



from

# All Creatures Veterinary Hospital



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DOCTOR'S EDITORIAL ...

SUMMER 2002

## COMMENCEMENT

Considering the time of year, it is not surprising that we have heard from a great number of our clients who have recently attended a loved one's high school or college commencement. For the honorees in cap and gown, most can't wait for the never-seems-to-end ceremonies to conclude so the party can begin. Of course, there are a few who patiently sit there, waiting anxiously for their name to be called, all the while wiping tears from their eyes.

But all of us seem to have lost the true meaning of the word "commencement". These ceremonies and festivities do not honor the end of something, rather they herald in the beginning ... the commencement ... of the next chapter of life. For our recent graduates, this means the beginning of their college careers while for others, it means the search for a job and the beginning of their professional lives. In short, we

share in one of our society's "rites of passage" as we collectively celebrate the joyful anticipation of what is to come.



This being said, as a veterinary practice, we are anxious for some people to commence with the next chapter of their lives that involves the proper care of their companion animals. We often see pets that are in terrible condition - often brought to us when it's too late and too expensive to treat the animal. Euthanasia is usually the only option. We hope some pet owners gain an understanding that pets do not take care of themselves - they routinely need to be seen by a veterinarian. We wish they change their ways and *commence* to provide their pets with preventive medical care so that their companions have a longer, healthier, pain-free life. I am sure their pets would celebrate the *commencement* of this new chapter in their owner's life!

## Pet Allergies

Just like with their human masters, our pets are susceptible to several major causes of allergic reactions.

*Among these are:*

- Reactions to airborne allergens,
- Reaction to flea or tick bites,
- Reaction to a particular food.



**Airborne Allergies:** This time of year, television programming is filled with advertisements for various medications designed to treat the torment of airborne allergens. We are usually shown images of an individual suffering from sneezing and coughing along with runny eyes and noses. Our pets suffer from the same allergens as well but their reaction is usually in the form of itching. It is hard for us to imagine the torment of itching over the entire length of your body but this is what a dog or cat feels when suffering from allergies. Often, they scratch so hard that secondary infections develop in the over-itched areas causes something called "Hot Spots". Ear infections are often the result of an allergy. Certain dog breeds like Golden Retrievers, Dalmatians and Miniature Schnauzers have a predisposition to this form of dermatitis. Additionally, just like with humans, allergies in pets tend to be inherited. If Mom or Dad had allergies, there is a strong likelihood their offspring will as well.

**Flea Bite Dermatitis:** Fleas, mites and ticks multiply by the billions this time of year. Not surprisingly, their bite can cause a reaction in a sensitive pet. Because of the medications on the market that can kill fleas, mites and ticks before they annoy your pet, there is no reason why any pet has to suffer a reaction from a parasitic bite. We have the products you need to keep your pet parasite free.

**Food Allergies:** A common cause of allergic reactions in pets comes from the food we provide. The highest rate of allergies comes from foods primarily containing corn but products made from wheat, soy, dairy products and beef are also common culprits. We can suggest proper diets for pets suffering from food allergies.

A variety of testing procedures are available and an assortment of treatments can be performed depending upon the allergy's severity. Allergies provide a pet with near-constant torment so, if you see your pet scratching consistently, call our office immediately.

## Taking Your Pet On Vacation With You?

Here are some suggestions on what to bring. Having the following 14 items with you and your pet on vacation can keep your "down time" hassle free!

1. A well constructed and roomy pet carrier
2. Your pet's regular food
3. Snacks & chew toys
4. Drinking water
5. Bowls
6. Litter box & litter
7. Spray bottle for cooling
8. All medications
9. Our practices name & phone number
10. Your pet's rabies certificate
11. ID tag with your vacation address
12. Current photo for identification
13. Any grooming supplies
14. Favorite blankets, toys, etc.



## How To Avoid Summertime Pet Emergencies!

Common sense should dictate how we protect our pets during the summer months but it is occasionally good to go over a few simple items so they are fresh in our minds.

**General Rule:** *If you encounter a pet emergency, remain calm, make the pet comfortable and seek veterinary assistance immediately.*

**Heat:** When thinking what is best for your pet during the heat of the summer months, it is important to realize that *your pets feel that the current temperature is actually 15 degrees warmer!!!!* Do not make heat judgments for your pet based on how you feel. Compare a pet's fur coat with wearing your favorite winter sweater and consider where and for how long would you like to be on a hot day while wearing that sweater. It only takes two to three minutes in a hot car for a pet to suffer life-threatening heatstroke!!

**Perspiration:** Nature has given humans a rather effective means to overcome the ill-effects of heat - sweating! Dogs and cats can only release heat through panting, a process

significantly less efficient than sweating so pets can overheat rather quickly.

**Provide fresh water, shade and good air circulation:** For a furry creature, these are the keys to survival in warm weather.

**Toxins:** Some pretty toxic chemicals are used on our lawn and in our gardens to protect these areas from insect damage. Your pet may find some of them tasty and this can poison your pet. (Note: Call our office immediately anytime you think your pet may have ingested a poison. If we are closed, call the ASPCA Poison Control Hotline at 1-888-426-4435. They have an accurate database and have your credit card handy as there is a charge.) Use only non-toxic items on your lawn and garden.

**Hit by Car:** Possibly because our pets are outside more in warm weather, we see an increased incident of pets being hit by cars. The cure to this problem is simple - **DO NOT LET YOUR PETS RUN LOOSE!** Either invisible or stationary fencing should be used and, if you take your pet for a walk, keep them on a short leash.

### Yes, Pets Get Arthritis Also!

Veterinary practices usually see three different type of arthritic conditions. They are:

**1. Congenital Musculoskeletal Disorders:**

This is when a dog or cat is born with an inherent problem. Hip dysplasia is a common problem that is in large part hereditary but can also have nutritional and environmental causes.

**2. Patellar Luxation:** Partly hereditary, Patellar Luxation may lead to arthritis and cartilage wear from the kneecap (patella) moving from its normal position in the knee joint. This ailment is commonly seen in Poodles and Terriers but can also be seen in large dogs as well.

**3. Rupture of the Cranial Cruciate or Anterior Cruciate Ligament:** This is one of the most common degenerative orthopedic diseases seen in middle-aged dogs and cats.



In animals, it can occur from a single traumatic event or can develop slowly into a chronic condition which usually occurs in older, heavier dogs. Regardless, lameness is often observed and arthritis usually follows. Early detection of this problem can cause treatment to begin early before the condition worsens.

If your pet is diagnosed with arthritis, treatment is divided into medical and surgical options. The surgical option usually slows the progression of arthritis. The medical options include the availability of several wonderful new medications that are very effective.

If you feel your pet may be suffering from arthritis, make an appointment for the doctor to perform an evaluation immediately. As stated, early diagnosis is important. Once armed with the facts, the doctor will be happy to recommend the treatment and medications best suited for your companion.

# ANIMAL HEALTH NEWS

## A Letter From a Veterinarian that "Says It All"!

We recently came upon a letter written by a veterinarian from Covington, WA and we would like to share part of it with you. It says a lot about our profession for which we are immensely proud.

*When I think of the human-animal bond, more than pets and their owners come to mind. I think about the connections made between everybody working in a veterinary hospital with the people who come through our door. I've often said, "Always be kind to animals ... and remember that people are animals too." Those in need of caring and consoling extend beyond the pets. Over the years of building a high level of trust with clients, we became their confidants. Pets are the adhesive that pull people closer. We bond with our clients by way of their pets and the care we provide. We bond with the animals because it comes naturally to us - our natural inclinations drew us into this line of work.*

*Veterinary workers are a special breed. We will do almost anything for that "sick puppy." I am sure that if a survey were done to identify owners of disabled pets, those owners would be predominantly us. We love animals, whether they have three legs or four, or are blind, deaf or "homely." Rescued animals are often our hospital pets and personal pets. A hospital pet frequently lives to a ripe old age and gives many years of service. We had Princess the cat -- we changed her name from Scruffy when she turned 21. Princess died at 26 after raising many litters of receptionists, technicians, kennel attendants and veterinarians.*

*... we do our best to honor the dignity and needs of the people and their pets. We all remember those moments. They stay in our memories and hearts. Each month, the "Fruit -of-the-Month" package comes to our door - sent by a client whose pet I euthanized 16 years ago. The gift tag on the box reads, "Remember Susie"... I will.*

## TICK PREVENTION

Except for pets kept strictly indoors and those pets that are city dwellers, it is very difficult to keep you pet away from ticks if you are living in or traveling to an area in which they might dwell. As a general rule, ticks should be removed from your pet as soon as possible. Applications of hot matches and placing Vaseline on them just don't work. We recommend that to combat ticks you:

**1. Collar:** Use a collar specifically formulated to prevent ticks from attaching. Generally, products purchased in grocery stores don't do this.

**2. Sprays:** There are sprays available that will both kill and prevent ticks.

**3. Bathing:** There are shampoos specifically formulated to kill ticks and they often prevent ticks as well.

**4. Tube Applications:** These are drops designed to kill ticks and fleas that can be used once a month.

We have all the products you need to keep ticks from feasting on your pet. Give us a call for assistance.

## THREE THINGS EVERY PET OWNER SHOULD DO!

There is no greater source of dedication, unconditional love and loyalty than that given to us by our beloved pets. In return, it is every pet owners' responsibility to safeguard the well-being of their pets to ensure they enjoy a long, healthy and pain-free life. We strongly encourage every pet owner to do the following:

### 1. SCHEDULE REGULAR PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS.

Finding problems early is key to ensuring a long life. Additionally,

remedying ailments early is usually less expensive. An ounce of prevention is certainly worth a pound of cure! Proper dental care for your pet is especially important.

### 2. MAKE SURE YOUR PET RECEIVES THE PROPER IMMUNIZATION.

Our practice can identify your pet's needs based on his or her health status, lifestyle, medical history, etc. Obviously, not all pets are the same and your pet's individual needs will be evaluated.

### 3. PROVIDE AN APPROPRIATE DIET.

We can often trace a pet's problems to their historically poor diet. Someone once said that "you are what you eat." This is also true of our pets. Fat cats and porky pups are not often healthy creatures. We can help you make sure your pets eat right so they stay right!

*As always, please give our practice a call if you have any questions about what is best for your pet.*