

Newsletter of the
Community Practice Service

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as the days get
SHORTER

and weather cooler, the endless summer days of play for dogs and cats (and owners) come to a close. While it may not be possible to get outside and stay active on stormy winter days, there are plenty of fun, in-house things that can be done to beat winter boredom.



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**THE VETERINARY TEACHING HOSPITAL
 WELCOMES A NEW SERVICE—BEHAVIOR!**



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Our new Behavior Service includes a veterinarian who specializes in animal behavior problems and a licensed veterinary technician. In addition to the serious business of diagnosing and treating common behavior problems in dogs (aggression, barking, destructiveness, house soiling, phobias, and separation anxiety) and common behavior problems in cats (urine marking, inappropriate elimination, aggression, anxiety, over-grooming and scratching) we also offer pet selection counseling, behavior problem prevention counseling, help for those "troubled teens", as well as senior pet problems.

We derive our humane behavior modification techniques from the field of applied animal behavior where veterinary and behavioral science professionals specialize in applying scientific principles, learned from the study of domestic and wild animal behavior, learning theory, and counseling, to companion animals. In the clinic, we use these techniques to help owners solve their pets' behavior problems. Medication, which only veterinarians can prescribe, is occasionally used in conjunction with behavior modification therapy. Veterinarians can also diagnose medical conditions that can affect a pet's behavior.



Pets as Gifts

Before giving a pet as a gift, be certain that it is a welcomed (and expected) gift. Every year pets given as unwanted gifts end up in shelters, or worse, being destroyed.

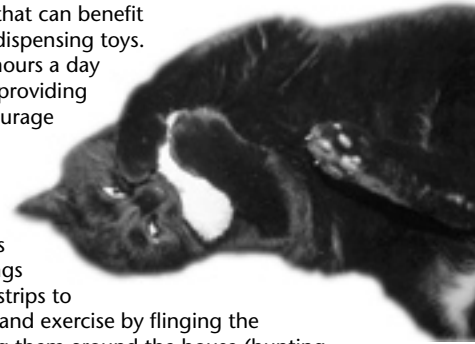
To help keep your dogs mind and body in condition over the winter months, provide a challenging treat, like the "stuffed" **kong**. Kongs are a rubber, rounded pyramid shaped toy that can provide an outlet for chewing and can be filled with treats (like a canine toy piñata). They come in sizes and strengths from puppy to polar bear, and are available at most pet stores. Do you have more than one dog? To keep peace in the family, follow this rule of thumb, the number of dogs plus three. This is the number of kongs that should be made available. To help prevent the kong from becoming wedged in the mouth or swallowed, choose the proper size of kong for your dog. If you have dogs of varying size, choose a kong size appropriate for the largest dog. The first time the kong is used, make it easy for the dog to get out the stuffing. Stuff the kong with cat food or other tasty morsels and set it up on end (opening on the floor). As the dog nuzzles the kong over on it's side-Surprise!! Gradually make the treat harder to get: smear the inside with peanut butter and shake some tasty kibble onto the peanut butter-it's a full day's job to get all the peanut butter out. And for the expert dog, put a piece of

cooked steak into the kong, pack it in with dog kibble, and wedge it closed with a dog biscuit. Some of our favorite stuffings include: peanut butter, wet cat food, cooked meat, and dog biscuits. An "official kong stuffing" is also available at pet stores. If your dog is on a restrictive diet due to food allergies, illness, or a weight reduction plan, consult with your veterinarian to find an appropriate treat your dog can have. According to the National Academy of Sciences Research Council, at least 25% of companion cats and dogs are obese. Keeping that in mind, cut back a bit on their regular dinner portions. Food dispensing toys are great fun. Balance them with plenty of exercise.



Cats need exercise too!

Dogs aren't the only ones that can benefit from interactive and food dispensing toys. Feral cats spend up to 11 hours a day hunting and foraging. By providing toys that address and encourage these behaviors, exercise levels can be increased as well as provide mental stimulation. A good hunting and foraging toy is the **kitty-kong**. Kitty-kongs come with catnip scented strips to encourage cats to interact and exercise by flinging the kongs in the air and batting them around the house (hunting behavior). The kitty-kong can be filled with food as well (encourages foraging behavior). Cats tend to appreciate food with a lot of odor like cooked meat, canned foods or treats. Put your cat's favorite treat inside the kong and let them enjoy the food fiesta!



For cats that are not interested in the kong, place tasty food on small paper plates and hide them through out the main living areas. This foraging for good stuff is bound to get kitty off the sofa and leaping into action. To keep kitty on her toes, interactive toys such as cat dancers and wands are great. After a long day of exercising with the dog, flop down on the sofa and exercise the cat. The cat dancers and wands are long, sturdy string toys with feathers, and various other accessories, built like a fishing pole. These toys allow for hunting play, without the risk of getting your hand in the wrong spot at the wrong time--ouch. Some toys interact like a bungee cord. Hang these toys over door handles for fun when you are not around. Add in a mixture of cat-nip mice, and the party will continue.

When winter fades into spring, continue the fun interactions with your pet both outside and inside the home.

VACCINATIONS

Vaccination protocols for dogs and cats have received a great deal of attention in the past few years. A lack of scientific studies on the duration of immunity have contributed to the controversy. We have adapted our vaccine protocols as new information emerges. We take each individual animal's needs into consideration before determining which vaccines should be given and at what interval they need to be administered. In this newsletter we will present the guidelines that we follow regarding each vaccine to help interested pet owners better understand our philosophy.

There seems to be an association between injection site irritation and the occurrence of fibrosarcoma (tumor) in the cat, and possibly the dog. This association motivated us to take a closer look at vaccination protocols in dogs and cats.

CATS:

All cats should receive **rabies** vaccines. The potential hazard to human health is too great to risk having an unvaccinated cat as a pet. A relatively new rabies vaccine is available (recombinant, canary pox) that minimizes tissue irritation at the injection site.

FVRCP:

Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, and Panleukopenia should be given to all kittens and adult cats. It is uncertain as to how long the vaccines will protect individual cats. Protection can vary from one year to several years and length of protection largely depends on the immune status of the animal at the time of vaccination. While some veterinarians recommend that this vaccine be given every three years, we have found that some

cats on this protocol are not well protected when they are challenged. An intraocular/ intranasal (IO/IN) vaccine is available that can be given yearly without risk of inducing a fibrosarcoma. Currently we are using the injectable vaccine for the kitten series to ensure that a substantial base of "memory" cells is established, and then we are vaccinating annually with the IO/IN vaccine to promote ongoing protection.

FELINE LEUKEMIA (FeLV):

This vaccine should only be given to those cats that are at risk of contracting the disease by direct exposure to other cats. Unlike the diseases covered in the FVRCP vaccine, which can be spread easily through the air or on clothing, FeLV can only be transmitted by direct contact with an infected cat shedding the virus. Indoor cats that do not come into contact with outdoor cats do not need to be vaccinated for FeLV. In this case, the risk of an adverse reaction (fibrosarcoma) outweighs any potential risk of disease. It is also important to remember that this vaccine is not 100% protective and that cats who are vaccinated but are exposed to diseased cats may still run the risk of contracting FeLV.

FELINE IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (FIV)

This virus is primarily transmitted by bite wounds from an infected cat. The current test for FIV cannot distinguish a vaccinated cat from an infected cat. Furthermore, the current vaccine may not protect cats from all of the various field strains of the virus. Therefore, until a test is developed to identify diseased cats from vaccinated cats and until the vaccine is shown to be effective against all types of the virus, we are not recommending use of the vaccine.

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TIPS FOR A SAFE AND FUN HOLIDAY SEASON

Traveling with Your Pet

Most people realize that health certificates are required for air travel for pets. During the winter months, air travel may be restricted for pets if extreme temperatures occur. A health certificate is valid for 30 days, but most airlines will require that it be issued within 10 days. Travel across the border to Canada requires a current rabies status and a health certificate. Check with the airline to confirm specific flying recommendations and be certain your pet is used to it's carrier before travel.

Be aware that other areas of the country have heartworm disease. This mosquito borne disease can be life threatening. Any dog or cat traveling to a heartworm endemic area should be put on preventative. Please talk to your veterinarian before traveling to these areas with your pet.

Cold Weather Tips

As cold weather approaches we need to think about our pets outdoors. All animals need shelter from the sun, wind, rain and snow. When an animal is wet, the ability to maintain body temperature is decreased and is dramatically worsened by the wind. Hypothermia and frostbite affect animals as well as people!

Be sure to wash off rock salt or deicers after walking your dog. Snowballs must be removed to prevent frostbite. Also, be careful walking dogs near frozen lakes or ponds. If you can't skate on it, then your pet might fall through the ice and suffer hypothermia or drown.

Never leave your pet in the car. The interior can become too cold, or if you leave it in the sun even the winter sun can overheat a car.

Fresh water is necessary in the winter as well as summer, so be sure that the water is not frozen.

Pet food left outdoors attracts rodents, wildlife and other animals. Many animals will need extra calories in the winter to maintain body weight (especially if they are spending a lot of time outside). Be sure that your dog's food is not being carried off by other animals. Also, use plastic bowls as tongues may stick to cold metal bowls.

Antifreeze, which is sweet, is VERY toxic. Even a small amount (1/2 teaspoon per pound) can kill. If you suspect your pet has ingested any antifreeze seek medical attention immediately.

Outdoor cats may seek warmth by climbing up into a warm car engine. They can be seriously hurt or killed if they haven't moved by the next time you start the car. Rap on the hood of your car before starting it to scare any visitors.

Short-coated breeds may benefit from having coats or sweaters on when they go outside.

Remember that the young, old and sick or infirm animals are less tolerant of temperature extremes. They need extra care in the cold weather.

Holiday Tips

With holiday commotion on its way, prepare your pet for the onset of visitors, the hustle and bustle, and (a cat's delight) a tree in the house.

Provide plenty of interactive toys AWAY from the Christmas tree, other decorations, and large crowds of people.

For dogs, have a travel crate or quiet place where they can get away and feel safe. If your dog or cat is wary or anxious about having company over, prepare him a special room away from the noise. Provide all the luxuries: chewing toys, food, water, litterbox, a comfortable bed, and put him in the room well in advance of visitors.

Provide plenty of quality time with your pet. With changes in work schedules, vacation, people coming and going, reassuring contact with the owner is the perfect end to an otherwise troubling day.

Holiday Hazards

Dogs, and cats find holidays to be filled with wonderful surprises. Many of these things can be hazardous or fatal to pets. Most people are aware of the risk of chocolate toxicity in dogs, but somehow, there are always clever dogs that seem to find a way to get to the fudge and truffles. If lucky, the dog may vomit and rid themselves of most of the chocolate, but it is important to have the animal evaluated for further treatment.

Ribbons and tree decorations are also popular with our pets. Intestinal obstructions are common if these are ingested. A sick pet and a visit to the ER can be avoided with care.

Aluminum foil, often with some tasty morsel attached, can be ingested and can cause bleeding as it passes through the intestines.

Bones, at any time of the year, can cause obstructions and at the very least can cause severe enteritis. Remember, HEALTHY TREATS ONLY during the holiday season!

Electrical cords from decorations can look like a toy to cats or dogs. Electrocution can be avoided by keeping cords out of reach from your pets. Also, avoid tinsel (it can saw through intestines if ingested) and use unbreakable ornaments. Hand ornaments with string instead of hooks. If you use popcorn or other food based decorations, be sure your animal cannot reach them.

VACCINATIONS *continued from previous page*

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE OTHER VACCINES AVAILABLE FOR CATS, THERE ARE NO OTHER VACCINES WE FEEL ARE BOTH SAFE AND EFFICACIOUS FOR ROUTINE ADMINISTRATION.

DOGS:

Rabies vaccination must be administered to all dogs.

DA2PP:

Distemper, Adenovirus, Parainfluenza and Parvovirus are recommended for all dogs. The interval for administration of this combination vaccine should be based on the individual's general health status and potential exposure risk. The current recommendation is to vaccinate between one and three years. The risk of administering this vaccine every three years to all dogs is the resurfacing of these diseases over time as the immunity in the population as a whole may decrease. We are still recommending vaccination on an annual basis for most of the dogs in our practice since they are highly social and many travel.

LEPTOSPIROSIS

This is a very serious disease in both dogs and people. All dogs with any risk of exposure should be vaccinated. The leptospirosis organism can be found in standing water. Domestic animals, wildlife and rodents are reservoirs for leptospirosis and thus it is maintained in the environment. While the vaccine does not protect against all forms of the organism, it does protect against several of the types that cause serious disease in humans and dogs. We recommend annual vaccination for dogs at risk and highly recommend that hunting dogs be vaccinated just prior to hunting season.

BORDETELLA (KENNEL COUGH)

This vaccine is recommended only for dogs that are kenneled or shown. The vaccine is protective for about four months and is not considered to be an "annual" vaccine.

THERE ARE NO OTHER VACCINES THAT ARE INDICATED FOR DOGS IN OUR AREA.