



The Southtowns Journal

A Quarterly Newsletter Prepared by the Doctors and Staff of Southtowns Animal Hospital

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The Importance of Strategic Deworming—A Message From Doctor Winkle

Based on advisements from the Centers for Disease Control, and the American Association of Veterinary Parasitologists, we are instituting a Strategic Deworming Program to keep your pets healthier, to reduce environmental parasite contamination, and minimize potential human incidence of parasite infestation. Strategic Deworming will consist of treating your pet(s) for intestinal parasites at regular intervals by giving broad spectrum deworming pills. Treatment will be given 1-4 times per year, depending on your pet(s) lifestyle and your family circumstances.

Why is this necessary? Pets have become a vitally important part of our lives. Pets now live in much closer association with their owners than ever before. With this increased contact comes the increased risk of parasitic zoonosis (transmission of pet parasites to humans). Unfortunately, when animal parasites enter the human body, they can end up in locations with potentially tragic consequences, such as skin rashes, intestinal disease, blindness, seizures and encephalitis. Intestinal worms are transmitted via a fecal-oral route, and children are chiefly at risk due to less stringent personal hygiene. We all can agree that one infected child is one too many, even without obvious clinical disease.

Our goal here at Southtowns Animal Hospital is to practice a sound preventive medicine protocol that helps keep the human/animal bond alive and thriving. We feel that Strategic Deworming is an important component of that protocol. Some of the things we consider when preparing such a protocol for your pet are if there are small children living with you, if any members of your household have suppressed immune systems, and to find out if your pets have any contact with wildlife or wild life areas.

If you have any questions about Strategic Deworming, feel free to direct them to any of our staff.



Use Caution With Lawn Care

Research conducted at the Purdue University School of Veterinary Medicine suggests a link between lawn treatment chemicals and urinary bladder cancer in Scottish terriers. The controlled study found that Scotties exposed to lawns treated with both herbicides and insecticides were significantly more at risk for the most common form of bladder cancer in dogs.

Despite not yet having established a definite cause and effect relationship between the chemicals and cancer, the study's authors recommend that Scottie owners decrease their dogs' exposure to lawn chemicals and that veterinarians perform routine cytological urine exams. Scottish terriers are already about 20 times more susceptible to bladder cancer.

As pets tend to spend a fair amount of time in contact with plants treated with herbicides and insecticides, it was decided to find out whether lawn chemicals were having any effect on cancer frequency.

Dogs exposed to lawns treated with both herbicides and insecticides or herbicides alone were found to be between four and seven times more at risk than dogs exposed to untreated lawns. The greater the exposure, the higher the risk. Those exposed to insecticides alone show a small but not significant increased risk.

According to the authors of the study, the next step will be to survey children as well as dogs in houses with treated versus untreated lawns to compare the chemicals that turn up in urine samples.

The Scottish Terrier Club of America and the American Kennel Club's Canine Health foundation provided funding for the research.



The Picnic Was Great!

The annual Southtowns Picnic, was, as always, a great success. Everyone, co-workers, family friends and pets, had a great time. There wasn't a horseshoe tournament this year, but we did play Bocce Ball and Pool. Dawn proved herself to be quite the pool shark.

All the food was delicious, especially the plump and juicy clams. As for the rest, everyone brought a specialty, and everything was yummy!

No one fell in the pond this year, but there was swimming, and Mary K caught the biggest fish!



Fleas! Yuck!

Biting fleas can cause health problems for your pet!

Fleas cause flea allergy dermatitis, the most common skin allergy on both cats and dogs. One flea bite is enough to set up allergic symptoms in extremely sensitive animals.

Fleas transmit Tapeworms, one of the most common internal parasites in pets.

Large infestations of fleas can cause anemia or even death in puppies and kittens, older pets or sick animals.

Biting fleas lead to a cycle of scratching and biting that can cause secondary skin irritation and infections. One of the most common signs that a pet has fleas is when they constantly chew at their rumps, just above the tail. Often, there is hair loss and skin irritation in this area too, even if no fleas are seen on the pet.

It is always best to prevent flea infestations before they occur, but if your pet has fleas now, Advantage can help.

Advantage stops fleas from biting in less than five minutes. After one hour, adult fleas are dying, and after two hours 98-100% of the adult fleas are dead. Dead fleas can't lay eggs. No eggs means no new larva, and no new larva means no new adults.

Flea eggs and larvae live in the environment, and for housepets, that means carpets and furniture. Be sure to vacuum well, discarding the vacuum bags. When Advantage is used, no other home treatment is needed. As any new fleas emerge they go to the treated pet and die before they can reproduce. We at Southtowns Animal Hospital recommend that all pets in an infested house be treated for a minimum of three months, to be sure the flea life cycle is broken.

If you have any questions, feel free to call the office at 824-4108



Understanding Your Pet's Bloodwork

Blood tests help doctors determine the causes of illness accurately, safely, and quickly. They also let us monitor the progress of medical treatments. We recommend blood testing of older animals to help treat the diseases of aging while they are still manageable, which is often before any symptoms are seen.

We are able to do many of these diagnostic blood tests right here at Southtowns, on the most modern equipment. This helps us to provide fast, accurate results--and that assures the best quality care for your pet.

Complete blood count (CBC)

This is the most common blood test performed on pets and people. A CBC gives information on hydration status, anemia, infections, the blood's clotting ability, and the ability of the immune system to respond. This test is essential for pets with fevers, vomiting, diarrhea, weakness, pale gums, or loss of appetite. If your pet needs surgery, a CBC can detect bleeding disorders or other unseen abnormalities.

HCT (hematocrit) measures the percentage of red blood cells to detect anemia.

WBC (white blood cells) measures the body's immune cells. Increases or decreases indicate certain diseases or infections.

GRANS and L/M (granulocytes and lymphocytes/monocytes) are specific types of white blood cells.

EOS (eosinophils) are a specific type of white blood cell that may indicate allergic or parasitic conditions.

PLT (platelet count) measures cells that form blood clots.

RETICS (reticulocytes) are immature red blood cells. High levels indicate regenerative anemia.

Blood chemistries

These common blood serum tests evaluate organ function, electrolyte status, hormone levels, and more. They are important in evaluating older pets, pets with vomiting and diarrhea or toxin exposure, pets receiving long-term medications, and health before anesthesia.

ALB (albumin) is a serum protein that helps evaluate hydration or hemorrhage, as well as intestinal, liver, and kidney disease.

ALKP (alkaline phosphatase) elevations may indicate liver damage, Cushing's disease, and active bone growth in young pets. This test is especially significant in cats.

ALT (alanine aminotransferase) is a sensitive indicator of active liver damage but doesn't indicate the cause.

AMYL (amylase) elevations show pancreatitis or kidney disease.

BUN (blood urea nitrogen) indicates kidney function. An increased blood level is called azotemia and can be caused by kidney, liver, and heart disease, urethral obstruction, shock, and dehydration.

Ca (calcium) deviations in a pet's bloodwork can indicate a great variety of diseases. Tumors, hyperparathyroidism, kidney disease, and low albumin are just a few of the conditions that alter serum calcium.

CHOL (cholesterol) is used to supplement diagnosis of hypothyroidism, liver disease, Cushing's disease, and diabetes.

Cl (chloride) is an electrolyte often lost with vomiting and Addison's disease. Elevations often indicate dehydration.

Cortisol is a hormone that is measured in tests for Cushing's disease (the low-dose dexamethasone suppression test) and Addison's disease (ACTH stimulation test).

CREA (creatinine) reveals kidney function. This test helps distinguish between kidney and non kidney causes of elevated BUN.

GLOB (globulin) is a blood protein that often increases with chronic inflammation and certain disease states.

GLU (glucose) is a blood sugar. Elevated levels may indicate diabetes mellitus. Low levels can cause collapse, seizures or coma.

K (potassium) is an electrolyte lost with vomiting, diarrhea or excessive urination. Increased levels may indicate kidney failure, Addison's disease, dehydration, and urethral obstruction. High levels can lead to cardiac arrest.

Na (sodium) is an electrolyte lost with vomiting, diarrhea, and kidney and Addison's disease. This test helps indicate hydration status.

PHOS (phosphorus) elevations are often associated with kidney disease, hyperthyroidism, and bleeding disorders.

TBIL (total bilirubin) elevations may indicate liver or hemolytic disease. This test helps identify bile duct problems and certain types of anemia.

TP (total protein) indicates hydration status and provides additional information about the liver, kidneys, and infectious diseases.

T4 (thyroxine) is a thyroid hormone. Decreased levels often signal hypothyroidism in dogs, while high levels indicate hyperthyroidism in cats.



The Hip Bone's Connected to the Leg Bone

Has your dog been limping around lately? Is he having trouble with the stairs? Does he seem reluctant to stand up? If so, your pet may be suffering from hip dysplasia, which affects the connection between the ball and socket of the hip joint.

Even if your pet is free of these symptoms, he may still develop the disease. We want to help you identify the signs of hip dysplasia and teach you how to care for your ailing friend.

In basic terms, hip dysplasia means badly formed hip. In unaffected animals, the ball at the end of the leg bone fits smoothly into a pocket in the hip. In affected dogs, the pieces don't fit as well. This looseness is what may cause your pet to limp or seem pained during certain activities.

The joint disease is common in large dogs but it can occur in medium or small breeds too. It primarily strikes purebreds, but it can develop in mixed breeds, particularly when both parents are prone to the disease. Dogs with a higher incidence are German Shepherds, Labradors, Rottweillers, Great Danes, Golden Retrievers, Dobermans, Mastiffs, and St. Bernards.

Because dysplasia is hereditary, having potential breeding dogs X-rayed is important. Look back three or four generations to check for carriers in the line. Breeding two animals with excellent hips still won't guarantee that all puppies will be free of hip dysplasia, but you'll have a better chance of getting a dysplasia free pup than if you breed two animals with fair or poor hips.

Dogs of all ages are subject to the symptoms of hip dysplasia, but in most cases they don't begin to show up until the middle or later years. If you want to check your pet for hip dysplasia at a younger age, x-rays are needed.

Dogs that show physical symptoms may walk or run with a bunny-hopping gait because their legs are stiff and painful after exercise or first thing in the morning. Dysplasia also may cause arthritis. Some pets will warm up nicely after they have been moving for a while. Others will get worse with exercise, and they may resist extended activity.

As dysplasia progresses, dogs may lose muscle tone and even need help getting up. Many people attribute the changes to normal aging, but once their pets are treated for dysplasia owners may be shocked to see more normal, pain-free movement.

Because hip dysplasia has a genetic basis, you can't determine whether your puppy will get dysplasia by how you raise him, but you may influence when he begins to develop symptoms. If your pup has genes for hip dysplasia, it is a good idea to prevent overly rapid growth while the pup is an adolescent because of the strain on the hip, further loosening the ball and socket fit. If your young dog is at the high end of the weight scale, or is a large breed, you should begin feeding him an adult dog food or a puppy food specifically developed for bigger dogs.

Dogs with hip dysplasia may be treated surgically or non-surgically, depending on the severity of the problem. Non-surgical treatment to improve mobility and reduce pain includes the use of drugs such as aspirin, other Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and steroids. These drugs should be administered only under veterinary supervision. Your dog's exercise might need to be restricted. An ideal exercise for dysplastic dogs is swimming, which doesn't stress the aching joints.

Surgery can correct current problems or keep the condition from progressing. Several surgical procedures are common, depending on the dog's age and the state of the joints.

Triple Pelvic Osteotomy (TPO) often is used for dogs younger than 10 months that show signs of dysplasia on x-rays but haven't yet developed symptoms. Surgeons will break the pelvic bone and realign the ball and socket correctly. As the bones heal, they will begin to fit together normally.

Total hip replacement is another option. This procedure involves removing the bad hip and replacing it with prosthesis. In order to qualify for this procedure, your dog must be full-grown and weigh at least thirty five pounds.

If you suspect your dog may have hip dysplasia arrange for an X-ray and physical exam. If your pet is diagnosed with the disease he or she should be spayed or neutered so the disease isn't passed on. You should also notify your dog's

breeder so that he can take steps to improve his breeding program. With help from veterinary care, your dog can live a long and happy life with hip dysplasia.



Thanks for Everything

On July 22nd and 23rd, Marina was at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. When Marina was x-rayed at Southtowns Animal Hospital, Dr. Winkle diagnosed her with a megaesophagus. At Guelph, a fluoroscopy was performed on Marina. A fluoroscopy is a series of x-rays in real time. Doctors at Guelph confirmed Dr. Winkle's diagnosis, and also have suspicions that Marina has a sliding hiatal hernia.

Marina is at high risk for developing aspiration pneumonia because of her frequent vomiting. Her conditions are congenital and must be surgically corrected. The surgery will be performed by a local specialist once she reaches 4 lbs. Right now she is 2.8 lbs.

The surgery to correct her problems will be around \$2,000. A fund has been started to help Marina's new family with her medical bills. Donations can be sent to Southtowns Animal Hospital at 154 Orchard Park Rd., West Seneca 14224. Attn: Marina

A sincere and heartfelt thank you to everyone who has already donated. You will find another update on Marina in our next newsletter.



Just A Reminder

Be sure to keep your screens secure. We have had several reports of kitties escaping from loose window screens. Even though cats are always said to land on their feet, they can still injure them selves, and a housecat outside can easily panic and become lost.

It only takes a moment to check for escape routes. In any case, have a collar with a readable ID tag on your pet, and consider an AVID microchip. For more information, call the hospital at 824-4108.



September is Senior Pet Month!

Be sure to ask about discounted senior packages!

As our pets age, there are many things that change, and some of them cannot be seen. For this reason, we recommend blood testing of our older patients to catch problems when they begin--and when they are most treatable. There is a series of tests that the doctors advise, and to make this valuable diagnostic more readily available, we offer the tests bundled together, at a savings to you.

If your pet is older, call to schedule a senior workup today, at 824-4108. We will be happy to explain the tests involved, and their benefit to your pet.



Happy Thanksgiving From The Doctors and Staff

All of us here at Southtowns Animal Hospital wish all of you a wonderful Thanksgiving. Just be sure the furry members of the family stay out of the turkey and ham bones!!