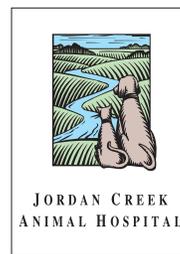




SPRING 2009 Gazette

A newsletter for people and their pets



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

in this issue:

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Allergy Season is on its way!

Our peak allergy season is right around the corner. You are probably familiar with the symptoms of human allergies that include sneezing, wheezing, runny nose and watery eyes. What you may not know is that your pet can suffer the same discomfort in different ways, most commonly an incessant itching, skin irritation or secondary ear infections. An estimated 1 out of 5 dogs and cats suffer from some sort of allergy. Common allergies in pets include environmental pollens, molds, house dust, fleas, and food. Signs that may indicate that your pet has allergies include scratching, face rubbing, hair loss, ear infections, biting and chewing at the skin or recurring skin infections. There are several different approaches that can be taken in treating allergies. The first is symptomatic treatment which involves the use of steroids, antihistamines or fatty acids. Secondly is avoidance of the environmental allergens. This option is most effective for flea and food allergies. Lastly is immunotherapy,

which is a long-term treatment that builds your pet's immunity to allergens through injections of serum specifically formulated to your pet's sensitivities. Immunotherapy is often used in patients whose symptoms are severe or cannot be safely controlled with other medications. Immunotherapy works to normalize your pet's immune response. Over the long run, it is often more effective than many medications and has been shown to have no long-term side effects. With our guidance you can administer injections to your pet right from your own home. All animals respond to immunotherapy differently. Sometimes, improvements can be seen within one month of treatment, but more often they are seen by the third or fourth month of treatment. Immunotherapy is a long-term treatment with long-term results.

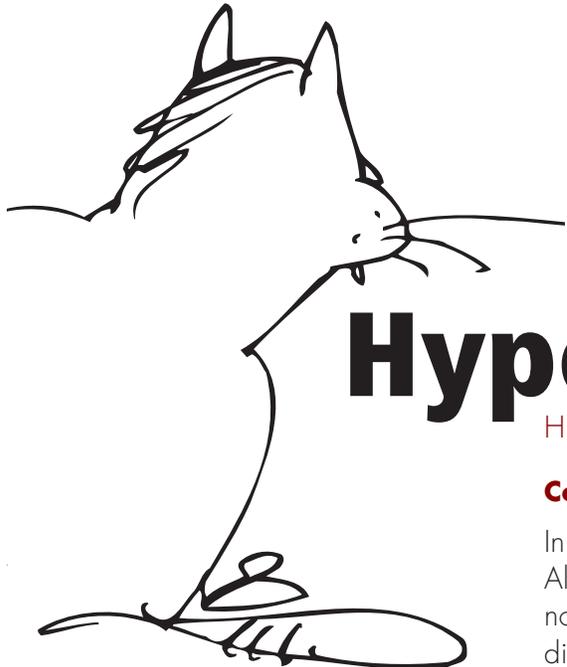


New Product Update

COMFORTIS – A new flea control product. This new product is a beef-flavored chewable tablet that kills fleas on dogs and is given once a month. The product is safe for dogs and puppies older than 14 weeks of age. The chewable tablet acts on specific parts of the nervous system of fleas to kill them if they bite your pet. The product is very fast acting and starts to kill fleas within 30 minutes after administration. Please call us for more information on Comfortis.

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





Hypertension In Cats

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Contributing Factors

In humans, hypertension is related to several factors, including a stressful lifestyle. Although not all of the causes of feline hypertension have been identified, stress does not appear to play a role in the development of this disorder in cats. However, kidney disease and thyroid disease are known to be associated with feline hypertension.

Clinical Signs

As with people, many cats with hypertension have no symptoms at all, especially if the hypertension has not been long-standing. In cats that are symptomatic, vision abnormalities are the most common clinical findings. These abnormalities can include dilated pupils that do not constrict with light, blood within the front chamber of the eye, and blindness. Blindness develops because high blood pressure in the eye causes the retina to detach. These cats run into objects in their path because most of them have no vision at all. Other clinical signs or symptoms that may be seen with high blood pressure include strokes, blood clots, heart murmurs, and general lethargy. If cats with high blood pressure also have concurrent kidney or thyroid disease (both of which can be contributing factors in hypertension), they may also have signs consistent with those diseases.

Causes

Kidney failure and hyperthyroidism have been identified as the two most common predisposing factors for development of feline hypertension. One study found that about 65% of cats in old-age kidney failure have hypertension. Elderly cats in the

early stages of kidney disease may also have hypertension. Cats may also have primary or idiopathic hypertension in which case there is no apparent underlying cause.



Is this a hypertensive cat?

It can be difficult to tell. Many cats do not show symptoms.

Diagnosis

Hypertension should be suspected in any cat with kidney disease or hyperthyroidism. Onset of sudden, unexplained blindness should raise a strong suspicion for hypertension and the associated diseases should be considered. The presence of a heart murmur or kidney-related problems may also signal the presence of a hypertensive state. Because hypertension is now recognized as a common finding in senior cats, and we know that these cats may have no symptoms, we recommend

annual blood pressure screening in all senior cats (9 years or older) and more frequently in cats with known kidney or thyroid abnormalities. Blood pressure is determined with a device that can detect blood flow in arteries. Because the cat's arteries are so small, a special instrument is required. The most common one used is based on the Doppler principle which is placed on the cat's tail.

Treatment

The first step in treatment is to use one or more of several hypotensive agents (drugs to lower blood pressure). The next step is to diagnose and treat the underlying disease. If it is hyperthyroidism, treatment is required. When treatment is completed, hypertension resolves, and further treatment with hypotensive drugs is often not needed. If kidney failure is diagnosed, it is usually not curable but often can be controlled. However, most of these cats require long-term treatment for hypertension. If no underlying disease is found, primary hypertension is considered to be present and long-term treatment for hypertension is needed. Drugs used to treat hypertension in cats are similar to those used in people, and include calcium channel blockers, ACE inhibitors, diuretics, etc.

Bonnie & Clyde:

AN ARF SUCCESS STORY

Bonnie and Clyde arrived at Jordan Creek Animal Hospital on a cold December day in 2008. Found orphaned at 4 weeks of age by West Des Moines Animal Control, they were malnourished with fleas, diarrhea and an upper respiratory infection. A volunteer at West Des Moines Animal Control asked that we take the kittens in after their



littermates died at the shelter.

Thanks to ARF, Bonnie and Clyde responded well to their treatment for fleas, diarrhea, intestinal parasites, and respiratory infection. After 3 weeks of nursing care from our staff, Bonnie and Clyde were adopted by loving families and are thriving in their new homes.

What is the Animal Relief Fund (ARF)?

The Animal Relief Fund was started by members of the Jordan Creek Animal Hospital staff in order to help orphaned animals and those that are brought to the clinic injured and without owners. To give these animals the care they need and deserve, staff members often donate time and money to provide the needed medical attention. Eventually, caring clients learned of the fund and made donations, bringing the Animal Relief Fund to life! Due to the generosity of all of these animal lovers, many animals have been helped, but there are many who still need our assistance.

In the News... *Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)*

What is MRSA? MRSA is a type of bacteria that is resistant to certain antibiotics. Although MRSA is primarily found in people, animals can be infected. There is some evidence that shows that MRSA can be spread between people and animals.

Is MRSA a health risk for myself or my family? MRSA does not usually cause illness in healthy people or animals. If a person or animal has a compromised immune system due

to old age, recent surgery, or cancer, exposure to MRSA could threaten health.

How is MRSA transmitted to people and animals? Direct skin-to-skin contact is the most common way MRSA is transmitted, but it can be transmitted by contaminated objects such as bandages as well.

What are the symptoms of MRSA in people and animals? MRSA most commonly causes skin infections

or wound infections. Not all people or pets that carry MRSA on their skin or in their nasal passages have outward signs of illness – this is called colonization.

How is MRSA diagnosed? A swab taken from the affected area is submitted to a laboratory for bacterial culture. If your pet is diagnosed with this bacterial infection, we recommend that you consult your physician for examination and recommendations.

The Parasite You • **BAYLISASCARIS** Should Know About •

Companion pets and livestock are known to have some diseases that can be transmitted to humans called zoonotic diseases but many people are less familiar with diseases that are carried by wildlife. Raccoons are common around Iowa and often well intentioned clients "adopt" these animals as pets or attempt to rescue them. However, these animals can harbor a very severe roundworm that puts people as well as dogs at risk.

Baylisascaris procyonis is an intestinal parasite which is carried by raccoons and sometimes dogs. Parasite eggs are shed in the feces and can survive for years in the environment regardless of weather conditions. *Baylisascaris* eggs have also shown to be resistant to many methods of disinfection. Desiccation (drying) and sunlight eventually destroy the eggs.

Humans can also become infected from incidental ingestion of eggs following contact with raccoon feces or dirt and water contaminated by raccoon feces. Once ingested, the parasite can invade a number of tissues including the liver, heart, lungs, central nervous

system, and eyes. The parasite larvae continue to grow and molt during their migration through the various tissues of their host. Approximately 5-7% of larvae are thought to invade the brain. Infections are difficult to prevent completely. Most cases in humans have been associated with regular contact with or observation of raccoons on the property or in the house. Young children who eat dirt are at a particularly high risk of infection. Prevention includes avoiding contact with raccoons and their feces.

Dogs that are infected with *Baylisascaris* typically do not show signs of disease. Young animals may develop intestinal obstruction with massive infestations. Diagnosis in dogs includes identification of eggs in feces or worms in the feces or vomit. Dogs can be treated with deworming medications. Many monthly heartworm medications appear to decrease the risk of intestinal infection. Dogs in high risk areas or who share their outdoor environment with raccoons should receive regular fecal exams and stay on year round heartworm preventatives.



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 8, May 13, and June 10, 2009.**

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



Dr. Pam Erdman, originally from West Bend, Iowa, received her Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Iowa State University. She then went on to receive her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from ISU in May 2005. Before joining the staff at Jordan Creek Animal Hospital in January 2006, she practiced at a pet hospital in Darien, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. Dr. Erdman and her husband Matt share their home with their black lab Clover and cat Ace. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with friends and family, playing guitar and piano, boating, and reading.



Mistee Hendricks, RVT is originally from Horton, Iowa, and has lived in the Des Moines area for 3½ years. She received her Associate of Applied Sciences degree in Veterinary Technology from Kirkwood Community College. She has two bichon frises, Jester and Shamee. Mistee enjoys being outdoors, biking and walking, playing sand volleyball, going to concerts and I-Cubs games, and spending time with family, friends, and her pets.