

Paws and Claws Quarterly



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Is your cat losing her girlish figure? See page 2 for information on weight loss in cats.

Is that new lump something to worry about? Read our article about lumps and bumps on page 2.

Is Fluffy's breath unbearable lately? It could be due to dental disease. See page 3 for details.

My New Year's Resolutions



"Humphrey" Nash



"Archie" Blackwell

1. I will remind my family to give me my heartworm and flea prevention every month by any means necessary. (This includes barking incessantly, refusing to obey commands, and basically being naughtier than I already am.)
2. I will refuse all table scraps no matter what my family offers me because I know they are BAD for me!!!
3. I will retrieve the phone for my family in order for them to schedule an appointment for my yearly examination.
4. I will not pull on my leash during walks or drag my family behind me when I spot a squirrel, a bird, a tree, a bush, a leaf, a blade of grass.....
5. I will give up all digging and rolling around in the dirt because I know my family appreciates me being clean.
6. I will be brave and well-behaved at my doctor's office because I know those people are only doing what they need to in order to keep me healthy.

You ARE kidding, right? I'm pretty much perfect just the way I am. I have instead composed a resolution list for my family to adhere to.

1. I will give my beloved cat his heartworm and flea prevention every month.
2. I will feed him the best cat food money can buy, along with the occasional small portion of tuna and salmon.
3. I will host an intervention to address my cat's little catnip problem. At this event, I will serve generous portions of tuna and salmon.
4. I will not forget to schedule my cat's yearly examination or he may resort to scratching up my furniture or using my bed as his litter-box.
5. I will pay attention to any subtle changes in my cat's behavior or habits since these could indicate that he doesn't feel well and thinks he needs to go to his doctor.

HEALTH INSURANCE FOR YOUR PET—IS IT WORTH IT?

With all the talk going on lately about human health care, it is important to remember that there are reputable pet insurance companies with plans designed to help you afford the best veterinary care possible for your furry friend. Most of these companies provide several levels of coverage for different monthly payments, ranging from reimbursement for routine visits only to coverage

for every problem your pet could encounter during its lifetime. All companies advise owners to start coverage on pets when they are kittens or puppies. Most pet insurance companies will not reimburse you for treatment of any pre-existing conditions, but will cover the treatment for many diseases or health issues your pet develops if you start coverage before the onset of any problems.

Visit:

- www.petinsurance.com to learn about VPI Pet Insurance
- www.isyourpetcovered.com to learn about ASPCA Pet Health Insurance
- www.trupanion.com to learn about Trupanion Pet Insurance



THE SKINNY ON FAT CATS

It is estimated that anywhere from 20-40% of cats seen in veterinary practice are obese. Studies have consistently shown that obesity is associated with shorter life spans. This common health problem in cats can mostly be attributed to two main causes:

1. Sedentary lifestyles

Cats need exercise. In the wild, cats must hunt 5-7 times a day to satisfy their caloric needs. This involves stalking and striking, which consumes a good bit of energy. Indoor cats need a minimum of 10-20 minutes of exercise a day involving pouncing, stalking toys, or playing with catnip, laser pointers, or even scraps of paper. Visit www.indoorcat.com for ideas on how to enrich your indoor cat's environment.

2. Overeating/Improper diet

A cat's daily caloric intake requirements are reduced by 25-30% after being spayed or neutered. It is important to realize that recommendations

on the average cat food bag are based on studies using unneutered male cats, so feeding by the bag's instructions is not appropriate for most cats.

Cat's main dietary requirements are protein and fat.



They have little need for carbohydrates; in fact, in sedentary cats, carbs are not used as energy sources, but are instead stored as fat. Cat's bodies are in constant demand for protein and if they don't get it from their diet, they will take it from their own muscles. For this reason, simply feeding a cat less of their regular diet or feeding some of the diet foods out there will not help a cat lose weight because they will not get enough protein that way. Instead, the ideal diet for a cat for weight loss would be a high protein (>45%), low-fat, and low-carbohydrate diet. A good quality name-brand canned food fits most of the criteria for a good diet in cats. These diets are high in protein and water, contain little carbohy-

drates, and more closely resemble their natural diets. The amount of canned food given should still be regulated to avoid overfeeding. An average active cat needs around 300 kcal/day, whereas a cat needing weight loss should be restricted to 200kcal/day. Most large cans of cat food are anywhere from 100-150kcal/can, while small ones such as Fancy Feast are anywhere from 70-100 kcal/can.

It is not easy to get weight off of a heavy cat, but obesity is a potentially life-threatening disease. Obesity in cats is associated with the development of diabetes, liver disease, arthritis, respiratory illness, constipation, and poor grooming habits. There are some studies that implicate obesity as a risk factor for cancer. Consult with your veterinarian to discuss a safe and healthy weight loss plan for your special cat.

"Obesity in cats is associated with the development of diabetes, liver disease, arthritis, respiratory illness, constipation, and poor grooming habits. There are some studies that implicate obesity as a risk factor for cancer."

If you insist on laying on me, you could at least lose a little weight...



"Gypsy" and "Marley" Jagocki

LUMPS AND BUMPS—ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT?

Growths on the skin or underneath the skin of your pet can seem to pop up out of the blue. Maybe you've noticed one and are wondering if it is something to be worried about. Certainly, pets can develop masses that can be concerning, even if they don't look very threatening at all.

Older pets can develop benign growths on the skin that resemble warts, as well as soft lumps under the skin that are composed of fat tissue called lipomas. Although these are usually nothing to worry about, you should always have any growths checked by your veterinarian to confirm that they are in fact benign (non-cancerous) masses. Unfortunately, pets can develop several different kinds of cancerous growths. Depending on how aggressive these cancers are, they can invade tissue and organs such as the lungs and liver. This is why it is impor-

tant to get any lumps or bumps checked as soon as possible to avoid the potential spread of cancer.

Before coming in for your pet's yearly exam, check him or her over carefully for any growths or masses and make sure to mention them to your veterinarian. Your doctor may decide to perform an aspirate, which involves taking some cells from the growth and looking at them under a microscope to determine if they look abnormal. If so, we may recommend surgical removal of the mass. At that time, we can send the mass to a pathologist, who can tell us exactly what specific type of cancer, if any, has caused the growth to occur. We can then determine what course of treatment needs to be started to prevent further metastasis, or spreading, of the disease.

If you notice any new lumps or bumps on your pet, please schedule an appointment with your veterinarian.

THE DANGERS OF TABLE FOOD



You and your family have just finished a wonderful home-cooked meal. You look down to see your loyal dog gazing up at you with those sweet, begging eyes. How could you deny him a bite or two of the tasty food he's just watched all of you eat?

As tempting as it is to give your dog a little of your leftovers, you may be causing bodily harm to your pet by doing so. Just a small amount of a food that is not normally a part of your dog's diet can cause health issues ranging in severity. General gastrointestinal upset may occur that can

cause diarrhea and/or vomiting. If fed meat with bones, dogs' gastrointestinal systems can become obstructed with pieces of these bones, often resulting in the need for emergency surgery. Dogs exposed to garbage or fatty foods can develop pancreatitis, a life-threatening condition that requires hospitalization for intravenous fluids and medications.

There are several foods that should never be given to your dog due to their potential of toxicity. These include chocolate (especially dark or baking chocolate), onions, grapes, and raisins. For a complete list these foods,

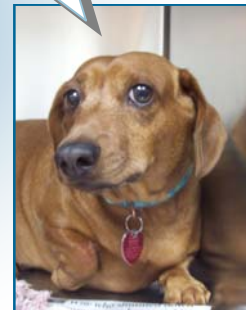
visit www.aspc.org.

If you insist on feeding your dog human food, go for low-calorie, healthy snacks like green beans, cauliflower, or carrots. Even though these may not seem as appealing as a juicy steak or piece of ham, your dog will think it's a wonderful treat.

Commercial dog foods are specifically designed to meet the nutritional needs of your dog. Think twice before offering anything outside of his diet as you may be causing him more harm than good.



So...you're telling me I can't have any of those leftovers? Bummer.



"Cooper" Dashnaw

PETS HAVE TEETH TOO!

Dental disease is the most common disease in dogs and cats. It is up to you and your veterinarian to discover this hidden and often painful disease.

Dental disease starts when bacteria breed on the surfaces of the tooth and form an invisible layer of plaque. Some bacterium is removed naturally, but the rest remains on the tooth to become tartar and eventually calculus. If the tartar is allowed to build and press on the gums, it can cause them to recede, leading to inflammation and infection. This is called gingivitis. The gums continue to recede until the tooth socket is infected and the tooth is lost.

Signs of dental problems include, but are not limited to, bad breath, yellow-brown staining, red or bleeding gums, changes in chewing or eating habits, loose, cracked, or missing teeth, drooling, and changes in general behavior.



So how do you prevent tartar build-up? Many pet owners think that feeding dry food will help; however, recent studies

have shown that dry food does not have an effect on tartar build-up one way or the other. The best way to prevent tartar is to brush your pet's teeth. Starting when your pet is young will make it easier once he/she is an adult. Remember to use pet-friendly toothpaste since human tooth-

available that can be applied directly to the mouth or with a tissue or cloth. Water additives such as CET Aquadent can be used as well.

Once tartar has hardened and turned to calculus, no amount of brushing is going to remove it. At this point, your pet needs a dentistry, during which your pet will be anesthetized to scale the calculus off the teeth and polish the teeth to relieve them of uneven surfaces. During this procedure, we are also able to do a more thorough oral exam, which may lead us to the discovery of any loose or cracked teeth that could be causing pain and need to be extracted. After this dental procedure, it is extremely important to continue preventative care at home.

Dental disease does not just affect the mouth. There is significant evidence that shows an association between periodontal disease and problems with the heart, liver, kidneys, and other major organs. This is why it is so important to be dedicated to the care of your pet's teeth.

paste contains foaming products that are not meant to be swallowed, and fluoride and sodium that can cause problems in pets if ingested. Of course, some pets just refuse to have their teeth brushed. Do not despair—there are other things you can do.

For dogs, chew toys and treats such as Kongs, Hexadent chews, and Greenies can help keep teeth clean. Hill's Prescription Diets also makes a food for dogs and cats called t/d that is specially formulated to prevent tartar build-up. Dental sprays are

OPEN WIDE.....

Want to try brushing your pet's teeth? The key is to start slow. Introduce the toothpaste first by rubbing it on your pet's gums with your finger. Repeat this for 2-3 days. Then rub the toothpaste on with the toothbrush. If your pet is resistant to this step, only rub a couple teeth at a time and work up to brushing all the teeth gradually. The goal is to brush the outsides of each tooth, especially along the gumline, at least twice weekly.



WEST ASHLEY AND
NORTHWOODS
VETERINARY CLINICS

MEET SOME OF OUR PERFECT PATIENTS!!!



"Baby" Spencer



"Baby Girl" Huck



"Annie" Mocyunas



"Precious" Parker



"Chloe" Santerre



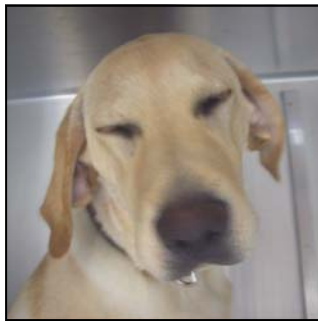
"Moo Moo" Smith,
RIP



"Wylie" Downey



"Ellie" Sternberg



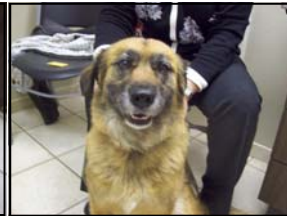
"Tober" Kershner



"Simba" Joseph,
RIP



"Brandy" and "Katie" Grooms



"Skift" McCann

Tober's picture needs a funny caption! Email your idea to: Kates@northwoodsvet.com (type "caption" for the subject). The winner will be posted in the next newsletter!

Please join us in welcoming Roxanna Wright to our Northwoods practice. Roxie attends Trident Technical College and will graduate this spring with her Associate's Degree in Veterinary Technology. She will become a certified veterinary technician at that time and is already putting all of her education thus far to good use at our clinic!

The staff of Northwoods Veterinary Clinic, including Roxanna's sister, Suzanna Wright, is proud to have Roxie on our team. If you see her, please give her a warm welcome!

WELCOME, ROXIE!



Roxanna Wright
with "Mittens", owned by Northwoods Vet Clinic



Kate Sternberg, CVT



Landry Brown, CVT

Look Who's Expecting!

- Kate Sternberg, CVT, has been a member of our Northwoods team for over 8 years. She is expecting her first child, a baby boy, this month and will name him Benjamin.
- Landry Brown, CVT, has been a member of our West Ashley team for 11 years, six of which have been as a technician. She is expecting her first child in May.

Both staff members will be returning to work after first enjoying getting used to motherhood!