



Winter
2019-20

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Pet News Quarterly

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!

We want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Can you believe it?! The Clinic has been open for 1 1/2 years! Time has flown by. Hopefully you had a chance to stop in during our Customer Appreciation week, in July. We really do appreciate all of our customers and their support!

As I was thinking of topics for this newsletter, one of my most important jobs came to mind. That is prevention. Prevention of infectious diseases like parvo, distemper, and Rabies. Prevention of dental disease. Prevention of obesity, which helps prevent other metabolic and arthritic issues. Prevention of external and internal parasites, such as Heartworms and Fleas. In other words, one of the best ways to keep your pet healthy is to be mindful of what can be prevented. I also threw in a few tips on some Holiday Hazards to be aware of and try to avoid.



What is involved in a Wellness Exam?

Have you ever wondered what your vet is doing while they poke and prod at your pet? Or even more important, is this really necessary? Many people feel they are capable of vaccinating their pet, so why even take it to the vet?

A comprehensive wellness exam is checking your pet from the tip of their nose to the end of their tail. Starting at the nose and eyes, the vet is looking for discharge from either. The eyes are examined to see if the pupils look normal and are the same size, and that they are responding correctly to light stimulus, which is called pupillary light reflex. The lens of the eyes are examined to make sure they are clear and not developing cataracts.

Next the mouth is examined to assess health and color of the gums as well as any signs of dental disease. Dental disease can occur as early as a year or two of age. Ears are checked for discharge, odor and appearance. Lymph nodes throughout the body are felt to make sure there are none that are enlarged or sore. The body in general is palpated to make sure there are no abnormal lumps or bumps developing.

The heart and lungs are listened to for murmurs and congestion, also for rate and rhythm. Some murmurs are present from birth and others can develop as the pet ages.

Body condition is assessed as well as the general condition of muscles and joints. The hair coat and skin are examined looking for signs of fleas, ticks, allergies or other abnormalities. Depending on clinical signs sometimes rectal exams are done to check anal glands and to palpate the prostate in male dogs. A rectal temperature may be taken as well.

The most important part of the wellness exam is establishing normal (or baseline).

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Did you know??

- Heartworm disease is contracted from mosquitos.
- It is estimated over 56% of dogs and 60% of cats are overweight.
- Grapes and Raisins are toxic to pets.
- Xylitol is a sugar substitute that is very toxic to pets.
- Bloodwork allows us to know how the body organs are functioning.

Heartworm Disease

The heartworm is an internal parasite that lives in the pulmonary arteries of the lungs. Although the name is a little misleading, as heartworms grow and mature, they move into the main pulmonary artery, and can eventually move into the right ventricle of the heart through the pulmonic valve. The female heartworm can grow up to 10 to 12 inches in length!

As you can imagine, a worm potentially 10 to 12 inches long that is camping out in the heart and lungs, can cause a lot of damage. At first, your pet may not show any symptoms, but as the worms mature and take up space in the vessels of the lungs, they are causing the heart to work harder to move blood through the lungs. The worms are also causing inflammation in the heart and lungs. Both of which can cause serious issues and eventually death if left untreated.

How does your dog, and on rare occasion cat, contract Heartworm disease? That pesky nuisance, the mosquito. It occurs when a mosquito bites a dog that has heartworms, ingests the heartworm larvae and then after a period of incubation where the larvae matures, bites another dog and transmits the larvae to that dog. The mosquito is known as the intermediate host, meaning that heartworms cannot be directly transmitted from one dog to another. They must mature in a mosquito before they can infect another dog.

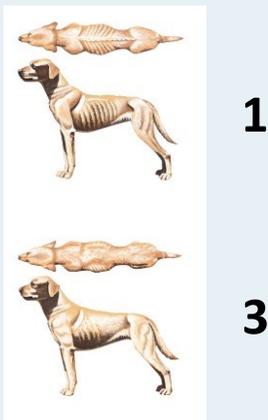
What can be done to prevent heartworm disease in your pet? The easiest and most effective preventions are oral, topical or injectable preventatives. These preventatives, if given on the regular recommended basis, which is generally monthly or every 30 days, are very effective. These medications work by killing off any

3rd and 4th stage larvae, before they can mature into juvenile or adult heartworms. It takes a little over 30 days for these larvae to mature once the dog has been bitten. This is the reason the preventative needs to be given monthly, so that it can treat any new larvae that have been introduced from a mosquito bite. These drugs do not stay in the animal's system, but instead kill the larvae present on the day they are given.

It takes up to 6 months after an unprotected dog is bitten and infected, for it to test positive on the typical in house Occult Heartworm test. These are quick screening tests that are looking for antigen to the heartworms. The host starts producing these antigens because of it's immune response in trying to fight off the heartworms.

Body Condition Score (BCS)

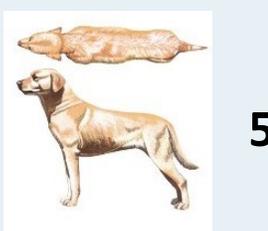
THIN



1

3

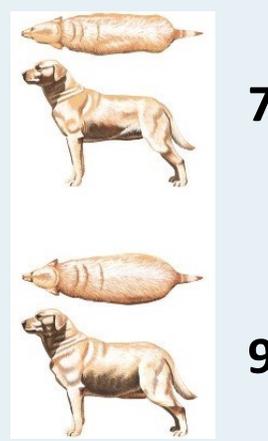
IDEAL



5

7

OVERWEIGHT



9

Maintaining a Healthy Weight.....

Nutrition is such an important topic and will have one of the biggest impacts on your pets overall health. This is a conversation that should start with your veterinarian when you first adopt your new pet, whether as a puppy or kitten, or as an adult. It should continue to be talked about throughout your pet's different life stages.

As a puppy or kitten, it is important to start your pet on a high quality food that is made specifically for this life stage. Foods that say they are for all life stages, can't possibly provide the specific nutrition required for each stage. As young animals are growing they need specific vitamins and minerals for healthy bone growth, DHA for healthy eye and brain development, certain fatty acids to promote good immune and nervous health, as well as highly digestible carbs for that extra energy that they need. There are special formulas within puppy foods that are made for Large Breed dogs, which help regulate bone and joint development, as well as different kibble size for the different sizes of puppies.

Your pet will need to be transitioned to an adult food some time around 10-18 months of age. At this point the animals growth and metabolism has started to slow down This is often determined by size and breed of animal, as well as monitoring of growth and body condition score. Cats often need transitioned between 10-12 months, while large breed dogs may still be growing up to 24 months of age. Again, it is still important to feed a high quality food that is well balanced and providing the correct amount and type of nutrients required.

As a pet ages, his or her metabolism as well as activity levels will start to decrease. Another transition will need to occur as your pet progresses into their senior years. Again this time varies based on the activity level of your pet, as well as breed. Even though your pet's calorie requirements have decreased, they still feel like they need to consume the same amount of food. Senior foods often have more fiber which helps the animal feel full while decreasing the amount of calories. If changes in activity level and metabolism are not taken into account, then your pet will start gaining weight.

That dreaded word.....obesity. Similar to the obesity issues seen in today's American human population, this issue is becoming a **huge** (no pun intended) problem in our pet population as well. It has been estimated by the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention (APOP) in a 2017 Survey, that over 56% of the dogs and 60% of cats in the U.S. are overweight or obese. Each year this number continues to rise. Check out petobesityprevention.org.

What are some causes of this epidemic? One of the biggest causes is that people love their pets, and equate love with food. It is certainly not a crime to love your pet, but a healthy weight needs to be determined and goals set to achieve and maintain that weight. It is important to remember that every treat your pet receives during the day adds extra calories. So try to minimize the amount of treats given, and look for healthy alternatives, like carrots or green beans.

It is important to become familiar with the term body condition score (BCS), how it is determined and where it needs to be maintained. Your veterinarian is a great source for the answers to these topics, and ideas on how to get your pet on target. Why is this such an important issue? The bottom line is research has shown that if a healthy weight is not maintained throughout an animal's life it can lead to multiple health issues, including but not limited to: diabetes, breathing issues, heart disease, high blood pressure, liver disease or dysfunction, arthritis, cancer and a decreased life span. In other words, your pet may not live as long as it has the potential of living, and in the process can develop a disease that may decrease their quality of life.

.....Holiday Hazards

The Holidays, one of my personal favorite times of year. The decorations, the food, time spent with family and friends, the holiday cheer and parties. Although it is a special time of year for many of us, the holidays can present a dangerous time of year for our pets. Here are some hazards to think about and tips on avoiding them.

Let us begin with the decorations: trees, lights, tinsel, ornaments, candles and potpourri, special holiday plants. All of these help us liven our homes to celebrate the holidays. However, each can present its own risk to our pets.

-The Christmas tree itself screams out "climb me," especially to young and active cats. A certain amount of training will be involved in trying to keep your pet away from the tree. Try to set the tree in a corner or figure out a way to help prevent the tree from falling over. Also putting a fence around the tree might discourage the dogs from getting too close.

-Lights and cords are especially interesting to young animals, which present risk of burn or electrocution if bitten into. As much as possible try to hide the cords and place the lights on higher branches of the tree to help keep them out of reach.

-If you have a cat or young puppy, consider leaving that shiny, hard to resist playing with, tinsel off your tree. Tinsel is especially hard on the digestive tract if swallowed. It easily balls up in the stomach or can cut through the intestines as it travels through.

-Ornaments become a problem if your pet tries to chew on them, or if they are knocked off the tree and break. Glass ornaments can become sharp shards that will cut a pet's mouth or its paws.

-Burning candles are always a hazard to have around pets. Curious animals will often sniff at them, which could cause burns. Your pet could accidentally knock the candle over or move it close to something that might catch on fire. Liquid potpourri is another concern, as curious pets may sniff or ingest the liquid. This can cause burns or if swallowed have severe consequences to the mouth, esophagus and stomach.

-Always be aware of the possible dangers your house plants can pose. Some special plants around the holidays to be aware of that are particularly dangerous if ingested are mistletoe, holly, lilies, and amaryllis. Surprisingly, Poinsettias and Christmas cacti are not dangerous in small amounts, but it is always a good idea to try to keep plants where your pets cannot reach them.

*****Dental Special*****

15% Off if Booked by January 31, 2020

Check out our new Wellness Plans for your Pet.....

In an effort to promote a more complete Preventative Medicine Program, we are introducing several new Wellness plans. These have been formed with the different species and different life stages in mind. They are also tiered within the plan to adjust the plan to fit your pets current health needs.

The idea with these plans is a way to affordably provide your pet with the best preventative care possible.

The first step is to choose the plan that fits your pet's life stage. The kitten/ puppy choice is divided into male and female. The other life stages have different levels of tiering from basic to plus to premium. These plans include Wellness Exams, Annual Vaccinations, Fecal and Heartworm Tests, 12 months of Heartworm Preventative, 9 months of Flea and Tick Preventative, and depending on life stage and tiering chosen annual bloodwork, urinalysis and dentals.

Once the Wellness Plan is chosen a payment plan is set up allowing for the total cost of the plan to be spread out over 12 months. The idea is to allow for a more budgeted way of providing the best preventative care possible.

Other than providing a budgeted approach to your pet's health care, what are the other benefits of enrolling in the Wellness Plans. At each BiAnnual Wellness Exam, there will be a weight assessment and nutritional consultation. There will also be loyalty benefits that go towards purchase of additional services such as grooming and retail items that include shampoo, food, collars, etc. It also allows for 6 free nail trims throughout the year, and unlimited office visits during office hours. (After hours will be assessed an additional fee.)

Check out the Wellness Plans on our web page Bluerivervetclinic.com, for more complete information.

Holiday Hazards (cont.)

Some holiday foods to think about and avoid are:

-**Chocolate** can cause severe GI upset and sometimes neurologic signs if enough is ingested

-**Grapes and Raisins** are extremely toxic to your pet's kidneys.

-**Macadamia nuts** can cause neurologic signs.

-**Xylitol** is a sugar substitute that is being used more and more in sugar-free gums, candies and even used for baking. Double check anything deemed sugar free, even some peanut butters, to make sure that xylitol is not an ingredient. Avoid baking with xylitol in your household or make double sure that your pet cannot encounter the container where it is stored or any baked goods it is made with. Xylitol is very potent, and it only takes a small amount to cause extremely low blood sugar very quickly in your pet. It can also cause liver damage.

-Spices like **nutmeg and cinnamon** can be dangerous if a large enough quantity is ingested. Also, onions and garlic, can cause damage to red blood cells with subsequent anemia.

-**Bread dough** is something to avoid giving your pet. As it is digested and ferments in the pet's stomach it can produce carbon dioxide that could cause mechanical bloating and ethanol that could cause alcohol poisoning.

- It is always a good idea to avoid giving your pet bones. Cooked bones can splinter and cause blockages or irritation as they travel through the intestinal tract. So, throw those bones away!

-Another suggestion is to avoid feeding your pet any **Holiday leftovers**. A lot of our Holiday foods are rich in fats and dairy that can cause GI upset. Fatty foods can cause pancreatitis, which is extremely painful for the pet and can make them very ill.

The Holiday is such a fun and exciting time of year. By being aware of some of the hazards and ways to avoid them, it can also be a safe time of year for your pets.

Happy Holidays!

..... Bloodwork

Blue River Vet Clinic Hours

Dr. Nicole Porter and staff are available:

Monday: 7:30-5:30

Tuesday: 7:30-5:30

Wednesday: 7:30-5:30

Thursday: 7:30-5:30

Friday: 7:30-5:30

Saturday: 8:00-12:00

Open through the lunch hour

Emergency Care Available: 24/7

Phone: 785-363-2222

Is bloodwork really necessary? The answer is yes whether your animal is sick or not. Bloodwork is a way to monitor different organ functions with the thought of diagnosing and even catching an issue early.

A yearly routine screening CBC and Chemistry Profile allows for the normal values for your pet to be set. This allows for comparison of these values from year to year and the possible early detection of any changes. Some diseases, such as kidney failure, are better treated when detected before the animal becomes sick from it.

A CBC (complete blood count) monitors the number of red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets present. It also gives an estimate of the type of white blood cell present. There

are an array of diseases that can be indicated by abnormalities in these counts.

A standard chemistry profile gives levels for kidney and liver enzymes which can indicate how these organs are functioning. It also indicates levels of production of albumin (a blood protein), glucose (blood sugar), and different electrolytes.

There are more in depth blood tests that can be done once there is some indication from the screening bloodwork what direction should be taken.

If your animal becomes sick, it is important to do bloodwork to help detect what may be going on. There are many diseases that may present with the same set of clinical signs: such as vomiting, drinking too much,

urinating more than normal, and weight loss. Bloodwork allows your pet's doctor a way to figure out what is going on and ways to treat it.

It is recommended to start doing yearly bloodwork between 5 -8 years of age or earlier if there is any family or known history of issues. It is also a good idea to do screening bloodwork before an anesthetic episode so that any liver or kidney issues are known and can be accounted for during anesthesia. Also, if any kind of long term medication therapy (like pain medication) is going to be started, bloodwork needs to be done prior to starting the medication and at least yearly to monitor effects on organ function.

So, is bloodwork necessary? The answer is yes!



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Services:

- *Wellness Exams
- *Vaccinations
- *Grooming
- *Dental Care
- *Surgery
- *Radiology
- *Pet Food & Retail
- *After Hours Emergency
- *Pick up & drop off services available

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