



Pet

SUMMER 2007

Gazette

A newsletter for people and their pets

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Welcome to the first edition of Jordan Creek Animal Hospital's Pet Gazette!

Thanks for signing up for our new e-mail newsletter! We know how important your pets are to you, that's why we've decided to organize an e-mail newsletter to be sent on a periodic basis. Our goal is to inform you of your pets' special needs in order for them to live happier and healthier lives. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions after reading through the 1st issue, please don't hesitate to contact us!

PARASITES AND YOUR PETS

Preventatives and prevention in the home and yard can lessen the chances of infestation.

When the days grow longer and the sun brighter, dogs and cats become even more eager than usual to play outdoors. But, fleas, ticks, and intestinal parasites love the summertime and there is a good chance your pet will encounter one of the pests during his outdoor adventures. Fortunately, proper treatment can put a stop to complications before they become a serious concern.

PROTECTING YOUR PETS FROM PARASITES

Parasites, both internal and external, are common and can best be diagnosed and treated through regular check-ups and fecal exams. External parasites can live in or on the skin or ears, while internal parasites inhabit the internal organs. Some parasites are contagious to humans and other animals and may also be carriers of other diseases.

Internal Parasites

Dogs and cats infected with internal (or intestinal) parasites contaminate their environment by passing eggs or larvae in their feces. Because pets will pass feces anywhere, they may contaminate a large area very quickly. The most common intestinal parasites are roundworms, hookworms, and whipworms. We also see small intracellular parasites such as giardia and coccidia which can affect your pet. Most pets show no signs of infection; if symptoms are exhibited, you may see vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite or weight loss, lethargy, cough, or a poor hair coat.

Fleas and Ticks

Keep in mind that fleas and ticks are relatively dormant during the winter months. As temperatures rise, they are ready to cozy up to the nearest dog, cat, or warm body. Despite your best efforts, a flea or tick infestation can occur. A flea infestation will usually cause your pet to scratch more than normal, but sometimes it isn't obvious. Check your pet regularly for attached ticks and look closely for fleas and flea dirt on your pet's hair coat.

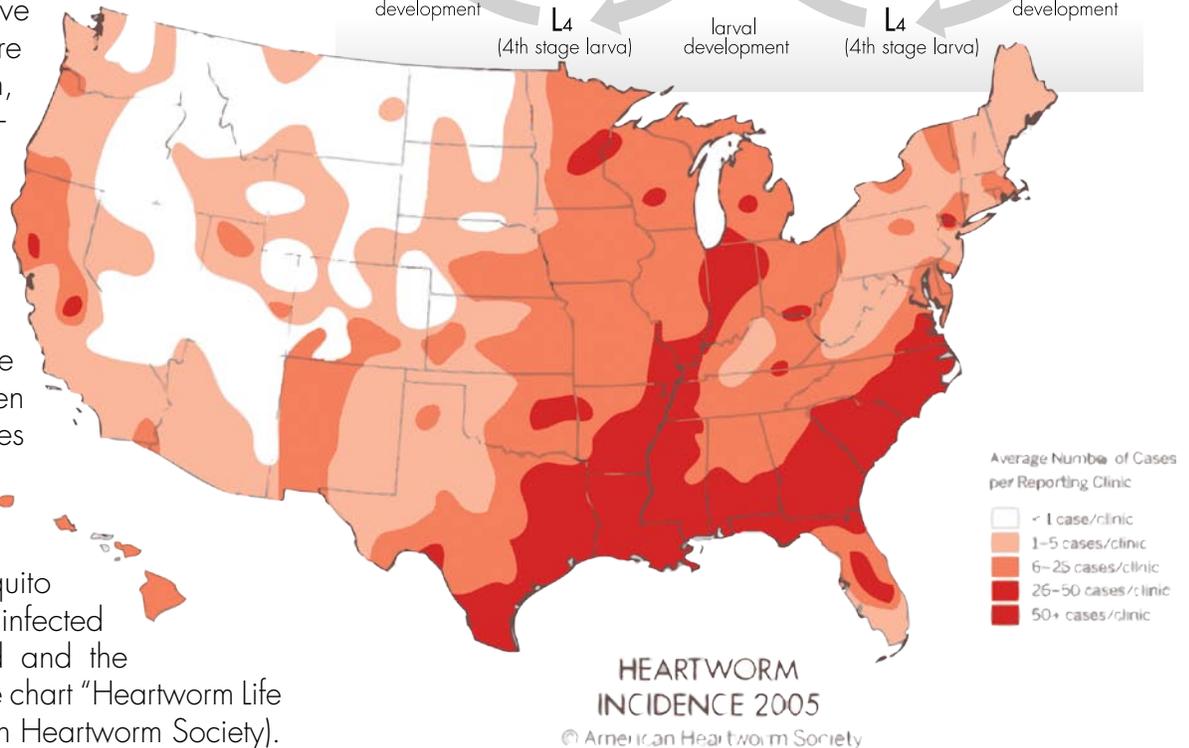
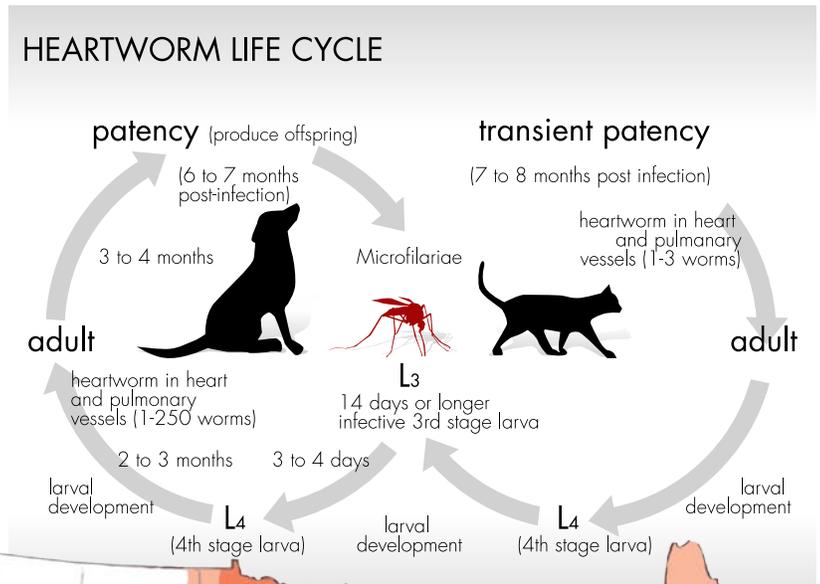
Fleas and ticks can affect humans also. Ticks can cause numerous diseases in both humans and pets, including Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. Remember to check your pet as well as yourself and your children for unwanted pests.

Heartworms

Heartworm disease is a parasitic disease that can affect any dog regardless of age, sex, or habitat. Spread by the mosquito, it is found in virtually all parts of the United States and Canada (see chart "Heartworm Incidence 2005" by the American Heartworm Society).

A single mosquito bite can be lethal to your dog if heartworm is transmitted. And since it can take months before the symptoms become apparent, heartworm is often referred to as the "silent killer." Heartworms live in the blood of a dog's heart and adjacent blood vessels, grow from four to twelve inches in length, mature one year after infection, and live for five to seven years.

Adult heartworms living in the heart produce offspring, known as microfilariae, which circulate in the animal's blood. When a female mosquito bites an infected animal, it sucks out the blood containing microfilariae. When the mosquito bites another pet, the infected larvae are transmitted and the cycle begins again (see chart "Heartworm Life Cycle" by the American Heartworm Society).



PREVENTING INFECTION

While it is almost impossible to prevent parasites from infecting your pet, there are many ways we can reduce the chance of your pet being infected. Prompt removal of stools from your yard; limiting your pet's contact with other animals' feces, including other dogs, cats, and wild animals; and maintaining your pet on a regular antiparasitic program. This may include the use of topical products for fleas and

ticks, oral deworming agents, and/or monthly heartworm prevention.

We recommend an annual blood test to detect whether your pet has contracted heartworm. In Iowa, most pet owners give monthly heartworm preventatives from May 15 through November 15. If your pet spends some of the winter months in a warm climate or is at risk for intestinal parasites, then year-round prevention might be best for your

pet. Not only will heartworm preventatives help protect your pet from heartworm disease, but most preventatives also contain a deworming medication for the most common intestinal parasites. Topical products are also available and can be found in combination with a flea and/or tick preventative. We can discuss which preventatives are right for you and your pet.

INFECTIONS IN HUMANS

The eggs and larvae that dogs and cats infected with intestinal parasites pass in their feces are resilient and can survive in your yard, parks and playgrounds, and even within your home. When people become infected from animals, these infections are called zoonoses. People get infected most commonly with roundworms or hookworms. Infection occurs through direct contact with or accidental ingestion of feces or contaminated soil, sand, or plants.

Hookworms

Hookworm larvae can penetrate the skin and cause inflammation called cutaneous larva migrans. Children are more susceptible than adults, perhaps because they play on the ground or in sandboxes that can be contaminated. Young children are also more likely to put dirty objects into their mouths, which makes them more prone to get these infections.

Roundworms

Roundworms enter the human body when ingested as eggs that soon hatch into larvae from an infected dog, cat, or wild animal such as the raccoon. The larvae travel through the liver, lungs, and other organs. In most cases, these "wandering worms" cause no symptoms or apparent damage. However, in some cases, they produce a condition known as visceral larva migrans. The larvae may cause damage to tissue and sometimes affect the nerves or eyes. In severe cases, the larvae can cause permanent damage, even blindness. This is especially a concern in children under the age of 3 years who have been exposed to these eggs.

PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY FROM PARASITES

You can protect yourself and your family by:

- Practicing frequent hand washing
- Having puppies and kittens dewormed at an early age
- Starting and keeping your pets on a preventative program for both internal and external parasites
- Considering year-round heartworm prevention to control intestinal parasites (especially if you have young children in the household)
- Learning to recognize and avoid possibly contaminated soil, sand, plants, and other objects (and teaching your children to do the same)
- Keeping play areas, your lawn, and gardens around your home free of animal waste
- Covering sandboxes when not in use



FAREWELL, JENNY

We are sorry to announce that Jenny Burriola, one of our receptionists, has left the practice. Because of a long distance relationship, she has made the difficult decision to move out of state to Las Vegas where she will be closer to her significant other, Jason. She would like to pass along to everyone that she has really enjoyed our clients and patients and hopes to return to the Des Moines area and join the JCAH staff again soon!

WELCOME, STEPHANIE!



We are pleased to introduce Stephanie Fraser as a new member of the JCAH team! Stephanie

joined us as a receptionist on July 2nd and is quickly learning all aspects of her position. She brings with her previous experience in the banking industry where she prided herself on providing top quality customer service. She has a strong desire to learn more about veterinary medicine and plans to go back to school to become a veterinary technician. Make sure to say "hi" to Stephanie the next time you stop in!

LEPTOSPIROSIS: What every dog owner should know

You may have noticed on a recent Jordan Creek Animal Hospital invoice or reminder card that we now separate the vaccination for DHPP and Leptospirosis. This is because the DHPP vaccination (Distemper, Hepatitis, Parainfluenza and Parvo) is now given every 3 years in adult dogs while the Leptospirosis component is given annually.

WHAT IS LEPTOSPIROSIS?

Leptospirosis is a disease caused by infection with one of the more than 250 serotypes 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 outside the body.

HOW IS LEPTOSPIROSIS TRANSMITTED?

Leptospirosis is most often transmitted to dogs through mucous-membrane (mouth, nose, eyes) contact with the urine of an infected animal or a cut in the skin. Raccoons, skunks, opossums, rats, cows, and pigs 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 an increased risk for infection). 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
- diarrhea
- dehydration
- weakness
- fever
- depression

Even with prompt, exhaustive medical care, 10 to 15 percent of infected dogs may die. When left untreated, many infected dogs die of kidney or liver failure.

HOW DO I PREVENT LEPTOSPIROSIS?

For most dogs, limiting exposure to the outdoors is neither practical nor desirable. Yearly vaccination is the best way to help prevent leptospirosis. Although the vaccines available today do not protect

against every serotype of leptospirosis, they are one of the best lines of protection we have. Discuss the benefits and risks of leptospirosis vaccination with one of our team members.

CAN CATS GET LEPTOSPIROSIS?

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

WHAT IF I DO 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. If your dog is diagnosed with leptospirosis, consider medical assessment for anyone in close contact with the pet.

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



Dr. Anne Kueter graduated from Iowa State College of Veterinary Medicine and joined Jordan Creek Animal Hospital after working here for a few months prior to graduation in 1997. Originally from Illinois, she attended community college for 2 years and finished her undergraduate degree from University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana in Animal Science. Dr. Kueter then moved to Iowa and attended Iowa State. After graduation she and her husband decided to live and work in the Des Moines area.

Dr. Kueter has been married to her high school sweetheart, Troy, for almost 10 years. They have 2 children, Abigayle (3½) and Lucas (1½). Their family also consists of more children – the four-legged kind – 2 dogs (a Golden Retriever and a Shepherd Mix) and 3 cats.

In her free time, Dr. Kueter enjoys spending time with her family. She especially likes being outdoors, whether camping, hiking, or biking. Anne and her family enjoy traveling, and like to visit relatives in Illinois and Colorado as often as they can.



Erin Darrow, RVT has been employed by Jordan Creek Animal Hospital since May of 2005. She started her veterinary technician career in 2001 by attending Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids. By May of 2004, she had received a Veterinary Assistant and a Veterinary Technician degree. While in school for 3 years, Erin worked at Frey Pet Hospital, where she learned many basic concepts on

what it was like to be a veterinary technician. Since that time, she has greatly expanded her skills by working with the wonderful patients at Jordan Creek Animal Hospital. Erin loves to share her pet ownership expertise with clients that bring in a new puppy or kitten. Outside of work, Erin enjoys spending time with her cat, Rocki, and watching her favorite TV shows, such as *House*, *ER*, and *CSI*.

Each issue of Pet Gazette will introduce you to more of our caring staff!