary hyperparathyroidism is usually caused by all-meat homemade diets that are deficient in calcium, thus creating a mineral imbalance in the calcium-phosphorus ratio. The disease most commonly occurs in kittens that are rapidly growing.

If you have any particular questions about your feline and its care, please give us a call. We are always glad to help.

(Source: Cornell Feline Health Center)

Foot & Mouth Disease: Should Pet Owners Be Concerned?

With all the news about this problem coming from Britain and other European countries, we have been asked a lot of questions about this ailment.

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) affects cloven-footed animals like cattle, swine, sheep, goats, deer, bison, llamas, and elk. The disease is characterized by fever and blister-like lesions followed by erosions on the tongue and lips, in the mouth, and between the hooves. Some affected animals recover while others remain permanently debilitated. Because of the rapid mutations of the seven main types of virus that spread this disease, vaccination is a real problem.

Currently, only the continents of North America, Australia, and Antarctica are free of the disease. Infection in humans is very rare and, if infected, disease symptoms are even rarer.

PETS CAN HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE TOO!



Just like humans, dogs and cats can suffer from high blood pressure. Hypertension is usually caused by some other health problem such as kidney disease or diabetes. Left untreated, high blood pressure can cause :

- enlarged left ventricles of the heart
- lesions in the small arteries;
- neurological abnormalities;

- eye problems including retinal disorders and blindness.

Fortunately, hypertension, can be treated with drugs and a special diet. If the doctor suspects that your pet is suffering from hypertension, routine exams and blood pressure checkups are extremely important. Please contact our office if you have any questions.