

Paws and Claws Newsletter

TIPS TO BEAT THE HEAT

It takes only minutes for your pet to become critically ill from heat exposure. Do you know how to prevent this debilitating and often fatal occurrence? Are you familiar with the steps you need to take should your animal show signs of heat stroke?

PREVENTION

- Always provide plenty of water, especially when at the beach.
- Make sure that shade is readily available. If it isn't, provide a small child's swimming pool.
 - Be sure your dog is appropriately groomed for hot weather.
 - Never walk a brachycephalic (flat-faced) or obese dog mid-day.
- Maintain a healthy weight for your pet as obese dogs are at a much higher risk of suffering heat-related injuries.
- Never leave an animal in your car unsupervised and/or without the air conditioner on. It takes only minutes for a car to get warm enough to suffocate your pet.

SIGNS / SYMPTOMS

- Excessive panting/trouble breathing
- Spaced-out look and/or staggering
 - Bright red gums
 - Bruises
 - Bloody diarrhea
 - Collapse

TREATMENT

- Remove your animal from the heat and wet him/her down with cool (not cold) water.
- Immediately bring your animal to the vet—call on your way so we can prepare for this emergency. Do not hesitate—by the time you notice symptoms, internal damage may already be occurring!



"Oscar"

For your pet's safety...

It is extremely important to make sure that during your pet's entire experience at the vet, including the walk in and out of the building, he is safe and well-restrained. As calm and obedient as pets may be at home, they could become scared or upset while out of their familiar environment. Make sure your dog is on a leash and your cat is in a carrier. Your dog's collar should be tight enough that you can fit only two fingers underneath it. This may seem tight to you, but this is a comfortable fit for your dog and greatly minimizes the risk of him slipping out of the collar should he try to run or pull on the leash. Feel free to ask us to assess the fit of your dog's collar at his next visit!

For those of you who have been reading our newsletter since the first issue in 2009, you may notice that some of the articles in this issue and in issues to come look familiar. Thanks to Pet Portal, we have been able to reach many more clients who have requested to receive our newsletter through email. Since we have touched on so many important subjects in past issues, we would like to make sure these new subscribers are just as informed as our very first readers. Of course, there are still brand new articles included and many new pet pictures to enjoy!

Brushing Up on the Basics of Tooth Care

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 toothpaste contains foaming

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 out-sides of each tooth, especially along the gumline, at least twice weekly.

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 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.

I've heard of people having their pet's teeth scaled without anesthesia. Isn't this safer?

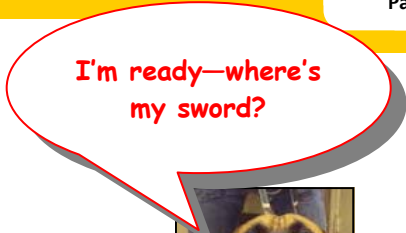
In response to the emergence of "anesthesia-free dentistry", a service being offered by people untrained in veterinary dental techniques such as dental hygienists and groomers, the American Veterinary Dental College has issued a statement regarding what they call non-professional dental scaling: "Anyone providing dental services other than a licensed veterinarian, or a supervised and trained veterinary technician, is practicing veterinary medicine without a license and shall be subject to criminal charges." They go on to state that performing dental procedures on unanesthetized patients is inappropriate and that dental cleanings on cats and dogs are safest and most effective when done under general anesthesia. This is for many reasons.

For one, dental tartar is so firmly attached to the teeth that an ultrasonic scaler, along with hand instruments with sharp edges, must be used to scale the tartar off. Any unexpected movement of the head could result in injury from these tools, so it is important that the patient stay still. Also, professional scaling involves not just removing tartar from the parts of the tooth that you can see, but from the surface of the tooth that lies underneath the gum layer. This is called subgingival scaling and is an extremely important part of the dental cleaning process since the bacteria that builds up underneath the gum layer is what leads to gingivitis, infection, and sometimes loss of the tooth itself. This simply cannot be done correctly on an awake animal. Another advantage to having an animal under general anesthesia is that an endotracheal tube can be passed down the trachea to allow for protection of the airway and lungs from aspiration of water and of particles loosened during a dental cleaning. A thorough oral examination can be done while under general anesthesia which could lead to the discovery of infected, abscessed, or fractured teeth, severe gum recession, and/or oral tumors.

Millions of dental scaling procedures are performed safely each year in veterinary hospitals. Our clinics take pride in using modern monitoring equipment as well as thorough patient evaluations to ensure the safest possible anesthetic experience for each and every patient.

FUN FACTS

The U.S. has the highest dog population in the world. About a third of all U.S. households have one or more dogs.



“Clifford”

During the Middle Ages, Great Danes and Mastiffs were sometimes suited with armor and spiked collars to enter battle!

33

Percentage of dog owners who admit to talking to their dogs on the phone and of cat owners who believe their cat can read their mind.



Sherman knows what you're thinking and he agrees—it's time to eat!

Cats spend nearly 1/3 of their waking hours cleaning themselves.

Pet dogs and cats were so treasured in Ancient Egypt that when they died, their owners would shave their eyebrows, hold elaborate funerals, and mourn aloud for days. Sometimes pets were even mummified and placed in the family tomb!

Donte's Story

Donte is an 8-year-old female yellow lab mix who was brought in to our Northwoods clinic in March because she had not been eating well and had started vomiting. While palpating her abdomen, the doctor felt a large, doughy mass. Donte's history of being an unspayed female, along with x-rays and bloodwork performed that day, led to the suspected diagnosis of pyometra.

Pyometra literally means “pus-filled uterus”. This life-threatening infection of the uterus can occur in mostly older female dogs and in female cats of any age that have not yet been spayed. Treatment is usually immediate surgery since this is an emergency situation. During surgery, the uterus and ovaries are removed, very much like in a routine spay. The difference is that this surgery is more risky since the animal is sick and the uterus is infected. This surgery is also much more costly than a regular spay because of the various medications and hospitalized care that are required.

Donte's story ended well. Surgery did indeed reveal pyometra. She made a full recovery after her surgery and a few days of hospitalized care. Her owners learned an important lesson that many pet owners have yet to learn:

Spaying your pet early in life prevents many serious health problems she could later encounter.



“Donte”

Spaying a healthy dog at any time in her life will essentially eliminate her risk of developing pyometra, but having your pet spayed early has added benefits. By having your pet spayed before its first heat cycle, usually around 6-9 months, you will have decreased her risk of breast cancer by nearly 100%!

With each heat cycle a female is allowed to go through, the risk of breast cancer dramatically increases, which is why it is so important to get her spayed as early as possible. Most veterinary clinics, including ours, recommend that this be around 6 months of age.

Of course, neutering your animal has its health benefits as well. Neutered males have absolutely no chance of developing testicular cancer; their risk of prostate infections or prostate cancer later in life is dramatically decreased as well.

Donte's owners were very gracious in letting us use their story to educate pet owners on the dangers of not having your pet spayed. We hope that by sharing their experience, we will see less of these emergency situations and more happy, healthy, spayed pets!



Is there a subject you'd be interested in reading about?
Do you have pet questions you'd like answered?
Email Kate at Kates@northwoodsvet.com!

Meet some of our Perfect Patients...



"Sophie" and "Toby"



"Mr. Gibbes"



"Phoebe"



"Petey"



"Beatrice"



"Shelly"



"Angus"



"Redman"



"Peanut"



"Scarlett"



"Bailey"



"Napolean"



"Daisy"



"Wesley"



"Noel"



"Lulu"



"Cleo"



"Annabell"



"Georgia"



"BC"



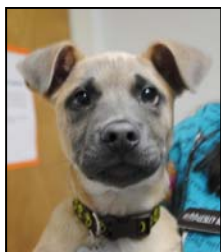
"Lily"

Caption Contest

Can you come up with a funny caption for this picture? Send your caption to Kates@northwoodsvet.com. Your entry could be featured in our next issue!



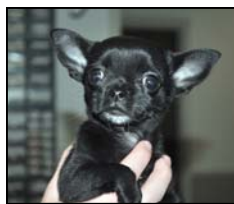
"Bailey"



"Barkley"



"Sissy"



"Squanto"



"Boomer"



"Lola" and "Puck"



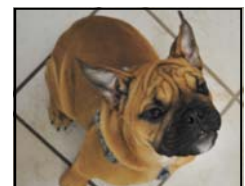
"Nessa"



"Kooper" and "Kayto"



"Rebel"



"Bowser"



"Ardy"

What is your pet's favorite activity?
Send us a photo of your pet in action and it may be featured in our next issue! Email pics to Kates@northwoodsvet.com today!