



# Paw Talk



A professional publication for the clients of East Valley Animal Clinic

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Hannah and Beauty

## Welcome Hannah!

Hannah is our newest Certified Veterinary Technician to join East Valley Animal Clinic. Hannah did her internship with us after graduating from Argosy University and we were so happy with her that we decided to keep her.

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## How To Be Your Cat's Best Friend

If you have a cat, you probably feel that they spend most of their day sleeping or eating. It is normal for a cat to spend up to 12-16 hours sleeping each day, but what are they doing with the rest of their day?

Cats spend about 14% of their day hunting. This means an indoor cat can "hunt" up to 50 times a day. If your cat is not given appropriate things to hunt during the day, it can lead to behavior problems. Sometimes, they will choose to hunt you! If your cat stalks you and attacks your ankles, that cat needs some stimulation. It may also lead to frustration, which may cause the cat to avoid its litter box.

Think about how stimulation may be lacking for your indoor cat. How can they express normal hunting behavior in a house? Give your cat at least 15 minutes of your time every day to play and imitate natural hunting behavior. Offer toys that allow them to stalk, and have at least three available to keep them interested. Once they get bored with the first one, move on to something new to keep them interested in play.

Laser pointers are good entertainment, but leave the cat frustrated because it can't "catch" the light. Neko Flies® are small "bugs" on the end of a stick and are a great toy for cats

because they get the feeling that they have "caught" something.

Meal time is another time that can be boring or can stimulate your cat. Veterinary behaviorists all agree that cats should be fed from a puzzle bowl. A puzzle bowl makes cats work for their food and simulates hunting behavior. NoBowl® (pictured at left) are small mice that hold food that you can hide around your house for your cat to hunt in order to get its food.

If your cat seems bored, it probably is! Set aside some time each day to play with your cat, invest in a puzzle bowl or other food toys and watch the wild hunter come out in your cat!



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## Powassan Virus

There's a new tick-borne disease making the national news these days: Powassan virus. This virus was first identified in the 1950s, but until recently it has been quite rare. At the time of this writing, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has received 75 reports of Powassan virus.

This virus is transmitted by deer ticks, and can cause severe symptoms in 50%-60% of people who are infected, including fever, headache, weakness, confusion, seizures and death. Most of the cases reported so far have been in the Midwest and the Northeast, with 20 cases appearing in Minnesota through 2015. As with Lyme disease, however, experts are concerned that the incidence of this disease will spread throughout the country.

Concerned pet owners have been asking about the danger to their pets. So far, Powassan virus does not appear to pose a threat to dogs and cats. It has been found in some animals, such as woodchucks and squirrels. Dogs and cats have been experimentally infected, but so far no naturally-occurring cases in dogs or cats have been reported.

Tick prevention is important for pets and pet owners. Remove brush and leaf litter from around your home, and be sure to keep your pets current on tick preventives.

**“Animals are such agreeable friends— they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms.”**

— George Elliot

## A Purr-fect Companion

“Dogs have owners, cats have staff.” There's no shortage of literary quotes depicting cats as aloof, solitary, and even antisocial. Yet somehow cats have worked their way into the hearts and homes of many Americans: it's estimated that there are 85.8 million owned cats compared to 78 million dogs (according to a 2015-2016 survey by the American Pet Products Association). And, of course, cats are superstars on the Internet. Clearly, many cat-lovers think felines are anything but antisocial.

Kristyn Vitale Shreve, a Ph.D. student at Oregon State University, appears to be one of them. She teaches kitten training and socialization classes, and her research interests include cat behavior and cognition, and human-cat interactions. She recently completed a study, published in *Behavioural Processes*, to assess cats' preferences for various types of stimuli.

Using adult cats from two populations, owned cats and shelter cats, the study aimed to determine whether the cats preferred social interaction with a human (petting, talking to or playing with the cat), food (tuna or chicken), toys or scent (a cloth that smelled like catnip or gerbil). In the initial session, researchers observed how much time the cats spent with items in each of the categories. In the final session, the preferred stimulus from each of the categories was pitted head-to-head and presented to the cats. The winner? Most cats chose to interact with people.

The study states, “Although there was clear individual variability in cat preference, social interaction with humans was the most-preferred stimulus category for the majority of cats, followed by food. This was true for cats in both the pet and shelter population.”

Understanding what type of stimulus your cat prefers may help you to enrich your cat's environment and increase the bond you share. It may also help you train your cat, if you so choose.

It turns out the most accurate of literary quotes about cats may be one from Charles Dickens: “What greater gift than the love of a cat?”



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**“The woman I live with had business cards printed for me. She says it's a nicer way to say hello to another dog.”**



# Lawn Chemicals and Pets

What could be better than playing fetch with your dog on a lush, beautiful green lawn? Many homeowners are motivated to enhance the beauty and value of their home by maintaining verdant lawns and landscaping. Use caution, though, because products designed to improve the appearance of lawns can be dangerous to your pets and your family.

Lawn chemicals and pesticides are used by many people to keep weeds and bugs at bay. Most people know to keep their children off newly treated lawns, but may not be aware of the danger these chemicals pose to pets.

One study performed by the Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine found that dogs exposed to lawn chemicals are seven times more likely to develop a certain form of bladder cancer, known as transitional cell carcinoma, or TCC. Another study, done by Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University found that the use of certain specific lawn care products is associated with a significantly higher risk of canine malignant lymphoma.

Given these known risks, a recent study published in *Science of the Total Environment* aimed to characterize the exposure of lawn chemicals to dogs by investigating how long the chemicals continue to come off the grass after application, and whether there is an uptake of the chemicals into dogs' urine.

The scientists realized that different environmental conditions might lead to different results, so they tested the chemicals on green and brown grass in both dry and wet conditions. They covered a wooden block with a cloth and dragged it through the grass. They found that chemicals were still coming off the grass after 48 hours, and in some conditions even longer.



In the separate part of the study that used dogs, they stated that "the detection of lawn chemicals in the urine of dogs was widespread;" in fact, some of the dogs had chemicals in their urine prior to the lawn treatment, indicating that they had already been exposed in other places. Eight dogs in the study were from homes that did not treat their lawns, and four of those dogs had chemicals in their urine.

The authors noted that further

research is indicated to assess the risk of exposure to humans and dogs.

Some recommendations: Read the labels of all the products you use in your yard, and if it says to stay off the grass after applying the product, that caution applies to your pets as well as people. Pay attention to public and private places where you walk your dog, as this study made it clear that many dogs are exposed to chemicals in places other than their own yards. Ask your neighbors to let you know if they use herbicides, as it's possible for airborne particles can make their way to your lawn (known as "chemical drift") even if you're not the one doing the application. Wash your dog's paws after walking on lawns that may have been treated with chemicals.



Never leave your dog unattended in a parked car in the summer! Even in the shade and with the windows down, the inside of a car can reach deadly temperatures within minutes.

# Backyard Hazards

Herbicides aren't the only things in your backyard that pose a potential threat to your pet's health.

Other products used to create a beautiful lawn and landscape can be toxic as well. It's wise to assess the environment in your yard, and determine if there are hazards that could unintentionally harm your pets. Some of the dangers include:

- Fertilizers (including bone meal and blood meal, which may smell really good to your dog) and other plant foods can be toxic to pets
- Pesticides
- Fungicides
- Herbicides
- Cocoa mulch, and some dyes used in bark mulch
- Many plants, including lilies, hosta and gladiola, are toxic to pets (for a complete list, visit [www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants/](http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants/))
- Barbecues and fire pits (and the food you're cooking)
- Pools can be treacherous for pets

Be familiar with the potential dangers of ingesting certain plants or other items. Symptoms of poisoning could include drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, depression, anorexia, tremors, seizures and lethargy.

In addition to ensuring that your yard is free of hazards, it's wise to monitor your pet while outdoors. If you do leave your pet in a fenced yard, be sure to provide shade and fresh water.



# Pyrethrin Toxicity



The incidence of tick-borne disease is increasing. Fortunately, there's a growing awareness of this threat, and many people are taking measures to keep their pets and their yards tick-free. It's important to realize that some chemicals, especially pyrethrins and permethrins, can be toxic, especially to cats and fish, and to dogs to a lesser degree.

Pyrethrins are a class of chemicals derived from chrysanthemums that are potent insecticides that target the nervous systems of insects. They are naturally-occurring, but also industrial-made as well.



Permethrins are a related, synthetically created insecticide. These chemicals are used in a wide variety of products, including spot-on flea and tick preventives, collars, flea shampoos, and aerosols and powders that are used by homeowners and commercial pest management companies.

Cats are most often exposed by inadvertent use of a product labeled for dogs, or by licking or grooming a dog that has had a product applied. Exposure to these chemicals can be toxic, and even deadly, to cats. Signs may include ear flicking, tremors, salivation, vomiting, lack of coordination and seizures.

*continued below*

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## **PYRETHRIN TOXICITY** *continued from above*

If you suspect exposure, you should immediately seek veterinary treatment. There is no antidote for this toxicity, but your veterinarian can provide advanced supportive care and decontamination, and if treatment begins quickly enough the prognosis is often good.

Small dogs and dogs with compromised livers are more susceptible to toxicity than large, healthy dogs. Fish are highly susceptible, and a small amount of these chemicals can kill fish. If you have an aquarium, be sure to cover it if you use the products, and don't let your dog go swimming in a pond where fish may live for at least 24 hours after application.

**A group of cats is called a clowder,  
and a group of kittens is called a kindle.**

## **WELCOME HANNAH** *continued from pg. 1*

Hannah shares her life with her German Shepherd, Beauty, and her cat, Madison. In her free time, she likes to read, shop and go to movies. She loves to explore new places and is always looking for a recommendation for a good restaurant to try.

We are happy to welcome Hannah to East Valley Animal Clinic!

