

Tails from the Dog House

The Quarterly Newsletter from the
Sardis Animal Hospital

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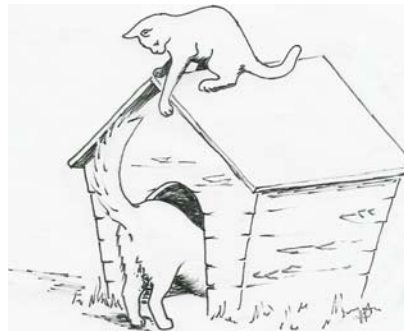
Questions&Answers

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Newsletter First Edition

Welcome to the first edition of the Sardis Animal Hospital Newsletter. We are very excited to be able to bring this service to our clients. The response to our inquiry about interest in an electronic newsletter has been very positive. We would like to thank all those who have made suggestions for the format and content. Our able teck Jocelyn Lavoie suggested the title and retired receptionist Verna Pigou drew the doghouse. The title was chosen for its humor rather than as a signal that we have any favoritism of dogs over cats.

We have several goals: to communicate, inform, entertain, but mostly to help you care for your "fur kids."

We chose the electronic , email format for practical reasons. We didn't want to be another piece of costly to produce, tree consuming "junk mail" that arrives at your door. This format also allows for ease of distribution and targets only those of you who are really interested. We hope to archive each edition on our website www.sardisvet.com for ease of retrieval and for access tthose who may not subscribe. For those who have not yet ventured out on the sometimes scary "information super highway", copies will be available in the waiting room.

Welcome Dr. Connie Stevenson

There is a new name on the door at the animal hospital!!! Dr. Stevenson has officially joined the professional staff. Known by us simply as "Dr. Connie," she brings a wealth of knowledge, skill and expertise to her patients. Her professionalism and caring manner make her right at home at the Sardis Animal Hospital.

Originally from the prairies, Dr., Connie moved to BC with her family in 1985. She attended high school in White Rock and furthered her education at Kwantlen College and Simon Fraser University where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry. She received her veterinary training at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Saskatchewan, graduating with Great Distinction in 1996.

Before joining the Sardis Animal Hospital, Dr. Stevenson practiced in Abbotsford. Her professional interests include Internal Medicine, Clinical Pathology and Oncology. Preventive pet health care and open communication with clients are also important to her. Together with her husband Spencer and their two young children, Connie has lived in Chilliwack for 2 years. Their family also includes "Paddy" a 5 year old Border Collie and "Jake", a grumpy 12 year old cat.





Seasonal Issues

Heartworm season is just around the corner.

Heartworm testing starts April 15 and winds down by mid summer.

Dogs entering risk areas during mosquito season should be on prevention.

Read on to find out if your dog should be tested first.

Prevention can be done by monthly pill or by one 6 month injection.

Feature Article: Heartworm Season Starts Soon

Yes, its that time of year again.! Warm weather takes us and our pets outside more and what is outside besides sunshine? -- *Mosquitos!!* Those nasty little pests that in some parts of the country can spread Heartworm Disease to our canine companions.

Do you need to worry about your dog? The answer is yes if you take Fido to a heartworm risk area during the hot summer months. You can relax if your pooch just stays in the Lower Mainland. The closest risk area is the Okanogan Valley, where transmission season is late May to first frost.

Heartworm Disease was first diagnosed in Oliver and Osoyoos in 1991, and sporadic cases still pop up, leading heartworm experts to declare the Okanogan Valley to be a risk area. The only case of Heartworm Disease ever reported in Chilliwack was diagnosed by Dr. Anvik in 1999. It was a dog that had moved here from a heartworm endemic area and had been unsuccessfully treated in its previous home. An unusual heart murmur found during the annual physical tipped him off and the diagnosis was confirmed on blood tests. The dog was treated successfully with a series of injections. Vigilance and

testing since then has not uncovered any further cases and leads us to conclude that the disease did not take hold in our area.

We are not recommending routine testing and prevention for dogs which have never left the Lower Mainland or for dogs not planning to leave. *There has never been a documented case of natural transmission in the Fraser Valley.*

If your dog has been in a risk area without prevention during past mosquito seasons he should be tested at least once in the spring following his visit. Dogs that may have picked up heartworm infections need a series of injections. Dogs that visit the Okanogan regularly should be tested every two years and be on prevention every summer. Even dogs who have been on prevention every summer need periodic testing. All dogs (except puppies born after Oct. 30 of last year) going on prevention for the first time should also be tested prior to taking any heartworm medication. If in doubt call the office and check if your dog should be on testing and prevention. If your dog has been tested previously, you may medicate him for 2 seasons before he needs testing again.

Staff

*Judy, Our steadfast
"Girl Friday"*

Judy Coutts, 26 years service

What would the animal hospital do without Judy! Our longest serving staff member has now passed 26 years at the "Dog House."

Judy started in 1977, when the practice was just getting off the ground. It was just Judy and Dr. Anvik in those days. She did reception, nursing care, housekeeping, surgical assisting and even bookkeeping in those days. Her dedication, exemplary work ethic and sense of humour has kept us all on a steady course these many years. Judy still tackles most tasks in the hospital, except bookkeeping, she is relieved to have passed that on.





Feature Article:

New High-Tech Lab Equipment

Our in-house
laboratory has
increased testing
capacity

Accurate results
available immediately

Laser based cell
counting technology

Our equipment also
helps save lives of
acutely ill dairy cows.

NEW BLOOD ANALYZERS OFFER MAJOR DIAGNOSTIC ADVANTAGES

Following the death of our old blood chemistry analyzer, the animal hospital has invested in new "state of the art" lab equipment. The new machines substantially increase our on-site testing capacity. The analyzers do most of the routine blood chemistries, enzymes, electrolytes and cell counts that are done in a commercial reference laboratory.

The advantage to our patients is that many of the tests that we had to send out can now be done on site. Blood can be tested immediately, so we no longer have the delay in reporting from the commercial lab. The results are inherently more accurate as well, since there is less degradation in sample quality from shipping.

The cell counter uses a well proven laser based technology that is in use in larger commercial labs, yet is small enough to fit on a counter top. Not only does the cell counter give us number values for hemoglobin, red cells, platelets and white cells, it is even capable of differentiating the various types of white blood cells and printing out numerical values for each cell type. The equipment has a built in computer that flags abnormal values and even makes diagnostic suggestions. Touch screen technology and a 20 gigabyte hard drive manage the test protocols and patient profiles.

In addition to helping diagnose dogs and cats, our technologist Jocelyn also tests cow blood samples submitted by the livestock veterinarians at Greenbelt Veterinary Services. Even though we are a small animal practice we are happy to make our laboratory and technical skills available to the agricultural community. Access to immediate results help livestock veterinarians save the lives of acutely ill dairy and beef cattle.

Those of you who are techno-minded feel free to ask a staff member for a quick look-see next time you are in.



*Technologist
Jocelyn Lavoie
enters patient data
into new automated
blood chemistry
analyzer.*



One Year Cancer Free and Going Strong

Medical Miracles

Modern medicines give hope to pets suffering from cancer

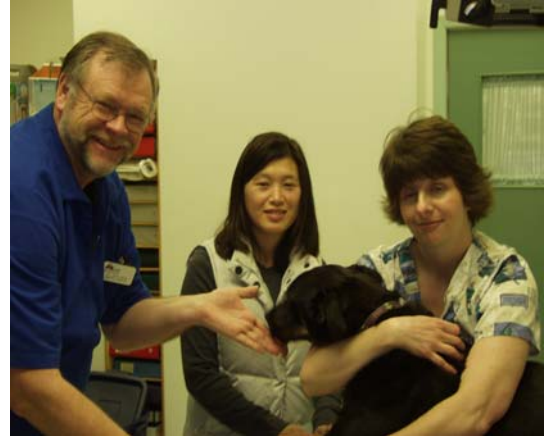
Care and support from owners and effective treatments can give a good quality of life to a pet with cancer.

One year ago, "Baby" was diagnosed with a life threatening form of lymph node cancer. A happy, playful pet, Baby was brought to the animal hospital because her owners, Tony and Karen Ando of Cultus Lake had noticed some rapidly growing swellings in her neck. Blood tests and biopsies confirmed our suspicion that Baby was suffering from Lymphosarcoma.

Without therapy, dogs with Lymphosarcoma are not likely to live more than a few months and can suffer greatly.

Fortunately, Baby was diagnosed early and had a form of cancer that can be treated. Early intervention with modern chemotherapy drugs has been life saving and has given Baby a chance for a good quality of life. Her survival time, is now well past the statistical average of patients treated for this deadly disease. One year for a dog is a long time, the equivalent of 7 cancer free years for a human.

Baby comes to the animal hospital for regular check ups and treatments that keep her cancer in remission.

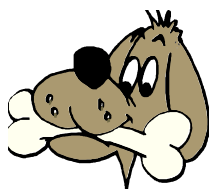


A grateful "Baby" licks Dr Anvik's hand as her owner Karen Ando and Animal Health Technologist Jocelyn Lavoie look on.

Tony and Karen report that the last year has given Baby a good quality of life. She eats well, is playful and very much her usual self.

Animal Crackers

A place to share some animal related humor. (send us your favorite pet joke)



Animal Crackers

A worried dog owner came to the veterinarian with a very sick dog. The vet checked the dog out and was baffled as to the cause of the dog's illness.

After much head scratching, poking and prodding, the vet decided he needed some help. He went into the kennel area and came back with "Upchuck", the hospital cat and "Rickets", the hospital blood donor, a Labrador Retriever. The vet put the cat on the table next to the sick dog and the kitty proceeded to sniff the patient and walk all over the table examining every nook and cranny of the hapless canine. He then hopped off the table, fluffed his tail and walked off. Next, the Retriever took a look and sniffed and nudged the patient and barked at him, then wandered off.

The vet made up a prescription for some pills and presented the man with a bill for \$470.00. What !!! said the man. How can you possibly come up with a bill like that??? The vet read him the itemized bill. \$50 for examination and consultation, \$20 for pills \$200 for the "Cat Scan" and \$200 for "Lab" work.



Questions and Answers

West Nile Virus

Early Post - Op
discharge is an
unnecessary risk
for your pet.

Question: Do I have to worry about my dog or cat contracting West Nile Virus?



Answer: Several people have asked us this important question. Fortunately, the species susceptibility of dogs and cats to West Nile Virus infection is low, so the chances are remote. This mosquito-borne disease is a big worry in horses, so if you have a horse be sure and get him vaccinated. Experts are expecting West Nile to hit BC this summer. Humans are also a susceptible species. It is wise to use mosquito repellants on yourself during mosquito season.

Question: Why can't I take my pet home the same day that it has been spayed or neutered?



Answer: It's a matter of safety for your pet! The first 24 hours after a major surgery and anesthetic is a fragile time for any patient. The main concern is excitement on seeing you and the stress of early transport before the effects of sedative drugs and anesthetics have worn off. Also the risk of post operative hemorrhage is much greater in a pet who's blood pressure goes up with excitement and sudden body movement before blood vessels that have been disrupted or tied during surgery have had a chance to stabilize. Yes, it's true that some clinics will send surgery patients home the same day. Such a practice is often based on convenience and expediency rather than a commitment to quality care and safety. Our opinion is that early discharge subjects your pet to an unnecessary risk. In fact, our doctors won't even take their own pets home or let a staff member take theirs home the same day they have been spayed or neutered. This practice has served us very well and consequently, our rate of serious post operative complications is extremely low.

"But there is no one there!" you may ask. Pets hospitalized in our hospital are checked routinely through the evening by staff and the doctor on call. Most people would be surprised to see how quiet and comfortable their pets are during evening rounds. Most are just sleeping off their anesthetics and curled up quietly in their cages. Separation anxiety is rarely seen in pets in the first 24 hours after major surgery. There is also a great advantage to your pet to have him or her checked by hospital staff the next day. We can take preventive measures on the "stitch chewers" and "lickers" and also better assess circulatory stability after drugs have worn off and before the excitement and stress of the trip home. So stop worrying! Think of your pet's safety rather than your separation anxiety.



Doggy Doo - Doo

(Hints on dog
behaviour and
training)

Crate Training your Dog



We all need a special place to call our own -- a sanctuary of sorts. Your dog is no different. Part of raising a healthy dog is providing it with its own sanctuary, or "den" and crates are a perfect solution. Most dogs can be trained to enjoy the retreat to their crate.

Crate training is neither cruel nor unfair, provided your dog has sufficient exercise and an opportunity to eliminate before you place it in the crate. However, allowing a puppy to wander through the home unsupervised to investigate, chew, and eliminate is unwise and potentially dangerous. Most crate trained dogs will go to their crates on their own when they want to rest or just be alone.

In the wild, members of the canine family are denning creatures. They give birth and raise their young in a den. Their den provides them with safety and security. Domestic dogs that are trained to a "den" are more sure of themselves, and more trainable in other ways. Crates prevent costly damage by curious puppies, help with house training, make traveling easier and improves dog-owner relationships by solving many discipline problems.

Because dogs are social animals, the best location for the crate is in a room where your family spends a lot of time, such as the kitchen, den, or bedroom. Avoid isolated areas like laundry or furnace rooms. Never use the crate for punishment. It should be a place of comfort and refuge.

If you would like to learn more about crate training, ask a staff member for the booklet "Crate Training- Creating a Canine Haven" next time you are at the animal hospital.

Kitty Capers

(How to live with
your feline
friend)

Cats and Furniture - Friend or Foe

Scratching is normal behavior that allows your cat to condition its claws and mark its territory. It also provides a nice stretch, but if the target is your leather couch or your stereo speakers.....

Here are some clues to minimize the damage. Keep your cats claws trimmed regularly, this may lessen the need to condition the claws quite as often. Encourage our cat to use a scratching post by placing one near its favorite sleeping area and perhaps a second post in a prominent area. The texture of the scratching post must be appealing to the cat. Good choices are carpet, nubby fabrics, or even bare wood. Some cats will even use something as simple as a fireplace log secured to a plywood base. Be sure it is secure and can support the cats weight without toppling or moving. It also must be tall enough to allow your cat to scratch with its legs fully extended.

Rub a little catnip on the post, attach toys to it and give your cat food rewards when it approaches the post. Constructing a cat perch or a "kitty condo" near the post will also attract the cat to the post and favor its use for territory marking.

Other strategies might include vinyl claw caps (Soft Paws) available from the animal hospital, and covering undesirable target areas with double sided adhesive tape, loosely draped cloth strips, plastic or aluminum foil. And as a last resort, De-clawing surgery can also be done. Ask a staff member for the booklet "Destructive Cats"





Featured Product

*Mature and
overweight pets
have different
nutritional needs*

*High quality diets
formulated
specifically for the
aging pet, solve
many of the
problems associated
with aging*

Our Featured Product: "Medi-Cal" Weight Control Mature" Diet

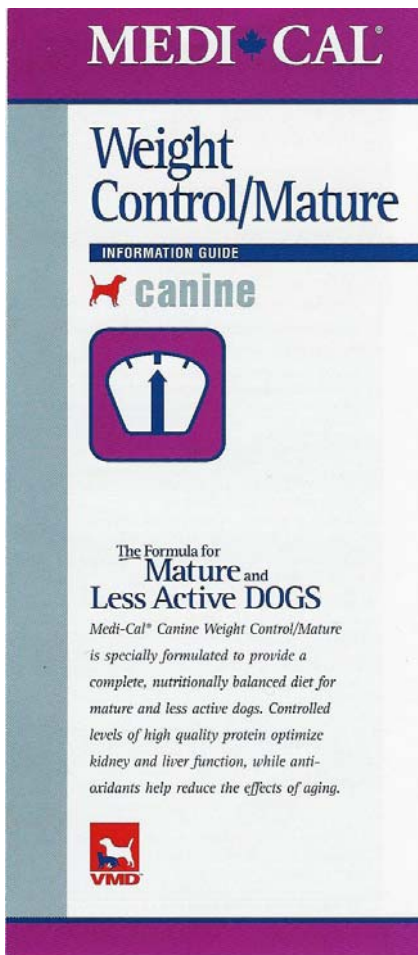
Has your dog been living a little too "high on the hog"? Is he starting to look like a barrel on sticks? Is he having trouble getting going in the morning? Not fitting through the doggie door like he used to? The solution is MEDI-CAL Weight Control/Mature diet for dogs. An equivalent diet is also available for well-fleshed felines and couch cats.

Weight problems are the single most common medical problem seen in our hospital. There are several causes. Lack of exercise, over feeding, free choice feeding, treats and table scraps, feeding the wrong kind of diet for the activity level or age of the pet, or just simply "killing with kindness," which in reality is not kindness at all.

The Canine Weight control diet is an excellent diet for maintaining optimum body weight in the older, less active dog. It will help the mild to moderately overweight dog return to a healthier weight. The severely overweight dog may need an even stricter diet. Talk to us if that's the case.

The features of this diet are as follows:

- Reduced energy and fat levels for dogs requiring a lower calorie intake.
- Formulated to maintain a healthy urinary tract
- Supplemented with omega 3-6 fatty acids for healthier skin and coat
- Added antioxidants Vit E, Selenium and Beta Carotene lowers risk of heart and joint disease and may slow aging
- supplemented with Glucosamine to help ease the effects of arthritis and aging joints
- premium quality ingredients producing better nutrient availability reducing feeding volume and stool production
- Supplemented with L-carnitine which helps fat metabolism and promotes weight loss
- optimum levels of fibre, complex carbohydrates and chromium yeast which benefits overweight and diabetic dogs
- highly palatable



This diet has been shown to benefit less active and mature dogs, mildly overweight dogs, patients with urinary bladder crystals and stones, Diabetics, dogs with colitis, fat intolerance, liver disease, chronic pancreatitis, arthritis and early stage kidney disease.

Your older pet will thank you for putting him or her on this type of diet. Remember it is a complete diet, and you must not add anything to it... and.. watch the type and amount of treats given.

Ask for the brochure shown here and our booklet on *Weight Problems in Dogs and Cats*.