

Tails from the Dog House

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Sardis Animal Hospital

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Cancer in Pets -- Growing Concern -- Growing Hope

Hardly a day goes by at the animal hospital that we don't diagnose cancer in a dog or cat! It seems that this dreaded disease is everywhere and strikes when we least expect. Tumors are found on the skin, under the skin, in the abdomen, chest, nervous system, bones, urinary tract, oral cavity and anywhere you can think of. How they come about and why they have hit a particular patient are questions that we cannot easily answer. Some have a genetic basis, some are the result of viral or other infections, still others are the result of toxic insult, solar or UV radiation damage. Many are totally unexplainable.

The good news is that just because the doctor has used the dreaded "C" word, it is not necessarily time to start digging a hole for Rover or Fluffy. Many tumors and even malignant cancers can be treated successfully or controlled with a hope for a good quality of life. Many tumors can be removed surgically and some can be controlled or in some cases even eliminated with modern drugs. There are even some tumors that can be prevented by simply having your pet spayed or neutered as a youngster! Yes, mammary tumors in female dogs and tumors of the rectum and prostate in males are nearly non-existent in dogs spayed or neutered as puppies, but common in older pets that have been left intact.

Tumor removal and cancer chemotherapy are common place at the Sardis Animal Hospital. We have many years of experience with dealing with medical therapy of certain types of cancers, and with our sophisticated in house lab, we are able to monitor "chemo" patients closely. You would be totally amazed, at how well pets handle chemotherapy with a good quality of daily living. Dogs in particular seem to do much better than people. Maybe because no one told them that they have a serious disease and they just go on playing as they always did.

The most common cancer in which chemotherapy is successful is lymph node cancer in dogs. In our hospital survival times vary, but 2 years is common and our record is 4 years. That's a lot in dog years!

Our motto for dealing with cancer patients is "Compassionate Care". We don't let them hurt, don't let them starve, and don't let them vomit. They generally keep their hair and their appetite. So if the dreaded "C" word comes up when you bring your pet in, consider carefully the options and don't rule out having your pet treated, many do very well.





Staff News-

**Dr Connie
goes back to
school**

Dr Connie Stevenson Departs to pursue Post Graduate Studies

We are sad to announce that Dr. Connie Stevenson has left us after two years at the Sardis Animal Hospital. Her skills, knowledge and professionalism will be greatly missed by both her work place associates and clients. Although we are sad to see her go, we are happy to see her progressing in her professional pursuits. Dr. Connie has been accepted for the single opening for a post graduate residency in clinical pathology at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. Her appointment will likely last two years and is directed toward becoming Board Certified in Clinical Pathology. This will qualify her to work in a clinical laboratory setting. Who knows, your pet's blood or urine may still be seeing her!

Dr. Kim Corfield Joins Sardis Animal Hospital Staff



We are pleased to announce that Dr Kim Corfield has joined us. Originally from Niagara Falls, Ontario, Dr. Corfield Obtained an Honours Sociology degree from McMaster University. After working for several years as an Immigration officer in Ontario, she obtained a B.Sc. in Biology from Brock University. She then moved to Prince Edward Island to pursue her dream of veterinary medicine. Kim was admitted to the Atlantic Veterinary College in Charlottetown and graduated in 2004 with honours. Her professional interests include animal behavior, surgery and emergency medicine. After graduation, Kim joined her husband in beautiful BC. She resides in Chilliwack with her husband Scott and stepdaughter, Bailey. Their dog Ryan and cat Baxter complete the family.

Dr Kim arrives

Animal Health Technologist Lynn Burks joins our Staff

To keep up with the increasing patient load at the animal hospital we have added a new member to our health care team. Lynn is a Registered Animal Health Technologist, qualified to assist in anesthesia, surgery, radiology, laboratory and animal nursing. Prior to joining us, Lynn worked with Dr. Connie Stevenson at the Fraser Valley Veterinary Hospital in Abbotsford.

Lynn is a native of Calgary and a graduate of the Animal Health Technology program at Cariboo College in Kamloops. She has lived in the Fraser Valley for 20 yrs.

Her hobbies are photography, camping, gourmet cooking and taking care of her dog Kona.



**New technical
staff member**



Kitty Capers

*feeding
preferences of
cats deter-
mined at
weaning*

The Finicky Feline- eating habits are learned in kittenhood

Clues to the finicky eating behavior of cats have been found by recent research by animal nutritionists. The acquisition of certain preferences may occur very early in life, as early as during gestation. Fetuses are surrounded by amniotic fluid which contain compounds they assimilate in utero. The chemical make up of both amniotic fluid and milk, varies with the mother's diet. There is a suspicion that puppies and kittens may develop certain preferences at this time in their lives, but there is little research to support this theory. Weaning has been studied more completely.

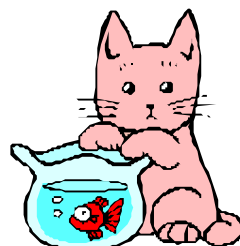
Weaning is an important time in an animal's dietary history. The moment a kitten eats it's first solid food is critical in terms of influence, especially if it happens in their mother's presence.

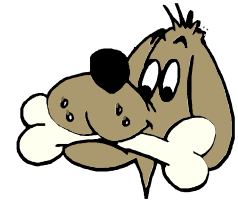
When eating their first solid food, kittens do not choose the most palatable food according to innate criteria. They choose what their mothers eat, even if this food is unusual for cats. Dietary preferences are not innate, they are acquired through social influences after birth. Kittens whose mothers have been conditioned to eat bananas, a food that is usually unpalatable for cats, will eat bananas during weaning even if they have access to more conventional food for cats, eg., "meat pellets". Kittens immitate their mothers eating behavior down to the smallest detail. They begin by eating from the same plate, at precisely the same spot, as where their mother takes her food.

This behavior likely has survival value for wild cats, and may play a big part in teaching predatory behavior and learning which species are primary prey for a particular species of wild cat.

Kittens' consumption patterns mimicked those of their mothers even after weaning and separation from their mothers. A kitten whose mother eats bananas at weaning, will then prefer bananas to raw meat!

Sometimes we try to change a cat's diet later in life because of a medical or dental problem or just happen to buy a different brand. Odors and textures play a critical role in the cat's acceptance of a new diet. When feeding your kitty, you may very well be fighting deeply ingrained behavior that has been present since kittenhood. So if your cat is fussy about what it eats, the explanation may very well lie in early training, rather than in the quality or the value of the food itself.





Veterinary Trivia and Wierd stuff

Animal Crackers



Doggy Vision

Flat-faced dogs see differently from long-nosed dogs. A pug's retina is best suited for central near-vision, such as looking at your face or watching TV. A collie's retina is best suited for peripheral vision but weaker central vision.

Doggles - sun glasses for dogs

For the dog who has everything. Check out the website www.doggles.com for the whole story. Not just a fashion statement for your pooch, but actually medically indicated for dogs with certain eye diseases. Protects dog's eyes from UV damage and bright light. Now just convince Rover to wear them!



Feline Facts



- A cat can jump 7 times its height
- A cat in a hurry can sprint at 31 mph
- A group of adult cats is called a clowder
- A group of kittens is called a kindle
- A cat will almost never meow at another cat. They use this sound for humans
- A cat's night vision is 6 times better than a human because its retina has a layer of reflective cells that absorb light

Redneck Car Alarm





Doggy Doo-Doo

Gaucoma is a serious eye disease

Certain breeds are predisposed

Eye pressure measurements are easily performed

Screening Dogs for Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a serious eye disease that affects animals and people. Minnesota Twins outfielder and baseball hall-of-famer Kirby Puckett had to end his career prematurely as a result of glaucoma in his right eye. Many dogs also suffer from this condition. Glaucoma can be painful and lead to blindness if not diagnosed early and treated properly.

Glaucoma is a condition in which the fluid pressure inside the eye increases to the point of damaging sensitive tissues. Diagnosis of early cases can only be done by measuring the pressure inside the eye with a sophisticated device called a tonometer. Advanced cases may show signs of globe enlargement, cloudiness of the cornea, congestion of the white of the eye ("red-eye") and eventually blindness. Often dogs are not diagnosed until the disease is well advanced, as the early changes are often not noticeable to the owner. Treatment consists of drugs and in some cases intra-ocular surgery by a veterinary ophthalmologist.

Some breeds of dogs are genetically predisposed to glaucoma. Breeds at risk are: Basset Hound, Beagle, Bouvier, Cairn Terrier, Chow Chow, Cocker Spaniel, Dalmatian, Norwegian Elkhound, Flat Coated Retriever, Jack Russell Terrier, Toy & Miniature Poodle, Samoyed, Shar Pei, Shiba Inu and Shih Tzu. Trauma and inflammatory diseases of the eye can also lead to acquired forms of glaucoma in any breed.

Measurements of intra-ocular pressure are done with the dog awake and the cornea anesthetized with a topical anesthetic. The eye is gently tapped several times with a device called a Tonopen which measures the pressure in the eye and gives a reading in mm of mercury. Dogs that are cooperative and easily handled can be measured in a short office visit. Measurements taken with the tonopen are also useful in diagnosing other eye diseases such as uveitis, which is characterized by low intra-ocular pressure.

If you have concerns about your pet's eyes or would like pre-breeding glaucoma screening performed on a breeding dog, see Dr Anvik.



Jocelyn holds Rusty while Dr. Anvik uses a tonometer to measure intra-ocular pressure



**Seasonal
Issues**

More on West Nile



This is an issue that just won't go away. This summer the BC Centre for Disease Control and the Regional Health Authorities will be collecting and testing dead crows, ravens and jays for evidence of West Nile Virus. There are also some mosquito traps set out in our community to identify different mosquito species. (Not all species are capable of transmitting WNV). Health authorities are also testing for human cases.

Ways you can help the health authorities:

1. Report any dead crows, ravens or jays you find. You may report your sighting online at www.bccdc.org or call the West Nile hot line at 1-888-WNV-LINE. Not all reported dead birds are tested. The BCCDC is mapping and tracking numbers reported.
2. If you come across a mosquito trap, leave it alone.

The Fraser Health Authority has an excellent website www.fraserhealth.ca that has a section on West Nile. The BC center for Disease control website www.bccdc is also an excellent source of information on a host of health issues.

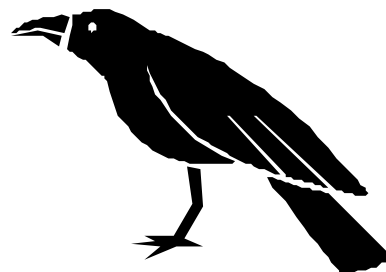
As an aside, and to follow up on an earlier article on feeding raw meat diets to pets, you may find one of the lead articles on the BCCDC website interesting. It warns about Salmonella infections from undercooked chicken strips.



I'm sorry but its not my fault!!



**Can't I use "off" for
birds?**



Quothe the raven "Never more"

*Tails from the
Dog House*

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Finally we will leave you with this photograph. It requires no explanation or comment.

