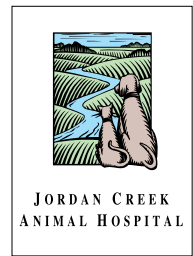




SPRING 2008 Gazette

A newsletter for people and their pets



JORDAN CREEK
ANIMAL HOSPITAL
3401 E.P. True Parkway
West Des Moines, Iowa 50265

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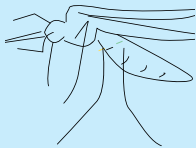
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Heartworm and Hurricanes

Heartworm season is upon us again, and recent surveys indicate the mosquito born disease is still spreading across the United States. Movement of people and their pets, as well as changes in the local landscape brought on by development may allow mosquitoes to establish in new areas or increase their numbers in areas already affected. Even hurricane Katrina may have helped the spread of heartworm disease. After the hurricane, homeless pets were relocated to shelters and homes all over the United States. Since they moved from an area with very high heartworm incidence, it is likely they brought heartworm disease with them. Iowa has had established heartworm disease for decades, but like many areas of the country, we may be seeing more cases in the coming seasons.



Here are some recent statistics:

Heartworms Prevalence and Incidence

- Diagnosed in dogs in all 50 States -
Prevalence highest in southern US
- Infections have been diagnosed in
dogs as young as 1 year
- 244,291 canine heartworm cases
diagnosed in the US 2001
- Only 23 million of the 65 million dogs in
the US are on heartworm prevention
- Relocation of infected dogs spreads
disease
- Transmission may occur even with
temperatures as low as 64° F for 1 month

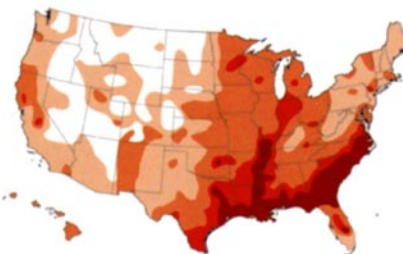
1970



1992



2005



Incidence of Heartworm in the US

Contact us by calling 515-224-9500 or visit our website at www.jordancreek.myvetonline.com



How much is that puppy in the window?

OK, admit it. That wagging tail and cute fuzzy face watching you from the pet store window can grab your attention in a heartbeat. If you're thinking of a new dog for your family (or even if you aren't!), it's all too easy to stop at the pet shop and fall in love with a pup. But what do we know about this cute four legged family member-to-be? Unfortunately, the answer may be not much.

Most of us have heard of "puppy mills", and know that they are no place to live or begin your life. Puppy mills breed large numbers of puppies for the purpose of wholesaling, largely to pet stores. In the process, adult dogs live out their lives in tiny cages, producing litter after litter, and puppies live there with little or no human attention or interaction, before being shipped to distant locations for sale to unaware customers. Dogs kept for breeding are often lower quality examples of their breed and many have no health screening prior to breeding.

For more information on puppy mills, visit these sites for recent articles : www.msnbc.com/id/22100558 or www.newsweek.com/id/77831.

Unless you are buying direct from a known reputable breeder, avoiding a puppy mill may take some research on your part.

Pet stores may tell you they only buy from USDA approved breeders that they "know" and that are not puppy mills. But USDA licensing doesn't mean much: it specifies a minimum cage size that is 6" taller, wider and longer than the dog inside, and minimum exercise of 30 minutes a day 5 days a week. The exercise requirement is waived if the cage is twice the floor space as above. No socialization is required,



and there are no rules pertaining to health, temperament or quality of parents. A USDA license does not require breeders to be knowledgeable about their breed or even about dogs in general. Even AKC certification means only that both parent dogs were of the same breed.

What about puppies advertised on websites? Beware of any site that promises large numbers of puppies available now, multiple breeds, high pressure sales tactics and credit card "orders". Such sites may be run by brokers who purchase large litter lots from puppy mills, sight unseen.

So what's the best way to find my dog?

Consider these steps:

- Make adoption your first choice. Visit your local shelter; if you have your heart set on a purebred dog, remember that an estimated 1 in 4 shelter dogs is purebred. Purebreds may also be found through breed specific rescue groups, or shelter-oriented websites like www.petfinder.com.

- Know how to recognize a responsible breeder. Good breeders care about their animals and will let you see their living spaces and records. They will ask you as many questions as you ask them.

Good breeders also:

- usually concentrate on just one breed, the better to know their breed and their individual animals. They can tell you the good points and the drawbacks of the breed.
- may belong to national and local breed clubs whose members pledge to adhere to that club's code of ethics.
- do not sell at flea markets, parking lots (or pet stores).
- allow you to come to their premises to meet the puppies AND the parents.
- help you choose the right puppy for your personality and lifestyle, and direct you to other sources if they don't have what you need.
- can tell you about the breed's potential health problems, and provide copies of health certifications performed on the parents or puppies.
- raise bright eyed, healthy, friendly puppies in the home, not in pens in the backyard or barn, and have clean, comfortable and safe housing for puppies.
- guarantee against disease caused by heritable disorders for a minimum of one year, and may offer to take the dog back at any time in its life if you are unable to keep it.

A puppy will be part of your life for 10 to 15 years. Taking time to choose carefully is the best way to ensure you and your pup enjoy a long, happy relationship.



Welcome Back, Jenny!



We are excited to announce that Jenny Burriola will be rejoining the JCAH team on

April 14th! Jenny left JCAH in July 2007 after deciding to move to Las Vegas to be closer to loved ones. While in Las Vegas, Jenny worked at a small animal hospital, acting as both a receptionist and veterinary assistant. Jenny is eager to return to JCAH and to resume caring for all of our clients and patients! Make sure to say "hi" to Jenny the next time you stop in!

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 **1:30-2:30 PM** on the following **Wednesdays: April 9, May 7, and June 4.**

Feline Nutrition— Challenging the Status Quo

For the last several decades, the mainstay of cat and dog nutrition has been commercially prepared dry food. The advantages of this food type are many: convenience, complete and balanced nutrition from a single source, long shelf life and palatability. Good quality dry foods can enhance and prolong the lives of our pets, particularly dogs. But these same foods may not be ideal for our cats.

Dry foods were first made for dogs, and as omnivores, they are well suited to them. These foods are made by extrusion, a manufacturing method that requires grains to form the dried kibble. Grains are high in carbohydrates. The dog's digestive system digests both proteins and carbohydrates well, making them good candidates for an all dry diet.

But what about the cat's nutritional needs? The cat's digestive system is designed to digest primarily protein. As obligate carnivores, they have a shorter small intestine, and do not digest carbohydrates as well. In addition, cats are descended from desert dwelling species, and do not naturally consume as much water as dogs.

Many veterinary nutritionists now believe that feeding exclusively dry foods to cats may be contributing to some health problems. Higher carbohydrate content and lower moisture in dry foods may lead to obesity, hepatic lipidosis (fatty liver), diabetes and urinary disorders in household cats.

Newer feeding recommendations include the following:

- 1) Feed most cats at least part of their diet as canned food. About 50% canned is a good starting point.
- 2) For healthy adults cats, look for a higher protein/low carbohydrate diet. These include kitten foods, some higher protein pet store brands, and prescription diets for cats such as adult m/d by Hills Science Diet and DM by Purina.
- 3) Change from free feeding to meal feeding to control total calorie consumption.
- 4) After neutering or spaying, you may need to decrease calorie intake by about 25%.
- 5) Begin using canned food in kittenhood if possible. Adult cats often develop strong food preferences and may not accept canned foods if raised on only dry diets.
- 6) Don't forget about exercise for indoor cats. Use moving toys such as "fishing pole" toys, "da bird", laser pens and others that get your cat chasing. Climbing structures and window perches may help keep your cat active also.

A final word of caution

Some cats may not be suited to these diet changes because of age or pre-existing health conditions. Any diet changes must be gradual and carefully monitored. Rapid weight loss in cats due to diet changes or refusal to eat a new food can cause serious liver disease. See your veterinarian for the advice on the best feeding plan for your cat.

Enriching your cat's environment

How happy would you be if you had one toy to play with, you never left the house, you ate the same food each morning, and the house was quiet all day? If it sounds like a dull existence, consider how your cat might feel. Even though cats sleep through a large portion of the day, they still need a certain amount of stimulation to be well adjusted kitties.

Tips to keep your cat happy

***Treat Them!** Cats like to walk around and "check out" their environment on a daily basis. Surprise your kitty by putting treats under chairs, on top of the couch, or in front of windows. Domestic cats who live exclusively outdoors (farm cats for example) hunt up to 9 times a day. Placing treats around the house can simulate the hunt for prey. You can also portion your cat's food and place the bowls in several places around the house. This is also good for overweight cats as it forces them to "hunt" around for a full meal.

***Change it up** Cats are very interested in any changes in the house. Make things interesting; tip over a chair, put an empty box in the middle of the room, place a brown paper bag in the corner, or put a ball in the sink or bath tub. Be creative, any small change you make to your cat's environment will be noticed, and of course investigated.

***Toy with them** One fuzzy mouse and a ball are usually not enough to keep kitty entertained. Have a variety of different toys, but keep some hidden away, so that you can rotate them on a weekly basis. If your cat has a favorite, like a crinkle ball, have several on hand to replace old worn ones. Remember that some of the best toys don't come from the store: milk jug rings, balled up tin foil, and ping pong balls can be a lot of

fun and even more fun to find later.

***Visualize** Since cats are predatory animals, they are very stimulated by movement. One great way to entertain kitty is to put a squirrel or bird feeder outside a favorite window. If feeding wildlife isn't possible, your cat might still enjoy an indoor window perch with views of favorite bird and wildlife resting areas. There are also cat videos that can be purchased that feature birds, mice, butterflies or bees. Not all cats like to watch television, but for those who think the big screen mimics life, they will be quite entertained.

***Play together** The very best thing you can do for your furry friend is to provide interactive playtime every day. Again, since cats are predatory creatures, they need and crave the stimulation that only stalking and capturing can bring. Though some cats like a game of fetch with a favorite toy, that may not be enough to simulate predation and capture. By the same token a wand with a couple of feathers on the end may get their attention visually, but doesn't create the sense of hunting. One toy that really satisfies "stalk and capture" is Da Bird. It's a wand attached to a long string with feathers on the end. The feathers are attached by a clip that allows the feathers to twirl as the wand

is being moved. To your cat, it looks like a bird flying around the room. Not only will it get your cat off the couch and in stalker mode, it also creates a sense of excitement that very few toys do. Try playing at least 10-20 minutes a day with Da Bird, preferably at night when a cat's predatory behavior is the strongest. To satisfy the hunting instinct, give your kitty a treat or small dollop of canned food after play. The happy hunter is often ready for bed after a good round of play and a treat.

A note of caution: Do not to allow cats access to any type of thread, twine, yarn, string or any string toys without direct supervision—cats can accidentally ingest them causing serious illness.

Most behaviorists feel that enriching your cat's environment can greatly enhance their quality of life and ward off potential behavioral problems. Even the very well behaved feline will appreciate your efforts. And if your cat is having problems with aggression, destructiveness, sleepless nights, or howling, it's a great time to try stimulating your kitty's world.

If your cat has other behavioral problems, feel free to call Jordan Creek Animal Hospital and set up a behavioral consult.

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



Dr. Leah Moore, grew up in West Des Moines before studying Animal Ecology at Iowa State University. She went on to receive her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from ISU in 1985. Before joining the staff at Jordan Creek Animal Hospital in May 1999, she practiced in a small animal hospital in the suburbs of Chicago.

Dr. Moore and her daughter share their home with two cats, Zak and Sylvie. In her spare time, she enjoys wilderness travel, gardening with native plant species, reading, and bicycling.



Tanya Harrington, grew up in Granger, Iowa before attending Iowa State University and receiving her Bachelors degree in Psychology/Sociology in 1990. She joined the staff of Jordan Creek Animal Hospital in February 1999 and played a major role in setting up the Animal Relief Fund (ARF).

Tanya enjoys spending time with her husband, Steve, as well as her dogs and cats. She has a Keeshond, Shaka; a Papillion, Leonard; and cats named Oscar, Tugar, Tuffy, and John Doe. Additionally, she enjoys volleyball, golf, watching movies, and cheering on the Drake men's basketball team!