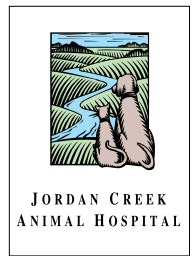




SPRING 2017 Gazette

☞ newsletter for people and their pets



3401 E.P. True Parkway
West Des Moines, Iowa 50265

in this issue:



Leptospirosis: Updates and Current Outbreaks

Recent outbreaks of leptospirosis are occurring around the country. In the Phoenix area, Maricopa County reported over 50 cases of leptospirosis diagnosed in the last year. The Chicago area is also showing concern over recent cases around Lake Michigan. There were even 3 human cases reported in New York City due to exposure to rat urine.

What is leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is a disease caused by infection with one of the more than 250 serotypes (strains) of bacteria called *Leptospira*. Although there are 250 serotypes worldwide, there are 8 serotypes that commonly infect dogs in Iowa. These bacteria can infect any mammal, including humans. *Leptospira* live in warm, wet environments like damp grass, standing water, mud, and ponds or lakes. Under ideal conditions, the bacteria can survive more than three months in the environment. When not detected and treated promptly with antibiotics and supportive care, dogs may go into kidney and/or liver failure.

How is leptospirosis transmitted?

Leptospirosis is most often transmitted to dogs through contact with the urine of infected animals, either directly or from contaminated environments. Dogs can be exposed through the mucous membranes of the mouth, nose, and eyes, or through cuts in the skin. Raccoons, skunks, opossums, rats, cows, pigs, and deer are all known carriers of the infection. Dogs can also become infected from close contact with another infected dog, which puts those dogs that frequent dog parks at increased risk.

Because of the broad range of carrier species, any dog – even one briefly outdoors in an urban backyard – is vulnerable to the disease.

What are the clinical signs?

Leptospirosis can cause a broad range of clinical signs in any combination. The most common early indicators of *Leptospira* infection are flu-like symptoms including:

- Loss of appetite
- Increase or decrease in urine production
- Uncharacteristic inactivity/lethargy
- Vomiting – sometimes shows up as pancreatitis
- Diarrhea
- Dehydration
- Weakness
- Fever
- Depression

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With prompt, exhaustive medical care, your dog's chances of recovery are good. However, some dogs can end up with permanent organ damage, and even die from the disease.

How do I prevent leptospirosis?

For most dogs, limiting exposure to the outdoors is neither practical nor desirable. Vaccination is the best way to help prevent leptospirosis. The leptospirosis vaccine is given yearly, and when done for the very first time is given as 2 boosters, between 2-4 weeks apart. Although the vaccines available today do not protect against every serotype of leptospirosis, they are one of the best lines of protection we have. Even if your dog comes in contact with a serotype that is not in the vaccination, your pet should have some cross-protection and will not become as ill as an animal that is not vaccinated.

In the past, many people did not vaccinate their small or toy breed dogs because of a mistaken belief that they were not at risk. There has also been a fear of vaccine reactions, particularly in small breed dogs. But these unvaccinated dogs are some of the ones becoming the most severely affected by the disease. At Jordan Creek Animal Hospital, we take steps to minimize vaccine reactions by

separating the leptospirosis vaccination from other vaccines in dogs under 10 pounds, especially puppies. If we feel your pet may possibly react to this vaccination, an injection of Benadryl prior to the vaccination can help. With our larger dogs, the leptospirosis vaccine is usually given in combination with the distemper/parvo vaccine on years when both are due.

Can cats get leptospirosis?

Cats are more resistant to leptospirosis than dogs and people. Infection is much less common and less severe. Because leptospirosis is so rare in cats, there is no available vaccine.

What if I suspect leptospirosis?

If you suspect your dog may have leptospirosis, promptly contact us to schedule an appointment. We can assess your dog's condition and order any necessary diagnostic tests, including blood work and urinalysis. Early diagnosis, treatment, and supportive care are essential to giving your dog the best chance for survival. Humans are also vulnerable to leptospirosis. Avoiding contact with urine from infected dogs is the best way of preventing transmission. Please make sure to wear gloves if you collect a urine sample at home. If your dog is diagnosed with leptospirosis, consider medical assessment for anyone in close contact with the pet.

THE HUMAN ANIMAL BOND

What does the Human Animal Bond mean to you?

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, the definition is "a mutually beneficial and dynamic relationship between people and animals that is influenced by behaviors that are essential to the health and well-being of both. This includes, but is not limited to, emotional, psychological, and physical interactions of people, animals, and the environment".

Several of our staff members recently attended a continuing education presentation on the Human Animal Bond. The speaker shared a lot of different stories, from animals saving peoples lives to the importance of animals to their owners. This was a reminder that we all can forget the importance of this bond as we get lost in our own lives.

There are many benefits to pet ownership, such as reducing stress, lowering blood pressure, and strengthening the immune system. Sometimes bad behavior of an animal can cause us to forget those benefits. As veterinary professionals it is part of our job to help keep this bond enjoy-

able for both the owner and the pet. The first step with any potential behavior issue is always to rule out medical problems.

There are various ways to help your pet if we determine there is a behavioral problem. Sometimes we can treat medically with anti-anxiety medication or refer to a behavior specialist. Cats can be a little bit harder. One helpful tip with urinary issues, for example, is to have a litter box on each level of the house, or to have at least one litter box per cat. Here at Jordan Creek Animal Hospital, we make sure to offer enough time for our puppy and kitten owners to go over all the



training and health guidelines. We want to make sure there is plenty of time to ask any questions and also go over the important topics such as potty training, how to discourage biting, socializing, and some common behavioral problems.

We want what is best for your pet, because at the end of the day your pet is not just an animal, but part of your family.



Do you brush your dog's teeth?

around your finger can be used, otherwise a children's size soft-bristled toothbrush is recommended. Animal toothpaste will also be needed, as human toothpaste should not be used. There are many flavors to choose from - we carry poultry, malt, beef, and vanilla mint. Once your supplies are ready, follow these steps to help slowly introduce this beneficial habit.

STEP ONE: Decide what time of day you will be brushing and introduce the toothpaste as you would a treat. Place a little on your finger and let your pet lick it off. Do this once for a couple days around the same time you plan to brush, so your pet gets used to the taste.

STEP TWO: Using your finger, smear the toothpaste onto your pet's canine tooth (large fang-looking tooth) so he begins to know the feeling of something being rubbed onto the area. Begin with one side, then after a couple

days do both sides, eventually adding the small incisor teeth in the front.

STEP THREE: Introduce the toothbrush if using one. Instead of using it in the mouth right away, simply place toothpaste on it and let your pet lick it off. Do this step for a couple days so he familiarizes himself with the texture of the brush.

STEP FOUR: Use the toothbrush to brush the teeth. As step two suggested, start with the canine teeth and incisors for the first couple of days, eventually working back onto the big molar teeth. There is no need to open the mouth and brush the insides of the teeth, or to work too much on the lower teeth.

Brushing can seem like a daunting task, but it can be an enjoyable bonding experience for you and your pet. Please ask us at your next visit if you would like to set up a time for a demonstration!

Research shows daily brushing of your dog's teeth decreases the amount of bacteria in his mouth. Brushing should be started with a clean mouth, so ideally after a professional cleaning. If tartar has already adhered to the teeth, brushing won't do much for breaking up what is already on the teeth, but can inhibit further formation.

Not all dogs like toothbrushes, so a cloth or gauze square wrapped

Teeth have feelings, too!

Did you know teeth are alive? They have a very hard exterior called the enamel that is not alive, but everything underneath is! The layer just below the enamel is called the dentin, which contains microtubules filled with fluid. These microtubules are connected with the nerve endings that make up the inside of the tooth, known as the pulp.

Teeth can feel pain, temperature changes, throb, and sometimes can become damaged and die. Animals can have the same type of teeth problems humans can, but the treatments are very different. A lot of the time if a tooth is fractured and dying the best treatment would be to remove the tooth. Some pets are candidates for root canal therapy. This needs to be performed by a board certified dental specialist. Sometimes, animals can fracture or chip the enamel and dentin, but the rest of the tooth is healthy. What would be the best treatment in this circumstance? It might just be the new bonded sealant we have available.

If a tooth is damaged, there are steps we take to assess how far the damage extends. In routine dental cleanings, after removing plaque and tartar, we use a dental probe to look for pockets around the gum line. For a fractured or chipped tooth we recommend dental radiographs to rule out pulp canal or root damage. If the tooth is alive and

looking healthy, with no pulp exposure, we now offer a bonded sealant to protect the area.

The bonded sealant helps decrease the amount of plaque and tartar accumulation on the fractured site, as well as protects the soft tissue in the mouth from irritation due to the rough surface. The bonded sealant plugs the damaged microtubules, helping to slow (and in some cases prevent) bacteria from reaching the

pulp canal. Depending on the aggressiveness of the animal's chewing, the sealant can last anywhere from 3-12 months. During this time the tooth has a chance to form a 'patch' and heal itself from further damage. Regardless of the severity, fractured teeth can be pretty painful. Animals are very good at hiding this pain, so problems go unnoticed until an oral exam or a dental cleaning is done.



Fractured right lower canine tooth prior to treatment.



After smoothing the fracture and applying bonded sealants. Note the smooth surface.



Ask us about our new oral flea and tick preventative!

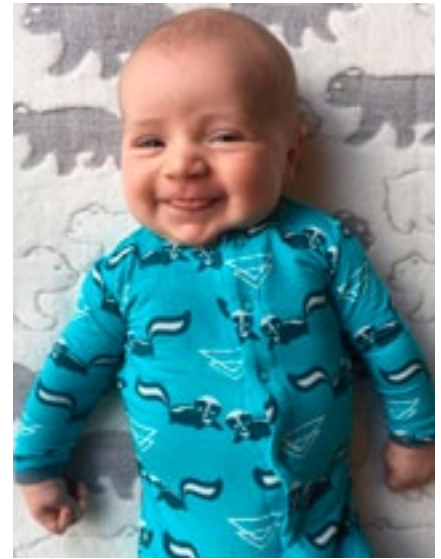
As we continue to provide products we feel have the best coverage, this



year we are offering a newer monthly chewable for dogs 6 months and older. It is a liver-flavored monthly chewable called Simparica. It protects against adult fleas within 3 hours of treatment and ticks within 48 hours. To ensure you are providing the best product for you and your dog's lifestyle, please talk with a staff member at your next visit.

Monthly Meetings

The doctors and staff at Jordan Creek Animal Hospital feel that monthly employee meetings are essential to promoting communication and educational opportunities. Because of this, we will be closed from **1:30-2:40 PM** on the following **Wednesdays: April 19, May 17 and June 21.**



Congratulations to Dr. Rachel Varley and her husband Chase, as they welcomed baby James Everett on January 11th!

MEET THE STAFF/our editors for this issue of Pet Gazette



Dr. Anne Kueter, originally from Freeport, Illinois, received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Animal Science from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana in

1992. She obtained her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Degree in 1997 from Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Kueter joined the staff of Jordan Creek Animal Hospital in March 1997.

Dr. Kueter and her husband Troy are parents of two wonderful children Abigail (Abi) and Lucas. They also have two dogs, Hannah and Buddy and two cats, Munchkin and Tango. In her free time, she enjoys biking, camping, crafts, and travel.



Claudia, RVT originally from Lehigh, Iowa, obtained her Associate Degree in Veterinary Technology from Des Moines Area Community Col-

lege in May 2008. During college, Claudia gained experience at two Central Iowa animal hospitals. After graduating, she became a full-time staff member at Jordan Creek Animal Hospital. She is particularly interested in dentistry and dental radiology.

Claudia and her husband Tim share their home with son Remington and their furry child Ean. Together they enjoy attending ISU basketball games and finding mid-century modern furniture for their home. Claudia enjoys cooking, practicing yoga, reading, painting, gardening, and crocheting.



Brooke, RVT grew up in Johnston, Iowa. She obtained her Bachelor of Science Degree in Animal Science from Iowa State University in 2013. She then went back

to school for her Associate of Applied Sciences Degree in Veterinary Technology from Des Moines Area Community College in May of 2015.

Brooke has two cats at home, Gabriel and Nonny, and is hoping to get a dog next summer. When she is not at work, Brooke enjoys watching movies, going to the gym, tailgating for Iowa and Iowa State football games, traveling, spending time with her family, and spoiling her nephew.