

Paw Talk



A professional publication for the clients of East Valley Animal Clinic

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Now Boarding...

With the warmer weather approaching, many people are planning vacations. If you're planning to board your pet while you're away, you should be aware of a condition called "kennel cough," and the precautions you can take to protect your dog.

"Kennel cough" is a dry hacking cough that typically lasts 7-14 days. It is spread by contact with other dogs, which is why it is easily contracted at boarding facilities. In some unusual cases, kennel cough can progress to pneumonia. Kennel cough is usually caused by both bacterial and viral infections, and the most common bacterial component is called "Bordetella." A vaccine is available to help protect your dog against this bacterium.

Your boarding facility should require that your dog is up-to-date on its vaccinations, and may require a Bordetella vaccine, which may not be included in the routine vaccines that your pet receives. Because bordetella is only one component of kennel cough, a vaccinated dog may still develop symptoms of the disease, but it is

continued on pg. 4

Looking Good!

As summer draws near, it is important to be aware that your pets' grooming needs may change with the warmer weather.

Many thick-coated dogs and cats benefit from a grooming, which will remove the thick undercoat that builds up over winter. Some animals get a close shave at the beginning of summer, to remove the excess hair. That long hair can actually insulate dogs from the heat, so consult with your veterinarian or groomer before shaving your dog. Also, once shaved, the hair may grow back differently, which can affect the appearance of your pet. The best thing you can do is brush your pet on a regular basis. Regular brushing removes the undercoat and stimulates the oil glands, which keeps the coat looking shiny and protects the skin.

It is important to keep toenails short year-round. Dogs and cats can catch long nails on things, causing the nail to rip off, and leaving a very painful and bloody mess.

Dogs that are kept outside are at risk for bites and irritation from insects. Dogs with erect ears are particularly vulnerable to fly bites, which may leave painful sores on the tips of the ears. There are pet-safe bug repellants, or a light coating of petroleum jelly also protects the ear tips.

Don't forget flea and tick preventive! Frontline or Certifect are effective ways to prevent unwanted pests on your pet. Even if your dog or cat doesn't spend time outside, they are still susceptible to these pests from squirrels and rabbits that run through your yard. It only takes one flea on your pet to lead to an infestation of thousands in your house!

If your pet spends time outdoors, a sunscreen may be a good idea, especially if your pet is white or has a thin haircoat. Sunscreens made for pets are available and can protect your pet from sunburn and skin cancer.

As always, don't leave your pet exposed to the heat. Never leave your pet in a car in the summer, and if they are outside, make sure they have access to a shaded area. Dogs like pugs and bulldogs are much more susceptible to overheating, which can cause death quickly, so ensure they are in a cool environment on hot, humid days.

A little preparation can help your four-legged friends remain comfortable during the dog days of summer!





Whiskers

At first glance, whiskers are like ordinary hair. Also known as vibrissae, whiskers are comprised of the same substance as hair, but are usually thicker and extend much deeper into the skin. Whiskers grow from specialized follicles that contain many sensory receptors and nerve cells, which make them extraordinary tools that some animals use to obtain information about their surroundings.

Many animals can move some of their whiskers. Cats will push their whiskers forward when they're in an inquisitive mood, and pull them backward when in a defensive posture. Other animals, such as rats and mice, can move whiskers quickly back and forth in a motion known as "whisking," which appears to provide information about their environment. Rats are able to distinguish between sandpapers of differing coarseness and holes of just 3mm difference in size using just their whiskers.

Folklore tells us that cats use whiskers to determine whether their bodies will fit through an opening, but it's questionable whether that's true. Whisker length is genetically determined, and whiskers do not grow longer if a cat gets fatter.

Studies have shown that cats use their whiskers to sense changes in air currents, which probably helps them hunt at night. Aquatic mammals such as seals use their whiskers to sense changes in water currents, and are capable of detecting disturbances in water as small as a goldfish.

Swamp Fever

According to the Centers for Disease Control, leptospirosis (or "lepto") is considered the most widespread zoonotic disease in the world. Not only can this insidious disease affect dogs and humans, it can affect other mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians as well. It has been known as Swamp Fever, Milker's Disease and Swineherd's Disease.

Leptospirosis is caused by spiral-shaped bacteria called leptospire. There are more than 200 known varieties of *Leptospira* bacteria, which can be found in water, soil and on damp, contaminated grass. Leptospirosis occurs most in warm, wet climates around the world, but it has been documented throughout the United States, even in drier areas.

The most common exposure to leptospirosis bacteria is from drinking water that has been contaminated by animal urine, but can occur any time the bacteria comes in contact with the mucous membranes (eyes, nose, mouth) or an open scratch or wound. Standing and slow moving water harbor the biggest risk of being contaminated. Dogs can also become infected by eating an infected carcass, and the disease can spread through the placenta of a mother dog to her puppies.

Leptospirosis is relatively rare in humans and cats in the United States, but cases in dogs appear to be on the rise. Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, fever, abdominal pain, lack of appetite, muscle pain, weakness and depression. The disease can quickly damage a dog's kidneys and liver, and lead to kidney or liver failure and death if left untreated. Don't hesitate to contact your veterinarian if you notice flu-like symptoms in your dog, because prompt treatment is essential! Notify your physician if your dog is diagnosed with leptospirosis, as there are precautionary measures that humans should take to avoid contracting the disease.

There is a vaccine available for dogs that provides protection against the most common strains of the bacteria. Ask your veterinarian if the vaccination is appropriate for your dog. In addition, try not to allow your dog to drink from slow-moving streams or stagnant water, and try to minimize contact with farm animals, rodents and wildlife.

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Cat Implants



Heartworm–The Threat Is Real

Heartworm disease is a deadly condition caused by parasitic worms that can infect dogs, cats and a variety of other animals. The only method of transmission is by mosquitoes.

Heartworm has now been documented in all 50 states, and around the globe. Everyone should consider their pets at risk, even if they never go outside.

Mature heartworms can inflict severe damage in the heart and lungs of dogs. Sometimes an immune response occurs, which can then damage other organs as well. Symptoms of infection include coughing, exercise intolerance, weight loss and abnormal lung and heart sounds. Once the infection becomes symptomatic, it is labeled heartworm disease. Left untreated, heartworm disease is almost always fatal.

Treatment

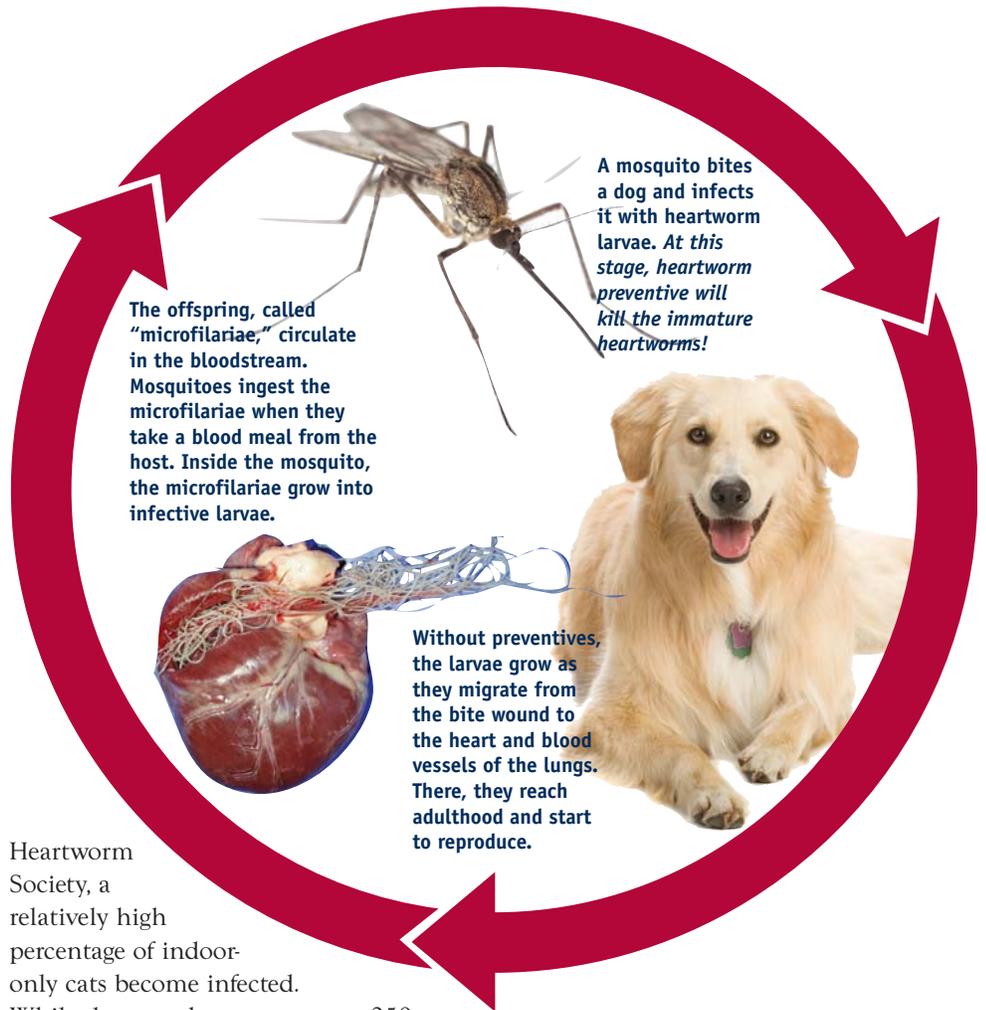
There is an FDA-approved treatment for dogs; however the associated risks are high and it is more likely to be successful if the infection is detected early. During treatment, the heartworms die inside the lungs. Dogs undergoing this treatment require complete rest, and additional medications may be required to help control the body's inflammatory response. Surgical removal of heartworms is possible, but it is considered a very high risk procedure.

Prevention

Heartworm disease is almost 100% preventable, and as with most diseases, prevention is easier, less expensive and safer than treatment. Heartworm preventives do not kill adult heartworms; so prior to starting preventives, veterinarians require a blood test to ensure that your dog is not already infected.

Cats Are At Risk

Cats are more resistant to heartworms than dogs, but they can still become infected. According to the American



Heartworm Society, a relatively high percentage of indoor-only cats become infected. While dogs can have as many as 250 heartworms, infected cats often have fewer than six. Nevertheless, even a small worm burden is potentially fatal.

Signs of heartworm disease in cats can mimic other diseases, and include coughing, respiratory distress, lethargy, vomiting and weight loss. Diagnosis in cats is more difficult than in dogs.

There are no approved heartworm treatment medications for cats, however there are multiple approved heartworm preventives. Your veterinarian can recommend the best choice for your pet.

News Alert

There is currently a critical shortage of the drug used to treat heartworm in dogs (Immiticide®). Because of this, prevention is more important than ever!

For more information about heartworm disease, visit the American Heartworm Society website at www.heartwormsociety.org.

Canine heart infested with heartworms photo courtesy of Stephen L. Jones, DVM, American Heartworm Society

“I love cats because I enjoy my home; and little by little, they become its visible soul.”

– Jean Cocteau



NOW BOARDING *continued from pg. 1*

usually milder and shorter in duration than in an unvaccinated dog.

We recommend the vaccine be administered at least four to seven days before your dog enters any boarding facility. We use an intranasal vaccine (into the nostrils) which does a very good job of providing immunity, but it takes a few days to become effective. If a dog is likely to be exposed to immune-suppressed individuals, or if a dog's temperament will not tolerate the intranasal vaccine, we may give an injectable version of the vaccine. This version requires a booster in three weeks and takes up to four weeks to be "protective." Having your dog vaccinated with either version immediately before they enter the kennel may leave them unprotected to the disease.

If you have plans that include your dog spending time at a boarding facility, give us a call. We can ensure that your pet is up-to-date on all of their vaccines, so everyone can have a safe and enjoyable vacation.

Meet Dr. Dudley

Dr. Katie Dudley started working at East Valley Animal Clinic after graduating from the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine in 2003. After four years, she left to pursue opportunities on the East Coast, but just couldn't stay away. We were happy she returned to Minnesota in 2009, and she shares in our happiness. Even though it has been three years, she says that the joy of being back in Minnesota and at East Valley Animal Clinic hasn't worn off.



Dr. Dudley and Sebastian

She considers the staff at East Valley like a second family and loves the time that we all spend together, both at work and after hours. Dr. Dudley also enjoys the time she gets to spend with clients and being a part of keeping their furry family healthy.

Originally from southeastern Minnesota, Dr. Dudley now calls south Minneapolis her home. She is a new homeowner, having just purchased a house last year. Dr. Dudley shares her home with her three cats (Henry, Stuart and Sebastian), her Standard Poodle (Walter), and one fish (Buddha #4). When not at work, Dr. Dudley spends a lot of time at the dog park watching Walter run. She also enjoys reading, yoga and watching movies.

Dr. Dudley is a wonderful and caring veterinarian with a unique (and infectious) giggle. We love her dearly!

CERTIFECT IS HERE!

As we move into the summer months, fleas and ticks become more prevalent. Luckily, we now have a new product to help combat these dangerous pests. Certifect combines the ingredients from Frontline Plus with a small dose of amitraz, which has faster and longer lasting flea control and extra tick killing power.

Fleas can quickly infest your house. A single female flea can produce over 200 eggs in less than three weeks.

Ticks are carriers of some very serious diseases; Lyme disease, anaplasmosis and other diseases can be fatal for some dogs.

Please don't hesitate to ask us about Certifect. It may be just what your dog needs this summer!



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