

# PawPrint

The quarterly newsletter of  
Apple Valley Animal Hospital

Volume 3, Issue 3

Fall 2012



## The Flea Edition

**What's the deal with fleas?** This has been a rough flea season. Across the board we have seen more fleas and people are having a harder time controlling them. What's behind this year's bumper crop of fleas and why are they so hard to control?

While the first part of the answer is easy, the second part might surprise you. In our area, cool fall and spring temperatures slow the flea life cycle and hard winter freezes can decrease the flea population. So while we were enjoying the unseasonably warm 2011/2012 winter, so were the fleas.

**Flea facts:** They thrive in warm, moist environments (like our pet's fur). The fleas main food is blood from their host. They get blood by biting their host (up to 400 times per day). Their saliva, like other biting parasites (think itchy mosquito bites) contains a component that softens the host's skin making it easier to penetrate for feeding. The flea's saliva is what causes itching, irritation and allergic reactions. Ok, so that's how fleas make our pets miserable, but what makes them so hard to control? This is where fleas have a secret weapon. Its their variable life cycle and we need to understand each phase (egg, larva, pupa, adult) to understand how control their population.



An adult female flea can lay 50 white, roundish eggs per day and up to 600 eggs over several months. While many parasite's eggs are sticky, the flea egg is not. As the pet or wild animal host moves through its environment, eggs fall off much like sand would. (Up to 50 eggs per female flea a day) And of course, more will fall off where the host spends most of its time; yard, bedding, carpet or furniture. The eggs will hatch from 2 days to a few weeks later, depending on the environment.

The hatched flea is now in its larval form. Roughly, 1/4" long and a semi-transparent white. Larvae crawl actively and feed on dried blood feces from adult fleas or other organic matter in the fur, soil, carpet or bedding environment. Depending on the environment, the larva stage lasts from 5 to 18+ days ending when the larva spins a silken cocoon where it will pupate.

The pupa is the last developmental stage before the flea becomes an adult, and this is their secret weapon. Fleas can survive in this impenetrable cocoon from *three days to more than a year* waiting for the right stimulation to trigger their emergence. Triggering factors can be warmth, high humidity, movement (cont. pg. 2)

### Visit Us @:

[www.AVvets.com](http://www.AVvets.com)

Find a wealth of pet care information, connect with your personal pet portals and get great deals from our online store.

### Inside This Issue:

- Meet our Staff:  
Dr. Howie .....2
- Frontline TRITAK...2
- And Ticks! .....3
- Technology .....3
- Cat Travel Tips..... 4
- Fall Pet Hazards.....4
- Upcoming Events.... 4

### Like Us:

and follow our weekly pet care quiz. Enter to win.

facebook

# Meet Our Staff: Dr. Howie

Dr. Howie is a native of Florida and graduate of the University of Florida's College of Veterinary Medicine. She completed her veterinary internship at Southwest Veterinary Center in Tucson, Arizona and moved to western North Carolina in 2004. Her veterinary interests include small animal medicine, surgery and ophthalmology. Dr. Howie brings over ten years of general practice, clinical and surgical experience to our hospital. Dr. Howie looks forward to meeting pet owners and getting to know her patients.



Dr. Robin Howie

Dr. Howie and her husband Shand have a wonderful daughter, another on the way and three rescue pets; cats Stitch & Autumn and a mixed breed dog named Amy. She loves spending time with her family and enjoys Pilates, baking and hiking.

Dr. Howie shares our commitment to excellence and compassion in veterinary medicine and we know you will enjoy meeting her. Please join us in welcoming Dr. Howie to Apple Valley Animal Hospital.

## Frontline Tritak:

### The next generation of flea and tick protection.

After reviewing the safety and efficacy information, Dr. McKee recommends Frontline TRITAK for flea and tick protection in dogs and cats.

Merial, the maker of Frontline has developed the next generation of flea prevention, Frontline TRITAK. Frontline TRITAK has two ingredients, fipronil and cyphenothrin, that kills fleas fast (90% of adult fleas in fifteen minutes). Because adult fleas make up only 5% of a typical flea population, your pet also needs protection against the fleas' eggs and larvae so TRITAK has added a third ingredient, (S)-methoprene, to control those stages.

**Frontline TRITAK:**  
**Kills fleas fast**  
**Kills ticks**  
**Waterproof**  
**30 days protection**

Fleas attack cats, too. Frontline Tritak For Cats is especially formulated for felines and contains two ingredients, fipronil and etofenprox, to kill fleas fast so they have less time to bite your cat. It also contains a third ingredient, (S)-methoprene, to kill flea eggs and larvae.

For more information on Frontline TRITAK, including their national television launch video visit our website [www.AVvets.com](http://www.AVvets.com) and click on "News of Interest".

Call us for more information!



As with other Frontline products, TRITAK for dogs comes with their Satisfaction Plus Guarantee.



### What's the deal with fleas? (cont. from pg. 1)

or even carbon dioxide from a passing animal. Fleas can feel the stimulus, emerge and jump toward the animal in the blink of an eye, ready to start the cycle over again. So the flea's secret weapon is the variable time it can spend in its impenetrable cocoon. Adult fleas make up only 5% of the typical flea population so even if all adult fleas are killed, more eggs and larva are present and pre-emergent fleas in their cocoons can be waiting to emerge for more than a year! That's why a systematic, year round flea prevention is crucial to flea control. We recommend the next generation Frontline Tritak because it kills adult fleas faster, limiting the time they can bite your pet.

### Microchips

Every two seconds a family pet is lost! Many never return home because they cannot be identified. Microchips are small, about the size of a grain of rice, and are injected under the skin just like a vaccine. Unlike id tags and collars, a chip is with your pet for life. Most animal control and pet shelters scan incoming pets for chips. When a chip is found, the manufacturer database provides the owners contact information.



## And We Just Have to Mention Ticks!

Ticks carry diseases which can infect people and pets. The CDC reports that ticks in every state carry diseases, and the number of tick-borne diseases is on the rise. Ticks are attracted to motion, warm temperatures and carbon dioxide exhaled from mammals; all reasons ticks are attracted to our pets. While their bites are not painful and usually not felt, the saliva they transmit can contain diseases and parasites.

Our "high tick season" is generally considered to be April to November, but with the wide temperature variations here in WNC, ticks can be seen any time. That's why year round prevention is recommended. If you find a tick attached to you pet, the best way to remove it is with tweezers. Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull out with a steady motion. Be careful not to touch the tick and wash with soap and water when you finish.

Ticks can transmit several illnesses and diseases to humans including Lyme's Disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted

Fever, anaplasmosis, erlichiosis. If you find a tick on yourself contact your family doctor for more information.

Ticks can be found anywhere from urban parks and neighborhoods to lake banks and forests. Ticks usually travel up (which is why they are often found on the scalp) to the end of a blade of grass, weed or bush and hold their two front legs out waiting to grab a passing host. Once on a host, they can spend between 10 minutes to 2 hours attaching and up to several days slowly sucking blood before detaching and dropping to the ground. Each time they feed they become infected with any diseases or pathogens the host carries. The next time they feed, those infections are passed to the new host.

**The good news is Frontline products protect pets against fleas AND ticks!**



## Technology Spotlight

### The IDEXX LaserCyte Hematology Analyzer

Our LaserCyte blood analyzer provides comprehensive and real-time lab results, allowing us to provide a higher level of care. The LaserCyte analyzer provides reference laboratory-quality technology and results. We can run complete blood counts (CBCs), including true five-part white blood cell differential, absolute reticulocyte count and body fluid capabilities. This allows our doctors to make more informed decisions more quickly and share the results with you. Our LaserCyte connects to the IDEXX VetLab Station Laboratory Information Management System to provide diagnostic information in one comprehensive patient report.

The analyzer focuses a laser beam on each indi-

vidual cell and quantifies the scatter of light on four separate detectors. Simultaneously, the analyzer measures the amount of time it takes a cell to travel through the laser beam. This cell travel time is referred to as the "time of flight" and it provides data on the diameter of the cell. Think of a flashlight as

an analogy for the laser. Passing a golf ball in front of the light is quicker than passing a basketball through the same light. While the time of flight, or cellular diameter, is being measured, four other detectors are measuring the quantity of light bouncing off the ball. The dimpled design of a golf ball will refract light differently than the seamed design of a basketball. Therefore, in this analogy, the golf ball would be classified as a different "cell" from the basketball.



### Notable Quotes:

"Animals are reliable, many full of love, true in their affections, predictable in their actions, grateful and loyal. Difficult standards for people to live up to."  
~ Alfred Montapert

"Cats seem to go on the principle that it never does any harm to ask for what you want." ~ Joseph Krutch

"Did you ever notice when you blow in a dog's face he gets mad at you? But when you take him in a car he sticks his head out the window!" ~ Steve Bluestone



### Drop-off Appointments: Making Your Life Easier

If your pet needs to be seen but your schedule is full, ask about a drop-off appointment. Rest assured, your pet will be treated like royalty while its here.

Likewise, if our schedule is full and your pet needs to be seen, we may suggest you drop your pet off. The doctor will work with your pet throughout the day. In either case, we will keep you informed and the doctor will call to discuss results and treatment options if any are needed.

## Tips For Bringing Your Cat to the Vet

We know it can be tough wrangling your cat for a trip to our office. Many cats dislike carriers as well as riding in a car so heading in for an annual checkup can be a stressful event. These tips will help reduce your cat's stress and make ride more peaceful.

1. Make the carrier your cat's second home. Cat carriers are typically associated with many unpleasant things. Many cat owners keep the carrier in a closet or in the garage, so the cat hasn't rubbed on it or slept inside it. Cats who haven't transferred their scent to the carrier, therefore, see it as a foreign object. So give your cat time to mark the carrier with facial rubbing--she'll feel like it belongs to her, and you may find it easier to place her inside. If you have room, make the carrier a part of your furniture. That means leaving it out all the time with the door open. Place a soft towel inside to make it a little more cozy. Pretty soon, your cat won't think twice about entering the carrier.
2. Turn the carrier into a meal center. Put part of your cat's daily food in the carrier to help your cat associate something good with the carrier. Even better: Use a bit of especially yummy food, like a canned variety or even a little tuna. Or try tossing your cat's favorite treat in the carrier when she wants to be left alone. This will reward her for seeking solitude in the carrier and continue to reinforce the notion that the carrier isn't so bad after all.
3. Try a different kind of carrier. If you have an emergency and don't have time to let your cat adjust to the carrier, try using a pillowcase as a carrier. With the cat on your lap, slip the pillowcase over her body, head first. Knot the top if the case and support the bottom when holding your cat. Alternately, you can use any type of item your cat likes to frequent: two laundry baskets connected together could also work. These items aren't a trigger for fear like the standard carrier might be.
4. Consider using a synthetic product. Using a product that contains a feline facial pheromone can help calm cats during stressful events. These products can be sprayed on blankets, towels, or bandanas before your head to the veterinarian. Many cats become less agitated when their owners use these sprays, so purchasing one could make your life easier when it's time to take your cat for a ride.

## Fall Pet Hazards

**Snake Bites:** We see an increase in snake bites this time of year. If your pet has access to snake habitats, consider the Rattlesnake Vaccine which also provides a level of protection against copperhead bites.

**Poisons:** The use of rodenticides goes up this time of year as mice seek shelter from cooler temperatures.

**Anti-freeze:** It smells good, tastes sweet and a very small amount can kill a pet. Watch for spills & leaks.

**Cars:** Cats can't resist a warm place to nap and during cooler weather, engine compartments are irresistible to them. If you have cats, tap the horn before starting your car.

**Halloween:** Pets can be frightened by costumes and ingestible decorations like fake cobwebs can be deadly. Keep your pet in a quiet part of the house during the festivities.

**Thanksgiving:** Rich foods can cause vomiting and serious peritonitis while some candies are toxic to pets. Symptoms include: trembling, vomiting, diarrhea, excessive thirst or urination, muscle spasms and seizures. If you have any concerns, don't wait. Call us. During special occasions, it's always a good idea to watch out for pets the way you would for children.

**Bladder Stones:** Fall is the most common time of year for male cats to form bladder stones that block the flow of urine. Any cat that seems to be straining to use the bathroom should see the doctor immediately. Why this time of year? It may have to do with the pet's decreased water intake in cooler weather.

## Coming Up!

### AVAH's 3rd Annual Pet Halloween Costume Contest

Prizes will be awarded to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners.

To enter, submit a photo of your pet in costume. Include: Your name, pet name, phone number or email address. *(Photos will become the property of AVAH and will not be returned.)* Entries will be accepted until October 24, 2012.



Stop by the hospital between October 25, 2012 and October 31, 2012 to vote for your favorite costume.

**SPOOKTACULAR refreshments will be available October 31, and winners notified**

**2012! Votes will be counted November 1, 2012.**

### November is Adopt a Senior Pet Month

#### Why bring a senior pet into your life?

~ They've seen things: They're generally quieter, calmer & less likely to get overly excited by common events.

~ No terrible twos! With puppy and kitten days behind them, they aren't chewing, climbing, scratching or eating things they shouldn't.

~ They're ready to go for a walk: Most seniors are familiar with a leash, meet people & pets calmly and love it.

~ They listen! Seniors often know basic commands.

~ They will be loyal, grateful family members. They know when they have it good and will love you for it.

