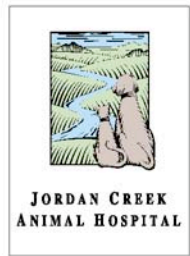




WINTER 2011 Gazette

☞ newsletter for people and their pets



JORDAN CREEK
ANIMAL HOSPITAL

3401 E.P. True Parkway
West Des Moines, Iowa 50265

in this issue:

Avoiding Winter Weight

Leptospirosis

Year-round Parasite Prevention

Hospital and Kennel News

Meet the Editors

Avoiding Winter Weight

Everyone is familiar with the term "winter weight"—it's the weight we put on due to more time spent indoors and all the yummy food we eat throughout the holidays. Unfortunately, it also happens to our pets and it's a lot harder for them to get the weight off. Extra weight can lead to health problems later down the road. This year try using a few of these ideas to help avoid the winter weight on your pet.

Who said all the fun is had outside? There are plenty of great activities you and your pet can enjoy inside while the snow is falling and the wind is blowing. If your dog enjoys running, try playing a game of chase around the house. Even if you just chase each other around the couch, it's still a chance to burn off some of Fluffy's extra energy.

If your home is too small for running around with your pet, a good game of Hide-n-Seek is a great alternative. Try using a small portion of Jake's food either as the "thing" to be found or as a reward for "finding" you. Keep it simple at first, hide behind a chair and reward with lots of praise and a tiny treat when you are found. As Jake starts to catch on to the game, try making it harder for him to find you. Hopefully after a while your pet gets more into finding you than receiving a treat.

If you have space in your home, play a smaller version of fetch. Instead of throwing the ball, roll it on the floor and offer praise whenever Molly gets the ball and brings it back to you.



For kitty there's a great toy available called "Da-Bird". It consists of feathers imitating a bird attached to a string and pole. It's great for stimulating the hunting instinct in cats. Drag it around on the floor or swing it in the air and watch Socks jump, chase, and attack the "bird". It's a great way to challenge kitties physically and mentally as they try to figure out where birdie is going to go next.

A variety of toys are designed to hold treats and small pieces of food. Through play and discovery your pet solves a "puzzle", and a treat is released as a reward. This type of toy offers both physical and mental stimulation.

When it's not possible to get our pets active indoors, another alternative is cutting back on treats and decreasing the amount fed by 20%. During the less active winter months, pets don't need to consume as much food as during the summer. Make sure to measure out your pet's daily food amount to eliminate overeating, and remember not to give your pet any people food. You may think sneaking Mr. Kitty an ounce of cheese isn't an issue, but it equals four chocolate bars for a person. Giving Fido an oatmeal cookie is equivalent to a person eating an entire hamburger.

And remember, when we are fortunate enough to have a beautiful winter day, try to get out there and see if Maggie can catch a snowball and burn off some energy while the two of you enjoy the fresh air together.

Contact us by calling 515-224-9500 or visit our website at www.jordancreekanimalhospital.com



LEPTOSPIROSIS:

Questions and Answers on this Re-emerging Disease

What is leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is a disease that is caused by spiral shaped bacteria called leptospires. It occurs worldwide and can affect humans as well as many wild and domestic animals, including dogs and cats. In the last few years there has been an increase in the number of cases being diagnosed.

What are the signs and symptoms?

The disease can be serious for both humans and animals. In people, the symptoms are often like the flu, but sometimes it can progress into a more severe, life threatening illness with infections in the kidney, liver, brain, lung, and heart.

In animals the signs are usually very non-specific and include fever, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, refusal to eat, severe weakness and depression, stiffness, or muscle pain.

What pet animals are susceptible?

All animals can potentially become infected with leptospires, although cases of leptospirosis in cats are rare.

How do people and animals get leptospirosis?

The bacteria are spread through the urine of infected animals which can get into water or soil and can survive there for weeks to months. The bacteria can enter the body through skin or mucous membranes (eyes, nose or mouth), especially if the skin is broken from a cut or scratch. Drinking contaminated water can also cause infection. Infected wild or domestic animals and pets may continue to excrete the bacteria into the environment for a few months up to several years.

If your pet has become infected, it is likely from the environment associated with infected animals. Your pet may have been drinking, swimming or walking through contaminated water. Because of increased building and development into rural areas, pets may be exposed to more wildlife, such as raccoons, skunks, squirrels, opossums, or deer that are infected with leptospirosis. Dogs may also pass the disease to each other.

How can I prevent leptospirosis in my pet?

Keep rodent problems under control.

Get your pet vaccinated against leptospirosis. The vaccine does not provide 100% protection since there are many strains (types)

of leptospires but it will greatly decrease the risk to your pet.

Is there a treatment for leptospirosis in pet animals?

Yes, leptospirosis is treatable with antibiotics. If an animal is treated early, it may recover more rapidly and any organ damage may be less severe.

What should I do if I have been told my pet has leptospirosis?

If it has been confirmed by your veterinarian, the action to take will depend on the nature of contact with your pet. Normal daily activities with your pet will not put you at high risk for infection. Types of contact that are considered to be high risk include direct or indirect contact with urine, blood, and tissues of your pet during its infection. Assisting in the delivery of newborns from an infected animal is also considered a high risk activity for transmission.

If you have had these types of high risk contacts with your pet during the time of its infection, inform your physician. If common symptoms, such as fever, muscle aches, and headaches occur within 3 weeks after a high risk exposure, see your physician.

How can I protect myself and other people when my pet has leptospirosis?

The risk of getting leptospirosis from a dog in standard instances is suspected to be low. Always contact your physician and veterinarian if you have concerns about a possible exposure. The following will also decrease the risk of transmission:

Do not handle urine, blood, or tissues from your infected pet before it has received proper treatment.

If you need to have contact with animal tissues or urine, wear protective clothing, such as gloves and boots.

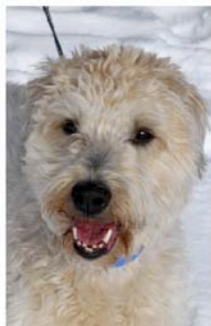
As a general rule, always wash your hands after handling your pet or anything that might have your pet's excrement on it.

If you are cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated or have urine on them, use a cleaning solution of 1 part bleach in 10 parts water.

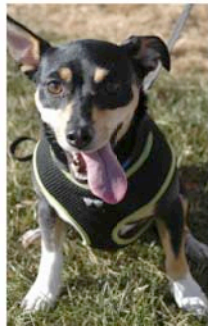
Make sure that your infected pet takes all of its medication and follow up with your veterinarian.

Kennel News

Has your pet been Boarder of the Week at Jordan Creek? Each week the kennel staff selects an outstanding pet from the guest list to receive our Boarder of the Week award. Here are some of the most recent winners.



Sydney



Millie



Sophie and Annie



Charley



Advances in Medicine at Jordan Creek Animal Hospital

Monthly Meetings

The doctors and staff at Jordan Creek Animal Hospital feel that monthly employee meetings are essential to promoting communication and educational opportunities. Because of this, we will be closed from **1:30-2:30 PM** on the following **Wednesdays: January 19, February 23 and March 16.**

We are excited to announce that we now have abdominal ultrasound available for our patients. This is another way to “look” at body organs. Many times ultrasound is used in conjunction with x-rays. X-rays show us the shape or outline of organs whereas ultrasound can give us a better idea of what that organ looks like on the inside. This will not always replace going to a specialist for further ultrasound diagnostics, but it is a good screening tool.

Ultrasound is based on the simple sound wave. By beaming high-frequency sound waves into the body, we can translate the “echoes” that bounce off body tissues and organs into “sounds you can see” that provide valuable medical information. This procedure is safe, affordable and noninvasive.

Dr. Whitney and Dr. Moore have both been

trained in the use of this new equipment. We are currently using our ultrasound in many helpful ways. Getting urine from the bladder, determining if there is a tumor on the liver or other organ, and looking in the stomach to see if it contains something inappropriate – these are just a few of the many ways that ultrasound can help your pet.



Year-round Parasite Prevention

Almost everyone has heard of heartworm prevention. It's a once-a-month oral tablet or topical application recommended to be given to pets from May through November. Heartworm preventatives have improved over the years and now provide the benefit of controlling many of the common intestinal parasites and some even help prevent flea infestations.

Intestinal parasites can infect your pet any time of the year. Parasites can affect your pet in a variety of ways, ranging from causing simple irritation to life-threatening conditions if left untreated. Some intestinal parasites are considered zoonotic, meaning they can be transmitted directly or indirectly from your pet to you and your family.

Some of the intestinal parasites that can infect your family pet are roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, and tapeworms. Most of these parasites can be transmitted to you and your family. Roundworms are the most likely to be transmitted to people.

If a person accidentally ingests roundworm eggs, they can hatch in the intestinal tract and the immature worms can travel to various tissues in the body, including the eyes and brain. Hookworm eggs if ingested by a human can cause larva to hatch underneath the skin.

Keeping your pet on parasite prevention year-round will greatly lessen the possible transmission of parasites to you and your pet. Year-round prevention is also very important to consider if you have young children or an immune-compromised person living in your household, as they are the most likely to be infected by intestinal parasites. This practice is recommended by the Companion Animal Parasite Council, an independent council of veterinarians and other animal health-care professionals established to create guidelines for the optimal control of internal and external parasites that threaten the health of pets and people. Be sure to discuss parasite prevention with us at your pet's next visit.

MEET THE STAFF/our editors for this issue of Pet Gazette



Dr. Kim Wilke is originally from Madawaska, Maine and attended vet school at Iowa State University. She is married and has two gorgeous children, a daughter and a son. She also has a cat, Kit, and a poodle, Charlie. Her favorite activities and interests include auto racing, photography, camping, reading, and playing with her children.



Carissa Colvin, RVT is originally from Dysart, Iowa and received her Associate of Applied Sciences degree in Veterinary Technology from Kirkwood Community College. She currently has a cat name Holstein. When not at work, she likes to spend time with family and friends, read books, and go on walks.