

Paw Talk

A professional publication for the clients of East Valley Animal Clinic

WINTER 2017

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Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is a contagious bacterial disease that affects most mammals. Rodents, farm animals and wild animals can transmit the disease. It can be passed to your dog through infected urine, which can get into the water or soil. It can live for months in the soil under the right conditions. There seems to be an increase in cases in the local area and we have seen a couple cases at East Valley Animal Clinic recently.

Leptospirosis can present with a variety of sometimes vague signs. Fever, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite, weakness and muscle pain are just a few of the signs. Leptospirosis can cause kidney and liver damage, which may not be reversible. The time from infection to when a dog starts showing signs can be anywhere from 5-14 days on average. Leptospirosis is very rare in cats.

The treatment for leptospirosis is antibiotics and supportive care, which can include IV fluids, anti-vomiting medications and medications to

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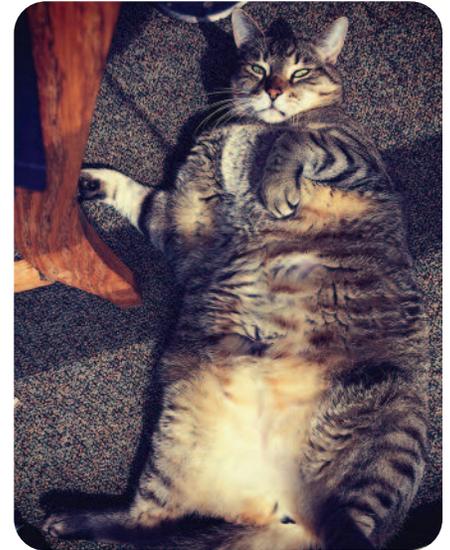
Carl is Losing Weight!

Last spring, East Valley Animal Clinic inherited a new clinic cat named Carl. When he came to us, he was extremely overweight. So overweight, in fact, that he couldn't clean his back so his fur was all matted. We had to shave all of the hair on his back. He had difficulty jumping on and off of things.

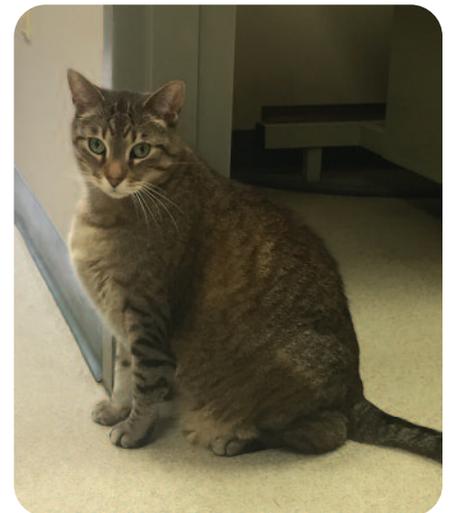
We started Carl on Hill's Metabolic[®] diet. This diet is made to help animals lose weight without feeling so hungry all of the time. We started him on the diet and in the past six months, he has lost 6.4 pounds!

Carl has gained a waistline and he is now able to clean his back! We are so proud of Carl and wanted to share this with everyone. It is possible to get weight off of your pets. It takes time, commitment and sometimes a diet switch.

If you have any questions about Hill's Metabolic diet, don't hesitate to contact us. Metabolic diet is available for both dogs and cats. There is also a feline variety that combines the needs of the cat who has urinary problems and is overweight. There is a canine version that addresses dogs with arthritis and helps them lose weight.



Carl living large



"Ladies, look at me now!"

Happy New Year!

We would like to extend our warmest wishes to all of our clients for a happy and healthy New Year for you, your family and your pets.



The Urinary System

The urinary system (also known as the renal system) performs several important functions: it removes waste products and toxins from the blood, regulates blood pressure, maintains the body's balance of water and electrolytes, produces some vital hormones and enzymes, and also processes vitamin D.

The urinary system consists of the kidneys, the ureters (the tubes that connect the kidneys to the bladder), the bladder and the urethra (the tube from the bladder through which urine exits the body). The "lower urinary tract" refers to the bladder and the urethra.

There are a number of problems that can occur within the lower urinary tract, including infection or inflammation, stones (uroliths) and crystals, cancer, and incontinence due to a number of factors, such as weakness of the urinary sphincter muscle.

"He taught me to appreciate the simple things – a walk in the woods, a fresh snowfall, a nap in a shaft of winter sunlight."

– John Grogan,
Marley and Me

UTI

If you've ever suffered from a urinary tract infection (UTI), then you're familiar with the burning, painful sensation and the urgency to urinate frequently. Pets can suffer from UTIs as well, and their signs are similar:

- Frequent urination, small amounts
- Straining to urinate
- Painful urination (your pet may whine or cry out)
- Frequent licking of the genital area
- "Accidents," when a normally houstrained dog urinates indoors or a cat goes outside of the litter box
- Blood in the urine (which you may not notice unless there is snow on the ground or your pet urinates indoors)

The most common type of UTI is a bacterial infection of the bladder, known as bacterial cystitis. Infections may also occur in the kidneys, ureters and urethra.

The urinary bladder is normally a sterile environment, meaning no bacteria are typically present. UTIs are often the result of bacteria entering through the urethra and traveling up to the bladder, and for that reason UTIs are more common in females than in males because the urethra is longer in males. Any age or breed of dog or cat can suffer from a UTI. Certain conditions such as diabetes, kidney problems and cancer can put pets at greater risk of UTIs as well.

House soiling is often considered a behavior problem by pet owners who are unaware that their pet may be experiencing a painful infection or other problem in the urinary tract. If you notice the signs of a UTI, it's crucial to take your pet to a veterinarian as soon as possible. In addition to pain and discomfort of an infection, the signs may be indicative of a more complicated problem, such as urinary stones, kidney disease, cancer or feline lower urinary tract disease (in cats).

If your veterinarian determines the cause is a bacterial infection, a culture will help determine what type of bacteria are present and therefore, which antibiotics will be most effective in treating it.



"The vet says I need a hobby. I thought eating and sleeping were my hobbies!"



Sniffing Out UTIs

According to the Centers for Disease Control, urinary tract infections (UTIs) are among the most common infections in people. Older adults, people with mobility impairments, impaired bladder function and those who require urinary catheters are at increased risk. As with pets, UTIs in humans that are treated promptly typically clear up quickly. Left untreated, however, UTIs can lead to complications, including serious kidney infections.

Early detection of UTIs is challenging. It can take up to 48 hours for laboratory cultures to yield results, and that's after people manage to get to the doctor. The issue is more complex for those with spinal cord injuries, as the symptoms associated with a UTI, such as back or abdominal pain, a burning feeling upon urination and urgency to urinate, may not be present at all.

Assistance Dogs of Hawaii, the Pine Street Foundation and the Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children recently embarked on a study to determine whether dogs can be trained to distinguish the odor of urine samples that are positive for bacterial infections (bacteriuria) versus those that are negative.

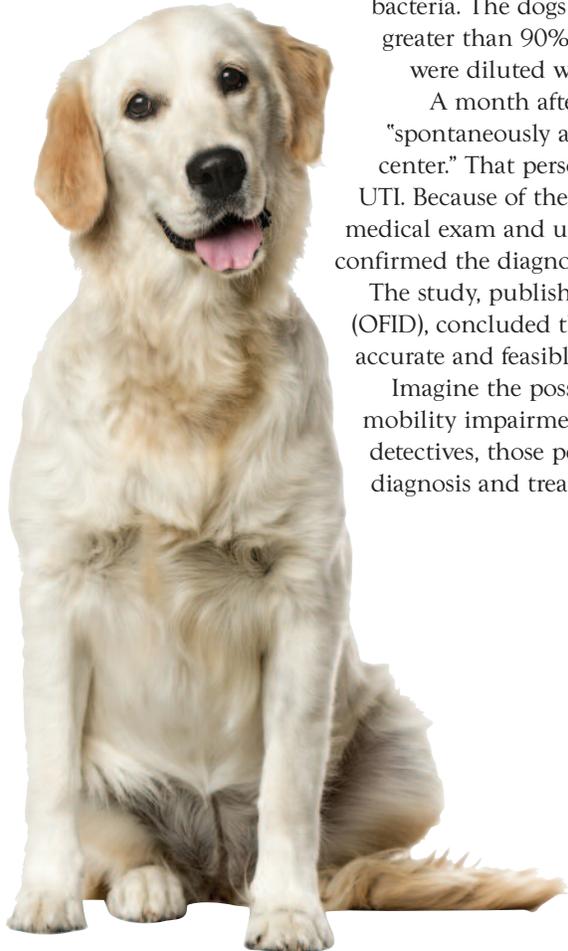
Five dogs with no prior scent training were selected to participate. Training occurred four days per week for eight weeks, using positive training methods (clicker training with food rewards). The dogs were taught to sniff multiple samples and sit in front of a positive sample if one was detected.

Samples from 687 people, from 3 months to 92 years of age, were used in the study. All of the samples had been previously tested by a laboratory. 66% of the samples were known to be bacteria-free, and 34% had cultured positive for bacteria. The dogs alerted to the positive samples with a greater than 90% accuracy rate, even when the samples were diluted with distilled water.

A month after the study, one of the dogs "spontaneously alerted to a person visiting the training center." That person didn't feel well but hadn't suspected a UTI. Because of the dog's alert, that person went for a medical exam and urine culture, and the physician confirmed the diagnosis of a bacterial UTI.

The study, published in *Open Forum Infectious Diseases* (OFID), concluded that "Canine scent detection is an accurate and feasible method for detection of bacteriuria."

Imagine the possibilities! If service dogs for people with mobility impairments could also be trained to be infection detectives, those people would benefit from earlier diagnosis and treatment of potentially dangerous UTIs.



A blocked urethra is a medical emergency, especially in male cats. If your pet is straining to urinate or crying out in pain, seek immediate veterinary care.



Urolithiasis

In humans, the first symptom of urolithiasis—or urinary tract stones—is sometimes sudden, excruciating pain. The condition also occurs in dogs and cats, and in some cases is likely to be just as painful for them.

Minerals in urine can sometimes form crystals. The crystals can then combine to form stones, known as uroliths. Uroliths can form in the kidneys, ureters, bladder or urethra.

Uroliths can rub against the bladder wall, causing it to bleed. They can also cause partial or complete obstructions in the urethra. Obstructions can quickly lead to acute kidney failure, septicemia and a ruptured bladder. A complete obstruction can be fatal, and is a true medical emergency. Obstructions are more common in male pets, who have a longer, narrower urethra.

Signs of uroliths are similar to signs of a urinary tract infection, and may include blood in the urine, straining to urinate and pain upon urination.

There are several different types of stones that can develop; two common types are struvite stones and calcium oxalate stones. The pH of the bladder affects the type of stones which may develop, as some occur in acidic environments while others occur in alkaline conditions.

There is no single cause of urolithiasis. Risk factors include decreased water intake, urinary tract infections, an imbalanced diet and certain medications. Some breeds of dogs are at higher risk. Additional factors include lack of exercise and the inability to urinate frequently, such as dogs who are confined indoors for long periods of time.

Treatment depends on the type of stones. Prescription diets (designed to change the pH of the bladder) and increased water intake will help resolve the condition in some cases. Other treatments include flushing the urinary tract with water, ultrasonic dissolution (using ultrasound to break up the stones) and surgery to remove the stones.





LEPTOSPIROSIS *continued from pg. 1*

support the kidneys and liver. Pets may need hospitalization for many days. If there has been damage to the liver or kidneys, the dog may not survive.

Leptospirosis is a zoonotic disease. That means that it can be transmitted to people. It can cause flu-like illness, and in some cases, can be serious. If your pet is diagnosed with Leptospirosis, good hygiene, including handwashing and wearing gloves when cleaning up after your pet, can help prevent transmission to people.

There is a vaccine to prevent leptospirosis in dogs. Because there are a number of different varieties of leptospirosis, there is no vaccine that prevents all types. Vaccines are developed to prevent the most common types of leptospirosis. No vaccine is 100% effective, so it is wise to keep your dog from swimming in stagnant ponds in areas where wildlife is found. The vaccine requires two vaccines initially and then is boosted yearly. Your veterinarian can help determine if your dog would benefit from a leptospirosis vaccine.

Leptospirosis is often fatal. Mocha and Sammy are two lucky dogs who survived because their owners brought them in quickly for treatment.

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GOOD UNTIL JUNE 1, 2017.

Welcome, Tina!

Tina is East Valley Animal Clinic's newest Veterinary Technician. Tina did her internship after completing school at Argosy University and we all liked her so much that we hired her.

Tina shares her home with her husband and their two dogs, Stella and Snow. They are both rescues and keep Tina busy with walks and playtime. In her spare time, she enjoys the outdoors and spending time at the cabin.

Tina is a caring individual and we are very happy to have her as our newest team member. She always has a smile for everyone. Please welcome Tina the next time you stop by the clinic.



Tina with Snow