

PawPrint

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Apple Valley Animal Hospital

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Fleas & Ticks: The Spring Fling

While fleas and ticks can be a problem year round, spring is when they really kick it up a notch. As of mid March, we are already seeing flea cases increase and have even found ticks on patients.

The female flea begins its reproductive cycle 20-24 hours after her first blood meal. After that, it can lay as many as 2,000 eggs in its life. Laid in a host's hair,



flea eggs fall out as the pet moves around its home and yard. In fact, studies show 90% of the fleas in an infested area will be in the environment and not on the pet. With fleas reproducing at this staggering rate, its no wonder an infestation seems to

develop overnight. Adding to the mix are wild animals and untreated dogs and cats that frequent our neighborhoods, dropping eggs from their own flea loads.

Since the life cycle from egg to adult can vary from two weeks to eight months (depending on temperature, humidity, food, and species), using a parasite preventative year-round is the key to breaking the cycle and getting rid of fleas. And since a typical flea population consists of 50% eggs, 35% larvae, 10% pupae and 5% adults, it takes at least three months to control an infestation, even during winter.

The tick life cycle, from egg to larvae to adult, also varies in length depending on environmental conditions.

In general, after several blood meals and molts, the female tick is ready to lay eggs. And although it only lays eggs once, it can produce from 2,000 to 18,000 eggs which will hatch in about a week to start the lifecycle over.

As with fleas, a year round parasite prevention program is the key to success. While there is no single preventative which protects against all parasites, (external and internal) our doctors will recommend one most beneficial to your pet's lifestyle. When considering a parasite preventive, its important to consider one that also treats the common internal parasites which can infect humans or expose us to parasite borne diseases. This is especially important if you have children. Kids often don't understand how parasites and diseases are



spread and don't always take the proper precautions.

So what do our doctors and staff use to protect their families and pets from parasites? It boils down to whether the pet

has exposure to ticks from their lifestyle. For indoor pets with minimal tick exposure we use Trifexis. Trifexis is a safe and effective new preventative which works well on fleas, heartworms, hookworms, roundworms and whipworms. Our pets that have a risk of tick exposure get a Frontline/Heartgard combination.

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Microchips Bring Pets Home

Every two seconds a family pet gets lost. Many are never reunited with their families because they cannot be identified. Because of these statistics, we recommend pets have a microchip implanted. ResQ chips are known nationwide and have a 24/7 hotline to match chip numbers and owner contact information.



Meet Our Staff: Dawn Surrect, RVT

Dawn grew up here in the mountains of Western North Carolina. Her childhood was full of pets and farm animals so it was no surprise when she decided to make veterinary medicine her career. After high school she moved to Colorado to attend the Bel-Rea Institute of Animal Technology, one of the highest rated Veterinary Technician schools in the country. At Bel-Rea Dawn excelled in her studies, receiving academic honors and graduating on the Dean's List. After graduation she spent four years working in a veterinary emergency hospital where she advanced quickly, spending her last two years as a trainer for new tech-



nical staff. Dawn has a special interest in veterinary dentistry and has attended many continuing education classes in the field. She still has plenty of personal pets; ten cats, a toy poodle and several goats. In her spare time she enjoys pottery, travel (she once took a spur-of-the-moment trip to Arkansas to dig for diamonds), concerts and provides pet/house sitting services. Dawn has been with AVAH for over five years and says "I love the clients and patients here." We know her training, skill and passion mean excellent care for our patients and their human companions.

School Days !

Veteran dog trainers Dean and Cyndi Connolly are offering classes at the barn and field behind Apple Valley Animal Hospital.

The AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy Program (for puppies up to one year) focuses on puppy/owner bonding, socialization and basic commands. The class lasts six weeks and homework involves practicing skills learned in class.

Basic Obedience And Canine Good Citizen Training is an eight week class designed to help dogs learn the skills and behavior needed to be reliable, well-behaved members of their family and communities. Skills include: sit, down, stay, come and appropriate leash behavior. Homework includes practicing new skills at home. Those who do well may choose to take the official AKC Canine Good Citizen Test. Agility is a fun sport for pets and owners. In the first eight week



session, dogs are introduced to basic AKC obstacles like tunnels, jumps, weave polls, the table, and the seesaw. No prior agility experience is needed for the beginner class, but because agility is an off-leash sport, basic obedience skills are required. Dogs of all sizes are welcome to participate in agility classes. Those who do well may want to compete in AKC agility trials and work to earn AKC titles.

The Apple Valley Animal Hospital facilities allow classes to be held rain or shine. These classes are a great way to spend time outdoors with your pet.

For more information contact Dean and Cyndi Connolly at 828-702-1555, 828-435-0686 or email them at applevalleydogtraining@hotmail.com

Oatmeal

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Oatmeal, the friendly face and self appointed greeter at AVAH. Oatmeal was adopted from the Blue Ridge Humane Society as a kitten. If you met Oatmeal, your first impression was probably, "Wow that's a lot of cat." He came by that honestly. At the shelter he was originally placed in the adult cat ward and it wasn't until the veterinarian examined him they found out he was a kitten. A very large kitten! Growing long, tall and wide, Oatmeal became a mammoth cat. Everyone who met him fell in love with his big blue eyes and massive frame. It was really hard to have a bad day with Oatmeal around. Even non-cat lovers would crack a smile when they saw him on his back in the middle of the floor. That was one of his favorite positions when he wasn't perched on his cat tower overseeing everything. It was common to see Oatmeal jump on the bench and sit with clients before their appointments. When Oatmeal refused to eat, we knew something was wrong. After a thorough examination and ultrasound, the diagnosis was an inoperable cancer. His quality of life decreased rapidly and, as many pet owners have had to do, the difficult decision was made that it was time. Oatmeal reminded us daily that all our patients are an important part of someone's family. Now he reminds us how hard it is when an owner has to make the difficult decision... "its time".



Leptospirosis Diagnoses Increasing In Our Area

Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease of dogs (and many other mammals) that damages the liver and kidneys. The bacteria is spread through the urine of an infected host. Dogs



are usually infected when they ingest rodent contaminated food or garbage, but some forms of the bacteria can penetrate damaged or thin skin. For instance, when dogs swim in contaminated water. Some infections may go undetected, but other cases can be life threatening. The incubation

period is usually four to twelve days and can progress to three main forms of the disease. Hemorrhagic (bleeding), icteric (liver involvement), and renal (kidney involvement).

Signs of infection may include fever, lethargy, loss of appetite, vomiting, bloody diarrhea, yellow color, anorectic, excessive drinking, frequent urination or abdominal discomfort.

Leptospirosis can be transmitted to humans. In humans symptoms closely resemble influenza and may be difficult to diagnosis before the infection becomes serious, leading to liver or kidney failure.

Leptospirosis can be prevented by a vaccine. Our doctors will consider your pet's risk and make recommendations.

Technology Spotlight

K-Laser Therapy

AVAH has added laser therapy to its list of treatment options. Laser Therapy is a cutting edge treatment which uses specific wavelengths of light to create therapeutic effects. These effects include faster healing time, pain reduction, increased circulation and decreased swelling. Laser Therapy is a tested medical treatment approved by the FDA and used in human medical, rehabilitation and professional sports facilities throughout the US and Europe.

For many patients, pain management drugs and their long-term side effects can be reduced or eliminated.

No patient sedation or restraint is required and the experience is usually pleasant and comfort-

ing for your pet. Although improvement is often seen after the first treatment, most patients require several therapy sessions to receive the greatest benefit. Class IV Laser Therapy treatments are cumulative in nature. The length and frequency of treatments varies with your pet's condition. A typical treatment series is three treatments the first week, two treatments the second week and one treatment the third week. The veterinarian will recommend a treatment plan based on your pet's specific condition.

"Booster" treatments are given to maintain the therapeutic effect. Although the booster treatment range is considered to be three to eight weeks, the average is around four to five weeks. An informed and observant owner is the best judge of when a booster treatment is needed.



Did You Know:

As an added precaution, our medical software displays your pet's picture whenever their record is open. This safety feature helps make sure there is never any confusion between pets. An added benefit is the ability to print those pictures. If your pet is ever lost, let us know. We will print twenty 8-1/2" x 11" Lost Pet flyers for you to use in your search. Next time we see your pet, make sure we have a current picture.



Notable Quotes:

"There's no need for a piece of sculpture in a home that has a cat." -- Wesley Bates

"Dogs come when they are called; cats take a message and get back to you later." -- Mary Bly

"The average dog is a nicer person than the average person." --Andy Rooney

Pet Health Insurance Gains Acceptance

Health insurance for pets, though common in European countries for years, is just now becoming main stream here at home. Veterinary healthcare, like human healthcare, is seeing great advances in equipment, technology and medicines. While these innovations allow us to treat more conditions more effectively, as in human medicine, we are seeing costs rise. A pet insurance policy can be a way of spreading the costs of pet care over time. In many cases pet insurance can be the difference in treatment or the ability to follow the best treatment options for a pet. If you are interested, be sure to do some homework. Most insurers have several policy levels. Some "comprehensive" policies cover vaccinations and physical exams. Some plans cover only "major medical". The things to consider are much like human policies: what is covered, deductibles, preexisting conditions, limits and renewal terms? Do you pay and then get reimbursed or does the policy pay? How much paperwork is involved in filing a claim? How are referrals to specialists handled?

The veterinary website www.DVM360.com has reviewed and rated pet insurance companies and policies. As a result of their review, they have rated the following companies highest:

Pet Plan	866-467-3875	www.gopetplan.com
Embrace	800-511-9172	www.embravcepetinsurance.com
Trupanion	800-569-7913	www.trupanionpetinsurance.com

(Apple Valley Animal Hospital is not affiliated with and does not endorse any pet insurance company)



Bark for Life: A Canine Event to Fight Cancer

Bark For Life is a fun-filled half day for dogs and their owners to come together for a walk, demonstrations, contests and games to raise funds for the American Cancer Society's fight against cancer. The event will be Saturday, May 7th, 2011 from 9:30 am until 12:00 pm on Hendersonville's Main Street. For more information contact Jennifer Vachon at (828) 230-0201, sullyursa@bellsouth.net or visit www.relayforlife.org/barkhendersonville.

Seasonal Pet Hazards

Spring is here. Finally! Soon we'll be outdoors enjoying warm breezes and time outside. But be careful; many springtime tasks we take for granted can be hazardous to our pets. Several local spring flowers and plants can be dangerous to dogs and cats. These include: tulips, hyacinths, daffodils, lilies, and Lily of the Valley. Lawn, garden and household chemicals commonly used this time of year can also be very dangerous to our pets. When using fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and insecticides take the same precautions you would if children had access to the area. If you suspect your pet has been exposed to any of these products contact us immediately. If possible, have the information from the product label so we know what compounds are involved. Common signs of exposure vary from mild (drooling, vomiting or diarrhea) to severe (lethargy, neurologic and convulsions). Remember that poisons used for rodents and snails or slugs are very dangerous to your pet. Don't allowed access to areas where these products are used or stored.

As days warm up, always provide plenty of fresh water for your pet. If they spend time outdoors, make sure they have access to a cool, shady area. Keep long haired dogs and cats well groomed or trimmed. Never leave a pet unattended in a car. Even on relatively cool days the inside temperatures can reach 120 degrees or more. Signs of heat stress include collapse,

heavy panting and excessive drooling. If you suspect heat stress or heat stroke contact us immediately.



Water Sprites

Many dogs love the water. If you have a pool or spend time around lakes and rivers, keep a close eye on your pets. Dogs tire quickly when swimming and can get into trouble in seconds. Vegetation around lakes and rivers can entangle pets, especially if they are exhausted from a long swim. Pools are especially dangerous because pets may not be able to find the way out if they fall in. And while cats are agile and surefooted, we hear about them falling into pools every season. We have also see a case of chlorine poisoning in a pet that constantly drank from a pool. Have a great time enjoying the water with your pets but keep a sharp eye on them!