

COMMUNITY PRACTICE UPDATES...



Your WSU Community Practice Service staff: (left to right) veterinary technician Angela Teal, Drs. Erick Spencer, Raelynn Farnsworth, Terri Schneider with Monique, and veterinary technician Danielle Wallace



Dr. Veronika Kiklevich

The Community Practice continues to grow and change. We recently welcomed the addition of our new veterinary technician, **Angela Teal**. Angela worked at an emergency hospital during the past five years and has brought experience and knowledge with her. She has been a great help to our busy service. Angela is a member of the Steptoe Volunteer Fire Department and is working on her EMT certification. She and her family also have quite a collection of pets, including five cats, four dogs, a fish, and a gerbil.

Angela Teal and **Danielle Wallace** are licensed veterinary technicians in the Community Practice Service and are available to take calls and answer questions for you.

Sadly, **Dr. Veronika Kiklevich**, a mainstay of our service, is moving away. Dr. K's husband has taken a research position at a hospital in Texas, and Dr. K and their daughters are reluctantly leaving the Palouse to become Texans. Dr. K has been a major part of the growth and success of the Community Practice for the past 12 years, and is a very talented clinician with a loyal clientele. She will be missed as a friend and colleague. We are looking forward to her frequent return visits to help with lectures and ongoing projects. She has been working hard to gradually transfer care of her long-time patients to **Drs. Schneider** and **Farnsworth**.

For the next several months we will have the pleasure of having **Dr. Erick Spencer** work with us. You may have met Dr. Spencer this past year either through the Community Practice or the emergency service. Dr. Spencer has been an intern for the past year and we are fortunate that he has agreed to join us for the summer. Next fall we hope to introduce a permanent associate to the Community Practice.

Newsletter of the Community Practice Service

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College of Veterinary Medicine
Washington State University

http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/ClientED/community_practice.asp

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To make an appointment call:
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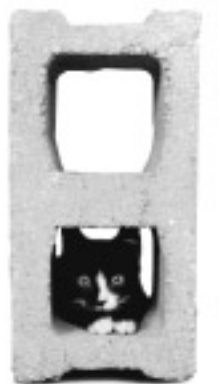
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helping your pets cope with **HOLIDAY FIREWORKS**

Many Americans look forward to the grand finale of the 4th of July celebration, the fireworks display. But the reality is, loud celebrations with fireworks persist during this holiday for several days. While some dogs don't mind loud noises, or the illuminated bursts in the night sky, many find the event stressful. Some dogs may just whine and pace, while others may destroy their surroundings or even injure themselves trying to escape the sounds of the fireworks during episodes of sheer panic.

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Helping Your Pets Cope with Holiday Fireworks —Continued from previous page

Here are 10 steps to help your dog have a safe 4th of July holiday:

1. Leave your dog at home. Panting, whining, yawning, and lip-licking are subtle signs of unease and may reveal that your pet is distressed.
2. Dogs should not be left unattended or loose. There are numerous accounts of dogs either breaking or becoming entangled in their chains, or even scaling fences in an attempt to flee from fireworks. If your pets must be housed outside, secure them in a chain-link kennel with a roof. Provide an airline crate or dog house with a padded surface. Secure the kennel with a latch to prevent accidental door openings. Covering the crate with a blanket, if it is in a cool place, can muffle both light and sound to reduce the animal's distress.
3. Consider setting up a 'den' inside a secure room in the home. Put soft blankets in an airline crate or cardboard box that the pet can crawl into. Close the room's windows to dampen the outside noise and cover the windows with aluminum foil or heavy drapes to block out the flashes of light. Turn on a radio or TV at normal volume to help block out the firework sound. Be sure the TV station you select will not be airing any fireworks displays.
4. Provide your dog with familiar toys, treats, and chews or Kong toys filled with food. These items may offer some positive distraction. Some dogs that are very uneasy may not eat their treats and/or have diarrhea. In that situation, medication may be advised. Talk with your veterinarian to determine if sedation or anti-anxiety medication will benefit your dog.
5. D.A.P. (Dog Appeasing Pheromone) is a synthetic pheromone that has a calming effect on dogs. Studies have shown that it reduced anxiety in thunderstorm-phobic dogs during a storm. It also may be helpful for dogs during fireworks. The D.A.P. diffuser is plugged into an electrical outlet and the electrical current warms the fluid (similar to a room deodorizer). Plug it in 48 hours in advance in the room that will house your dog during the fireworks display. Have several relaxed and calm interactions with your dog in that room in advance of the fireworks to help create a positive experience in that room.
6. Do not physically or verbally punish a dog for anxious, nervous, or fearful behavior. Punishment is not effective and can make the overall anxiety and fear worse.
7. Avoid inadvertently rewarding nervous, anxious, or fearful behavior. Stroking, holding, cooing, and telling them it is "ok", only helps to reinforce to the dog that there is something to worry about. Ignore anxious behavior. When your dog is settled down and relaxed, reward him for his calm behavior.
8. The 5th of July is a busy time of year for many animal control agencies. Have a method to get your companion back home to you. Be sure to have an ID tag on your pet's collar. The information should be current with an alternate phone or e-mail contact. It is also recommended to have your dog microchipped or tattooed so that if the collar and tag gets lost, there is a secondary form of identification available.
9. Be proactive. Don't put off behavioral counseling because the 4th of July happens only once a year. Talk with your veterinarian about behavior modification or a referral to a veterinary behaviorist. For more information about WSU's Animal Behavior Service, contact the Veterinary Teaching Hospital at 335-0711, or look on-line at www.vetmed.wsu.edu/depts-behavior.
10. A few simple steps will help your pet stay safe this summer holiday season.

YOUR PET AND OBESITY

Obesity is the single greatest cause of health problems seen in companion animals. Obesity can lead to a long list of maladies including arthritis, heart disease, and diabetes. Obesity can also predispose your cat to a fatty liver disease called hepatic lipidosis, and increase the risk of your dog developing a bladder tumor. There is a higher risk with anesthesia in obese pets, and a lower immune resistance to infectious diseases. Obesity can also contribute to respiratory and birthing difficulties.

All of these problems are serious, but because obesity is a preventable disease, it also makes them a tragedy. Each pet is unique, but in general, the way to assess ideal body condition for any pet is when you can feel its ribs easily, but not see them, and when viewed from the side, the belly should appear tucked up. If you view him or her from above, there should be a noticeable waist in front of the hips.



The major cause of obesity is excess caloric intake for the amount of exercise your pet receives. In simple terms, calorie intake exceeds calorie requirements. This accounts for 95 percent of obesity. Hormonal conditions, genetic predisposition, a lower basal metabolism in older pets and in spayed or neutered pets, and improper feeding practices are other possible reasons.

Since obesity can be caused by a number of conditions, your veterinarian should perform a thorough physical exam before a weight loss program is instituted. This might include a blood chemistry, CBC, urinalysis, and thyroid panel. Once it has been determined that your pet is ready for a weight loss program, your veterinarian can devise a program that will best fit you and your pet's needs. Important features of a weight loss plan include setting a goal for the amount of weight to be lost, setting an amount for daily caloric intake, selecting a specific amount of exercise, monitoring the progress of weight loss, adjusting calories, food, and exercise as needed, and finally, stabilizing your pet's caloric intake at its reduced weight to ensure that the weight is not regained.

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A RARE CASE: TETANUS IN A DOG

"Gonzo," a five-month-old small breed dog, had been a healthy, active, outdoor puppy with free rein to roam in the country. But in January, he began to experience stiffness in his right front leg that became progressively worse over a two-week period. When his owners brought him to the WSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital, Gonzo was in so much pain that he could hardly bear weight on the limb.

"Upon examination, Gonzo was depressed," said Dr. Erick Spencer, an intern in small animal medicine and surgery at WSU. "His temperature and respiration were normal, but his heart rate was elevated. He also could not flex his right forelimb, and both of his hind legs also appeared stiff."

Your Pet and Obesity —Continued from previous page

Cats present unique problems when considering weight loss. Dietary recommendations have changed dramatically for cats. If your cat is on a restricted calorie diet, there may be some alternative diets that will be better for your cat and help with weight loss. We will be happy to discuss these alternatives with you.

Achieving weight loss in our pets can take time and commitment. The most important factor for a successful program is being aware of the animal's caloric need and food intake. The health benefits for your pet make this all worthwhile. If you have any questions, please contact us at 509-335-0711, or make an appointment for your pet.

Despite this, Gonzo was able to walk short distances, although his back legs became more rigid the further he walked. He also had an abscess under his right forelimb, pain in his neck when moved from side to side, and his ears were erect.

Based upon these symptoms, Gonzo's doctors tested him for tetanus, and the results came back positive. Tetanus is caused by a neurotoxin produced by a bacteria commonly found in the soil.

"Dogs and cats are relatively resistant to tetanus, but it can be introduced into the tissues through deep puncture wounds," Dr. Spencer said. "Because this specific bacteria can only survive in the absence of oxygen, deep wounds provide an ideal environment for growth." Unfortunately, Gonzo's owners did not know how he was wounded, and did not notice the abscess in his leg until he was brought to the hospital.

The toxin produced by the bacteria causes muscle spasms that result in stiffness. Muscle spasms are usually seen in the limb nearest the wound, but the toxin can also spread via the bloodstream, which allows it to affect all four limbs and the muscles of the neck and mouth.

Gonzo was treated with tetanus antitoxin and penicillin to cure the infection, and also underwent surgery to drain the abscess in his right forelimb. He was sent home with a typical two-month treatment of penicillin therapy, and his owners reported that he showed dramatic improvement and appeared completely normal within a few weeks, Dr. Spencer said.

Dr. Spencer went on to explain that because this disease is so uncommon in dogs, annual vaccinations are not indicated.

SUMMER VACATION CHECKLIST

- Make sure your pet's vaccinations are up to date for the trip or the boarding kennel. If your dog is going to a kennel, he or she will most likely require a bordetella (kennel cough) vaccination.
- Bring a copy of your pet's rabies certificate, especially if traveling to Canada.
- Your pet may need a health certificate if you are traveling by air or going to Canada.
- If you are traveling outside of the Palouse, you may need to arrange for your pet to be on heartworm preventative and flea prevention.
- For pets prone to carsickness, call and we can give you some suggestions that may help.
- If you are leaving your pet behind, do not forget to make arrangements with your pet sitter or the kennel in case of an emergency. Make sure to leave phone numbers where you can be reached.



- Remember to take any medications or special food that your pet requires in the original vials or containers.
- Keep a leash in the car and attach it to your dog's collar before opening the car door.
- Keep cats in carriers when opening doors.
- Be sure to have more than one form of identification on your pet in case it gets lost.
- If possible, attach a phone number where you will be staying to the pet's collar – consider a microchip for permanent identification.
- Call ahead (or check the internet) for pet-friendly hotels.