

Newsletter of the COMMUNITY PRACTICE SERVICE

Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine
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Fall 2010

A dog is prepared for a CT examination in WSU's upgraded scanner. Photo by Henry Moore Jr. BCU/WSU



WSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital receives upgraded CT scanner

This spring, Washington State University's Veterinary Teaching Hospital installed a new, upgraded spiral computed tomography (CT) scanner for use in both small and large animals, thanks to funds donated by a generous family.

The VTH has had a CT scanner for more than two decades and a magnetic resonance imaging machine (MRI) since 1996. With the new Toshiba Aquilion 16-slice spiral CT unit operational, both MRI and CT in WSU's veterinary college are among the most advanced complementary tools for diagnostic imaging in the profession.

"Before the new CT, we had about 20 CT cases each month, but now I would expect to do five times that," said Dr. John Mattoon, a WSU professor and board certified radiologist who is head of WSU's veterinary radiology section. "There were limitations with the old technology that hampered its everyday use, but the new CT is truly state-of-the-art with brand new software that hugely improves its capabilities. Our goal is to examine several small animals a day, and perhaps 100 horses a year with the new CT."

Speed is one of the CT's main features. A small animal can often be imaged in the new CT scanner in seconds, in many cases without general anesthesia. "When necessary, anesthesia induction and prep-work will take much longer than the actual CT exam" Dr. Mattoon said. "By comparison, MRI may take an hour or more. Still, these two imaging modalities are complementary to each other, and one does not necessarily exclude the use of the other."

The CT scanner collects numerous images in slices and reconstructs the data in a variety of planes as well as three-dimensional representations of structures, such as a spinal canal with a bulging disc, or a fractured bone in a horse's leg. MRI is best used for imaging soft tissues, such as tendons and ligaments.

For small animals, the entire body can be scanned, and is especially useful for examining the lungs and abdomen. Horses are too large to fit entirely in the CT scanner, so only certain areas are eligible for examination, such as the head and limbs to examine complex dental diseases, tumors of the head, and limb fractures.

"CT scans are the first choice in human medicine for imaging the lungs and abdomen, and I think it should become the standard of abdominal imaging in small animals as well," said Dr. Mattoon, who has practiced radiology for nearly 25 years. "Unfortunately, horses are just too big."

As a result of the CT's speed, animals have to spend much less time under anesthesia, if at all. "Some small animals can just be sedated without undergoing anesthesia," Dr. Mattoon said. "For horses, we can use a short-acting anesthetic. This is an important advancement because there are always risks associated with anesthetizing an animal.

"Overall, CTs should be less expensive because exams take less anesthesia and time," he said. "This particular new CT scanner should also open up a whole new area of research,

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To make an appointment call:
509-335-0711



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Helping pets with osteoarthritis

Joint pain due to osteoarthritis (OA) is a relatively common problem in dogs and cats, especially as they age. There are many diseases that affect the joints from several types of arthritis that can lead to OA, also known as osteoarthrosis, degenerative joint disease or DJD, and just simply arthritis.

Common causes of OA include acute traumatic arthritis, resulting from an injury such as a ligament tear or fracture involving a joint and its cartilage; autoimmune disorders like rheumatoid arthritis where a pet's own immune system attacks the joints; and hip and elbow developmental disorders such as dysplasia. All of these problems can cause cartilage to break down and create changes to the tissues around the joint and the underlying bone. In turn, these changes can all negatively affect an animal's joint or joints.

With OA, the smooth bluish-white cartilage at the ends of bones that are the joint's bearing surface may completely wear down over time. This causes bone to rub on bone, which is extremely painful and causes inflammation and odd bone growth. In addition to the cartilage wearing down, there is an increase in joint fluid and thickening of the joint capsule and other tissues overlying the joint. Unfortunately, OA cannot be prevented and there is no cure for it beyond total joint replacement through surgery, but most pets affected by OA can be managed on several fronts to feel better.

"There are estimates by pharmaceutical companies that 20 percent of dogs in the United States are afflicted with OA, but that amount is probably a gross underestimate," said Dr. Steve Martinez, a WSU board-certified veterinary surgeon who specializes in orthopedics within the WSU Small Animal Orthopedic Service. "As dogs live longer, the clinical signs seen with OA have the potential to become more apparent. Signs of OA (lameness, joint swelling, etc.) can develop as early as 5 to 9 months of age, especially if elbow or hip dysplasia is present, but there are a number of dogs out there who may not demonstrate clinical signs at that time. Typically however, clinical signs show up at a much younger age, again, 5-9 months, but some may not manifest the disease until much older, say at 3 to 5 years old. The lameness and pain can be subtle at first, but can increase over time."

Common signs of OA include stiffness, limping, chronic soreness, favoring a limb, and reluctance to jump up or down from a stationary position and/or climb up or down stairs.

"Owners will notice symptoms progressing over time," Dr. Martinez said. "Lameness typically increases with activity, and the animal may be sensitive to a specific joint when touched. In extreme cases, there may be a decrease in much muscle mass (atrophy) in one leg as opposed to the other because the animal is not using it as much. Owners may also notice joint swelling, and may or may not hear popping or clicking noises from a particular joint. But not all dogs with OA will show pain. The hips, stifle (knee), and shoulder can tolerate a fair amount of OA before an animal begins to show any clinical signs. The elbow, carpus (wrist), and tarsus (hock or ankle) are more sensitive because they are smaller joints with more force applied per unit area of joint surface."

Cats can develop OA as well as dogs, but it may be harder to detect because cats are frequently good at hiding pain. They may also be affected to a lesser degree because they are smaller animals and gravity plays a lighter role on their joints.



Dr. Martinez attends to many small animals with skeletal problems, including Chocolate, who suffered multiple fractures of his forelegs that healed improperly. Photo by Henry Moore Jr. BCU/WSU

To diagnose OA, a veterinarian relies on the pet's history from the owner, a physical exam, and radiographs of affected joints. A veterinarian will also look to rule out other problems and diseases like cancer, infections, and neurologic disease that can produce signs that are similar to OA.

"Radiographs (X-rays) may show additional bone development called osteophytes, or sclerosis, which is thickening of the bone below the joint surface in response to inflammation," Dr. Martinez said. "When a diagnosis is made, we use a multi-modal approach to manage the disease, which includes weight management, exercise modification, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), and special nutritional supplements."

"Many animal with OA are overweight, but a weight reduction even as little as eight percent can greatly improve a pet's symptoms," Dr. Martinez said. "In fact, weight loss/control by itself has been shown to have a profound effect on the comfort level of a dog with OA. Exercise modification, not restriction, is also very important. Instead of prolonged high-impact activities like free running or Frisbee catching, pets with OA can benefit from low-impact activities like walking on soft, grassy areas and swimming, which is much less stressful on the joints."

A veterinarian can recommend a specific exercise program for a pet based on the severity of its condition. They can also offer appropriate ways to warm up and cool down a pet's muscles before and after exercise. WSU offers a physical therapy program for dogs that utilizes an underwater treadmill, ultrasound treatments, and electrostimulation of muscle groups if indicated.

"Many OA patients can benefit wonderfully from this kind of physical therapy program," Dr. Martinez said. "Keeping pets off of cold hard surfaces, especially during the winter months, can be of benefit as well. Using a soft and insulated bedding material that is high enough off the cold, drafty zone above the floor, but not too high to make it difficult for the animal to get in and

OSTEOARTHRITIS | *continued from page 2*

out, is ideal. Ceder-chip pet beds or similar beds and beds with memory foam are probably ideal for these kinds of patients.”

To help control pain, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as Rimadyl® are another common component of treating OA, but is generally only appropriate for dogs, and should ideally be used on an as-needed basis. In addition, dogs should only receive pet-formulated NSAIDs prescribed by a veterinarian. Pet owners should remember that human formulated drugs such as acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (e.g. Advil®) can be extremely toxic and can cause death if administered to a dog or cat.

“NSAIDs for dogs have been around since 1996,” Dr. Martinez said. “There are currently five FDA-approved NSAIDs, four of which are generally tolerated well by dogs with minimal gastrointestinal upset and kidney issues. As in humans, certain NSAIDs work better in individual dogs than others. Some can cause severe gastrointestinal upset, but there are drugs that can be administered to help combat these side effects. A veterinarian can also switch an animal to another class of NSAIDs.”

Dietary supplements (nutraceuticals) such as glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate may also aid joint health. In laboratory settings, glucosamine provides the building blocks to form new cartilage and joint fluid, which makes joints more lubricated and healthy. It has also been demonstrated in laboratory settings that chondroitin sulfate reduces degenerative enzymes that break down joint cartilage, and it also helps lubricate joints.

“What actually happens when these supplements are digested and absorbed by the body is unknown at this time,” Dr. Martinez said. “Given on a daily basis, evidence-based medicine has shown that these products can help with the inflammation and discomfort associated with OA in some dogs. Research has shown that glucosamine and certain chondroitin sulfates can have a profound anti-inflammatory effect if used together, and may decrease the likelihood of acute flare-ups of chronic OA, and therefore may reduce the need for NSAID treatment in those patients on such a regular basis after activity.”

Veterinarians can prescribe glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate in pill form, in a prescription diet, or as an injection (Adequan®). There are several nutritional supplements currently on the market that use different sources of glucosamine and have other components that have laboratory-based evidence for anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant properties. Other nutritional

supplements, such as MSM and SAME, commonly believed to have beneficial effects for OA human patients, have not been clinically proven to impact the clinical signs of OA in pets.

“Currently there are several ‘OA’ diets marketed with fatty acid modifications and may also contain some of the same supplements such as glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate,” Dr. Martinez said. “Current research suggests that these diets may help a smaller population of dogs when used solely for OA management, but when used together with weight control, exercise modification, NSAIDs, and oral nutraceuticals, they may have an additive positive effect on the patient.”

In addition to medical management, surgery may be appropriate for some animals with certain forms of OA. One procedure offered at the WSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital is a highly specialized, minimally invasive procedure called arthroscopy. This procedure involves the use of small fiber-optic telescopes and tiny instruments that surgeons pass through small incisions, giving them the ability to thoroughly examine and treat joint problems with less pain and a quicker recovery time for the animal. Total joint replacement, such as total hip replacements, may be appropriate for some animals with severe OA, but as with other procedures such as “FHO” or “femoral head and neck ostectomies” for OA of the hips, is generally considered a salvage procedure to restore pain-free joint movement.

“Recognizing that we cannot cure OA, there are some surgical procedures like arthroscopy that can help make a pet more comfortable and reduce the elements that are creating discomfort in the OA joint to a lower level,” Dr. Martinez said. “A high percentage of dogs that come to our orthopedic service with OA in their elbow due to elbow dysplasia can benefit from surgery, but even these animals must go through the multi-modal method of medical management for their condition.

“OA is a very complex disease with many different pathways, and we don’t know all the pathways yet,” he said. “But pets with OA can still have a long and happy life, and with current treatment methods, a large number of animals can have a very good to excellent quality of life.”

For more information about OA management, contact the WSU Community Practice Service at 509-335-0711. For pet weight loss information, including a new prescription for weight loss, look online at the fall 2009 issue of the WSU Community Practice Newsletter at www.vetmed.wsu.edu/depts-vth/newsletters.

SCANNER | *continued from page 1*

including vascular and shunt studies. I imagine that in the beginning we will do a lot of cases in which we use both CT and MRI.”

The WSU College of Veterinary Medicine received the new CT scanner through a generous donation from Joe and Barbara Mendelson of Santa Barbara, California. Joe and Barbara’s family have long been dedicated to Standardbred horses and whippets. They were made aware of WSU’s veterinary college by two of its alumni, Drs. John Oplinger ’79 and Ron Faoro ’81.

“We are very privileged to have a 16-slice scanner,” Dr. Mattoon said. “The machine collects multiple slices at one time, which is what makes it so fast. There are scanners out there that can collect more data at one time, but to put things in perspective, the CT scanner at Pullman Regional Hospital is currently a 4-slice scanner.”

For more information about WSU’s CT imaging, or to find information about obtaining a referral to WSU’s radiology section, contact Dr. John Mattoon at 509-335-0711, or look online at www.vetmed.wsu.edu/depts-vth/radiology.

Seeking care for your pet at WSU's Veterinary Teaching Hospital

Every day, veterinarians at Washington State University's College of Veterinary Medicine provide state-of-the-art medical care for animals and crucial information for owners and referring veterinarians. From dogs, cats, and horses to parakeets, cattle, alpacas, llamas, and iguanas, animals from all walks of life are treated in our world-class clinical teaching facilities.

WSU's Veterinary Teaching Hospital operates 24 hours a day, with regular business hours from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. It is a full service hospital serving the Pacific Northwest and western Canada. The teaching hospital is also part of the Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences, one of three academic departments in the College of Veterinary Medicine. The hospital offers services to both large and small animals, as well as some nearby livestock units.



The VTH is a state-assisted \$38 million facility that opened in September 1996. Each year, about 15,000 animals are treated here. The nearly three-acre building encompasses the hospital, clinical laboratory, and epidemiological surveillance service all under one roof. The central core provides space for surgery suites for small and large animals, clinical pathology, seminar rooms, administrative areas, reception, special medicine and diagnostic areas, and the state's only pharmacy dedicated exclusively to animals.

The VTH enjoys the finest medical imaging capabilities available to veterinary medicine. WSU is one of the most advanced veterinary hospitals in the world with such sophisticated systems as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computerized tomography (CT scan), and nuclear scintigraphy (bone scanning). Digital radi-



The WSU Community Practice Team (left to right): Dr. Raelynn Farnsworth, Dr. Matt Mickas, and veterinary technicians Melody Gerber and Teresa Crawford Carson. Photo by Henry Moore Jr. BCU/WSU

The WSU Community Practice Team

The veterinarians of the WSU Community Practice offer a full range of services for small animals without a referral. These services include basic care, vaccinations, dental exams, and geriatric check-ups as well as more advanced diagnostics and care for sick animals.

We work together as a team to provide efficient and comprehensive care for all of our patients. The Community Practice Service operates like a regular veterinary practice, but with the added benefit of access to veterinary specialists in virtually every area of small animal medicine and surgery, as well as the best-equipped veterinary teaching hospital in the Northwest with 24-hour emergency and ICU care. You can be sure that your pet is receiving the best possible care at the WSU Community Practice.

however, because of the increased attention given to patients associated with training third- and fourth-year professional students and postgraduate students. A team approach is used to evaluate patients that include faculty, residents, interns, students, and staff.

The Community Practice has in-house consultation services available for specialized diagnostic tests and treatments, including radiographic imaging, such as CT scans or MR imaging, and cancer treatment.

ography and computer aided radiography are also available. In addition to these services, ultrasound, endoscopy, arthroscopy, laser surgery, and therapeutic technologies including surgery, medical management, and radiation therapy are available.

Specialized medical treatments in certain areas are also available at the VTH. These include cancer treatments that involve advanced surgical techniques, radiation therapy provided by the college's \$2 million linear accelerator, chemotherapy, and palliative care.

Client animals are treated by renowned specialists who are also in the process of training compassionate and capable future veterinarians. Faculty in the Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences conduct research to enhance current knowledge of diseases, diagnostics, and treatment. WSU veterinarians have made recent advancements in the diagnosis and treatment of brain tumors, neurological problems, and canine osteoarthritis. They've conducted field disease investigations affecting herds and flocks and expanded our knowledge of exercise and cardiac physiology and the passive transfer of



immunity.

The Community Practice at WSU offers primary veterinary care to animals owned by the public. It operates much like a private veterinary hospital. Examinations and treatments proceed more slowly than in private practices,

Long live the goldfish

When maintained properly, goldfish can live as long as a cat or dog. "With ideal conditions and astute owners, it is reasonable to expect goldfish to live 8-12 years," said Dr. Nickol Finch, a WSU clinical instructor who specializes in exotic animal medicine and heads the Exotic Animal Service at WSU's Veterinary Teaching Hospital. "Goldfish are fairly easy to keep and fairly hardy in the grand scheme of things, which are probably some of the main reasons for their popularity."

Choosing a fish

To start, it is very important to choose a goldfish from a reputable source, such as a high quality pet store that deals exclusively with fish.

"I would highly recommend against taking fish home from the fair to keep as pets, and they should not be added to an aquarium with established fish," Dr. Finch said. "If you win a goldfish at the fair, just decline the prize. Often, 'fair' goldfish harbor disease and won't live long anyway, and will likely compromise the health of all the other fish in an established aquarium, which can have long-lasting impact.

"When choosing your fish, look in the tank they are held in to make sure the fish look healthy and that there are no dead fish," she said. "Using a goldfish bowl is another key mistake to avoid. Goldfish require 10 gallons of water for each one or two inches of length. A goldfish bowl is simply not appropriate. They are too small, hard to clean, and do not provide a place for a filter. For a happy goldfish and the least amount of work for an owner, I would recommend at least a 10-gallon aquarium with a filtration system that sits either under aquarium gravel or on the back of the tank."

Cleaning

Goldfish produce a lot of waste, so filtration and cleaning are an essential part of maintaining a healthy goldfish. How this is done is also essential.

"When cleaning, don't ever change all the water at once," Dr. Finch said. "Fish can't adapt to abrupt changes like that. I would recommend changing 50 percent of the water every three weeks, and add water as necessary at about the same temperature as the water already in the tank to avoid shocking the fish and cracking the tank. If you have to add city water, put a de-chlorinator in it or leave it out for 24 hours. Goldfish do OK in water that is air temperature, but thrive when the water is 65-80 degrees F."

When cleaning, also keep in mind that fish need bacteria to take care of fish waste, so everything in the tank should not be cleaned at the same time. "If you are going to clean the filter, don't clean the gravel at the same time," Dr. Finch said. "Wait maybe 3-4 weeks to clean the other. And never use soap when cleaning, especially antibacterial soap. I like to use a pop-sicle stick to scrap crud off."



A female goldfish patient presented at WSU's Exotic Animal Service because of an inability to control her buoyancy.

Feeding

Feeding can also affect the cleanliness of tank water. Over-feeding will make the water dirty and may cause digestive upset for the fish, making buoyancy harder for them. A goldfish feeding schedule should be based on the size, aggressiveness, and number of fish in the tank. Generally, goldfish do well being fed twice a day on goldfish flakes sold at pet stores. Younger fish may require more feedings, but directions regarding this can be found on the can. Fish should not be fed more than they can eat within approximately 2-5 minutes. Pieces of vegetables such as carrots, zucchini or squash can also be added, but should not be left in the tank for longer than three hours to avoid making the water or filter dirty.

Plants are another good idea when establishing an aquarium environment. Plants can give aggressive fish something to chew on or play with, and give non-aggressive fish a place to hide. Live or plastic plants can be used, but plastic plants can be easier to maintain.

see **GOLDFISH** page 6

Grieving? You don't have to be alone

Have you lost a beloved animal companion? Perhaps you know someone who has. The WSU College of Veterinary Medicine has a Pet Loss Hotline for those who would like to reach out for a caring listener. WSU's Pet Memorial Program offers families a wonderful way to memorialize and celebrate the life of their pet while supporting the education of future veterinary care providers.

To contact the Pet Loss Hotline, call 509-335-5704, email plhl@vetmed.wsu.edu, or go to www.vetmed.wsu.edu/PLHL.

For more information about the WSU Pet Memorial Program or to make a donation, contact Tim Osborn at 509-335-9516 or tosborn@vetmed.wsu.edu. Information can also be found online at www.vetmed.wsu.edu/petmemorial.

GOLDFISH | *continued from page 5*



Dr. Nickol Finch

“Due to bacteria, live plants will change the whole system of the tank,” Dr. Finch said. “Where you get your plants is important because they can carry bacteria or parasites from tanks they were kept in at pet stores. I would recommend adding only one live plant at a time and leave a three week gap before adding any new ones after that. Once the system is established, live plants may mean that you won’t have to clean your tank as often.”

Adding fish

Care should also be taken when adding other goldfish or other species of fish to a goldfish tank. It is a good idea to check with a pet store or veterinarian about species compatibility and quarantine new fish for 30 days before adding it to the tank to make sure it is not sick.

“Owners may also want to be wary of adding goldfish to other goldfish if there is a huge size discrepancy,” Dr. Finch said. “I’ve had a large goldfish eat the eyes from a smaller goldfish when they were put together. There are lots of types of goldfish, but I would advise against buying the fancy goldfish varieties. They have more problems that affect their health and longevity due to differences in conformation, such as their swim bladder, which are shaped differently than normally shaped goldfish.”

Signs of illness

Often with fish, the only sign one is getting sick is when the owner finds it dead in the tank. Other signs may include refusal to eat, buoyancy or floating problems in which it has trouble going down or up, if its fins are rotting off, if the tail, gills, or scales are discolored, if it is losing scales, or develops holes in its body from bacterial infections that can get into their blood.

“Fish can also develop serious disease if nitrate or ammonia levels are too high in their water,” Dr. Finch said. “Ideally for help with these problems, it is best to call a veterinarian that is knowledgeable about fish, and a good fish store might be able to help. There may be some good information at online fish forums as well, but they can offer some really bad information, too.

“Changing the salinity of the water can help fish with some bacterial infections, some need antibiotics, and some can be treated with a bath, or the whole tank can be treated with antibiotics if needed.”

And finally, people that are pregnant or immunosuppressed from cancer therapy or disease should consult their physician for proper precautions for keeping fish, including cleaning the aquarium. When cleaning an aquarium, be sure to use rubber gloves. If you suffer a cut or scrape attend to it properly and consult your physician if it appears infected.

For more information about caring for goldfish, establishing an appropriate tank, where to find reputable fish dealers or pet stores, or for an examination or treatment, contact Dr. Nickol Finch at the WSU Exotic Animal Service at 509-335-0711.

SEEKING CARE | *continued from page 4*

Hours of Operation

The Veterinary Teaching Hospital is open for large and small animal appointments from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Emergency care service is also available for large and small animals on a 24-hour basis. Clients with animals in need of emergency care should call the hospital at 509-335-0711 before arrival.

Fees

Fees comparable with private practices are charged for all services provided by the VTH, with payment due in full at the time of service. Clients with animals treated as outpatients will be given an estimate of the cost before the service is provided, with

payment due upon completion of the visit. Clients with hospitalized animals will also be given an estimate, with prepayment of half the estimate due upon admission. The other half is due when the animal is discharged.

Directions

The WSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital is located on the Washington State University campus in Pullman off Grimes Way on Ott Way, south of the Lighty Student Services Building. To get to the hospital, turn off Stadium Way onto Grimes Way. Then take the second right hand turn onto Ott Way where a brown sign on the corner says “Veterinary Hospital.”

Fall weather pet tips

Keep up with tick medication. Tick prevention should continue to be applied until October or November when freezing conditions occur. A number of preventative treatments are available. Contact us with any questions about which treatments or treatment schedules are most suitable for your pet.

Bee stings and allergic reactions. Like humans, animals can suffer allergic reactions to a variety of things including insect bites and stings. If your pet is bitten or stung, carefully remove the stinger and watch the area for an allergic reaction. If a reaction occurs, or if there have been several wasp or bees stings, bring your animal in for veterinary attention. To help prevent bee or wasp stings, inspect your home and yard to eliminate bee hives or wasp nests.

Clinical signs of seasonal or chronic allergies in pets include chewing, licking, head shaking, and scratching. Allergies may also cause inflamed, itchy skin that can lead to infections or a skin condition called atopic dermatitis. Pets may also cough, sneeze, or wheeze and have excess discharge that develops in the nose and eyes. If your pet is experiencing these signs, call us for an appointment.

Common allergens that affect dogs and cats in the fall include molds from dying leaves and decaying plants and ragweed pollen, which can be especially heavy from the end of August through October. A veterinarian can prescribe medicine to help with allergic reactions when they occur. To help reduce allergic reactions, pet owners can bathe and brush a dog or cat down that has been outdoors once they come inside.

Hiking. Hiking is a great activity, but be sure to plan for yourself and your pet. Must have items include a first aid kit that includes sterile bandages, gauze, disinfectant, and surgical tape. Also bring insect repellent for fleas and ticks, and enough water for both you and your dog. Streams and standing water may contain bacteria that can sicken a dog. You may also want to carry pet snacks, as well as an extra leash and collar. Dogs can get lost in unfamiliar surroundings, so make sure your pet has adequate identification, such as an ID tag on the collar or an identification microchip, or, ideally, both.

If a pet gets hurt on the trail and is bleeding, place a clean cloth over the wound and apply pressure for several minutes. Try to elevate the wound, and add more cloth if the first one soaks through, but do not remove what was already applied. Then do your best to get your pet to a veterinarian as quickly as possible. Even if no accidents occur, check paws and ears for thorns and



A Weimaraner puppy

other material that it may have picked up after the hike. Lastly, dogs need conditioning like people, so if your pet is mostly sedentary, limit the hike to a few miles.

Hunting Season. With the arrival of hunting season, make sure pets are in safe areas and cannot be mistaken for game. If your dog hunts, make sure to apply tick control and that it is vaccinated for leptospirosis, a serious bacterial disease in dogs that can potentially spread to people. Sources of infection include pond water or puddles contaminated with bacteria from wildlife urine, so hunting dogs are in greater need of vaccination. In scummy ponds, there can be blue-green algae toxins present, so again, carrying water is the safest. Owners should also check their dogs over at least daily and ideally during each break. Look for sporting injuries and foreign objects such as grass awns that may become lodged in the feet, ears, eyes and nose. Also, early season hunts can provide a lot of heat stress to an unconditioned animal. Consider some pre-season walks to get both you and your dog off on the right foot.

Want to know more about the Community Practice and small animal specialty services, or receive our quarterly newsletter online?

Visit the WSU Veterinary College website at www.vetmed.wsu.edu/depts-vth/smallAnimalServices.aspx, or subscribe to the online newsletter at www.vetmed.wsu.edu/depts-vth/newsletters. Also feel free to call 509-335-0711 for **veterinary appointments** or **emergency care**.