



Le Sueur Office



Le Sueur Belle Plaine



Belle Plaine Office

VETERINARY CLINIC NEWS

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February is Dental Month for Dogs and Cats

Pet Dental Health Month is coming up soon. We would like to take a moment to tell you why it is important to take care of your pets' teeth. Unlike humans, dogs and cats cannot brush their own teeth. Can you imagine if you never brushed your teeth? Ever? Yuck!

It does not take long for plaque, a colorless film that contains large amounts of bacteria, to build up on your pets' teeth, creating infection of the gums and even leading to tooth loss. Plaque turns into a hard, rock-like calculus that cannot be brushed off. It has to be ultra-sonically scaled off in a veterinarian's office.

Here are the signs to watch for:

- Bad breath
- Yellow-brown crust on teeth
- Bleeding gums
- Going to the food bowl, but not eating
- Change of chewing or eating habits
- Tooth loss
- Subdued behavior
- Abnormal drooling
- Dropping food out of the mouth
- Swallowing food whole
- Crying while eating

Contributing Factors:

- Poor oral hygiene – ignoring your pets' mouth can lead to periodontal disease and other serious health problems, like heart, liver, and kidney failure.
- Breed – dental disease is more common in smaller breeds and certain breeds of cats.

- Age – periodontal disease is more common as pets age.

Tips on Brushing Your Pets' Teeth:

- Begin brushing regularly, but start gradually in young dogs and cats, so they can get used to it.
- The first time be brief, so brushing is a positive experience. Dip your finger into beef boullion for a dog or tuna juice for a cat and rub your finger over the pets' teeth and mouth.
- You can introduce gauze on your finger with those flavors and begin rubbing teeth in a circular motion.
- Before using a soft bristle brush, use a small amount of flavored dog and cat tooth paste on your finger and allow the pet to taste it. Eventually, let the pet lick the toothpaste on the bristles of the toothbrush.
- When brushing, use a gentle 45 degree angle and brush away from the gum line.
- You only have to really brush the outside of the teeth.
- Never use human toothpaste on pets, it can make them sick.



Finally, there are special diets for oral care for dogs and cats. Special chew toys and treats can help keep your pets' teeth clean.

Happy Brushing!

\$10⁰⁰ off Dentals in February 2005

Call to schedule your appointment now.

Kitty Works



What is my cat trying to tell me? This is a question that many cat owners ponder, when their cat “misbehaves”. This is the first in a series of articles to help understand cat behavior.

Research over the last two decades has made it clear that cats are a social species. Cats form social groups with relatively stable long-term memberships. Cats exhibit social behavior such as grooming and rubbing each other, nose touch greeting, tail wrapping, signaling friendly intention (tail up), and ritual signaling of dominance or submission. Within the group, preferred associates are chosen. These cats prefer to spend time with each other rather than other cats in the group. Male-male, male-female and female-female may be preferred associations.

The core membership of a colony is the adult queen and her female offspring. These adult female cats help care for each others litters. They may groom the kittens, nurse the kittens or provide security and food. Some toms spend most of their

time in the group’s home range. These are “family toms” that may be preferred associates of the queen. Other toms roam over large areas looking for queens in heat.

Why are cats thought of as asocial animals? First, they typically hunt alone. Their prey is too small to share (i.e. mice). Second, established colonies resist intrusion by strange adults. This manifests itself in many of our house cats as a resistance to the introduction of a strange, new cat into the household. Other house cats accept new cats without reservations. Finally, culturally established preconceptions about behavior of cats no doubt effects how we interpret their actions.



The next time your cat rubs on you or approaches you with her tail up, feel *special*. You may be her preferred associate. More about cat behavior in our next issue.

(Reference: S. L. Crowell-Davis 2002, AAEP Fall Conference Proceedings.)

Zoonotic Diseases

Some of you may be wondering what exactly is zoonotic disease? Zoonoses are diseases that are transmitted between animals and people.

Diseases such as rabies, bacterial infections (e.coli, pseudomonas), fungal infections (ringworm), and parasitism (roundworms, hookworms, giardia) are all examples of zoonoses.

These diseases can be spread in many ways: rabies by bite wounds, parasites by fecal ingestion and ringworm by contact. Children and the elderly are the most susceptible to these diseases, because

their immune systems function at a lower level than those of normal, healthy adults. Children are also more likely to walk barefoot in contaminated areas and put things in their mouths that are not always the cleanest.

The best way to prevent yourself and your family from getting a zoonotic disease is to wash your hands thoroughly after handling your pet and to make sure your pet has regular check ups, along with fecal and urine checks, when visiting your veterinarian.

Always Time to Think About Heartworm Disease!

With warmer temperatures lasting later in the fall and coming earlier in the spring, keeping your pets on year 'round prevention is ideal. Heartworm disease, which is potentially fatal without treatment, is spread by mosquitos. Mosquitos have been seen as late as November and as early as March in our area. It's easy to give your pet monthly preventive such as Heartgard, and it is cost-effective compared to the actual heartworm treatment.

Heartgard also works as an intestinal dewormer should your pets find some unpleasant treats outside. Your pet must be heartworm negative before starting the preventive. Heartworm tests are done by drawing a small amount of blood and running a snap test,

which takes about 10 minutes. Testing yearly is best to catch infections from missed pills, spit out pills and possible resistance. Pets that are on the preventive year 'round can be tested every other year after the initial test.

Heartworm is a very real disease in this area, so please, get your animal tested and on preventive so they can live a long, happy life.

Heartworm Facts . . .

- 43 positive dogs in 2002
- 50 positive dogs in 2003
- 24 positive dogs in 2004

New Products

- **Eicosaderm** - for skin problems
- **Cosequin DS** for cats with arthritis
- **Acarexx** for earmites in cats
- **Iverhart** - generic heartworm prevention

Featured dog breed . . .

German Shepherd



German Shepherd

The German Shepherd ranks among the most popular breeds in the world. As a versa-

tile and enthusiastic worker, it is used in many capacities, including search and rescue and as Seeing Eye dogs.

German Shepherds came in short, long and wire-haired forms but now only the short-haired form is accepted for show purposes. Occasionally, long-haired German Shepherds are still produced. Although its working ancestry dates further back, the modern German Shepherd was first exhibited at a show in Hanover, Germany, in 1882.

They were first used for herding sheep. A very intelligent, responsive dog that averages in weight from 75-95 lb. and a height of 23-25 in. Other names: Deutscher Schaferhund, Alsatian.



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