

Paw Talk



A professional publication for the clients of East Valley Animal Clinic

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East Valley Animal Clinic
5049 Upper 141st Street West
Apple Valley, Minnesota 55124
Phone: 952-423-6800

Kathy Ranzinger, DVM
Pam Takeuchi, DVM
Katie Dudley, DVM
Mary Jo Wagner, DVM
www.EastValleyAnimalClinic.com



Erin and Angus

Meet Erin S.

East Valley Animal Clinic is fortunate to call Erin one of our own. Erin graduated from Argosy University in 2003 and is a Certified Veterinary Technician. Erin started here in September 2008.

Erin and her husband, Ron, share their home with Angus, a 10-year-old Boxer, and H.I., the newest member of the house. H.I. was a stray cat that was dropped off at the clinic and Erin fell in love with him.

In her spare time, Erin and Ron love to travel, and at home, they enjoy spending time in their big back yard.

Erin loves getting to know the clients and their pets. Erin is a wonderful technician who always gives her patients the best of care.

Animal Heroes

We have all heard about "animal heroes." Animal heroes are animals that have done something to save or help a member of their family or, at times, complete strangers. Usually when we hear these stories they are service animals that have been trained to perform life-saving tasks. Every now and then, we hear of a non-service animal performing an amazing task as well.

Meet Gibbs and Jessie, two animals, from two different homes, that have one thing in common – both of these animals potentially saved their owner's lives.

Gibbs is a 2-year-old Maltese mix. His owner takes a medication that thins her blood. Blood thinners increase the time it takes for blood to form a clot, therefore increasing the risk of bleeding. Gibbs' owner fell and hit her nose, knocking her unconscious, and she began to bleed profusely. Gibbs must have sensed something was wrong because he sat by her, licking her face until she regained consciousness and was able to call 911.

Jessie is a 4-year-old Cockapoo who loves her owner very much. One evening after Jessie and her owner went to bed, their home caught on fire. Jessie's owner did not hear the smoke detector. Jessie jumped on him and began barking and scratching at him in order to wake him. Fortunately, Jessie's owner was able to get both of them out safely. Jessie saved both of their lives that night.

These two animals have shown the love and bond that animals and humans form. Way to go, Jessie and Gibbs; you are both heroes to your families and to us here at East Valley Animal Clinic.



Gibbs



Jessie



Osteoarthritis

Do you have a relative who has a hard time opening jars due to pain in her hands? Perhaps you know someone who has trouble standing because his knee hurts? Joint pain can be debilitating, and one of the most common causes is osteoarthritis (OA), also known as Degenerative Joint Disease. OA is a degenerative condition in which the cartilage that normally cushions joints breaks down and wears away. As it erodes, the bones rub together, leading to pain and swelling in the joints.

Cats and dogs can also suffer from OA. Cats have evolved to disguise symptoms of pain and illness, so their signs of OA are often subtle. Cats may jump on furniture less frequently, be less meticulous about grooming or show inappropriate litter box behaviors. Dogs may be less active, show occasional lameness and/or stiffness and may even lick at the painful joint.

Talk to your veterinarian if you notice behavior changes or suspect your pet may have OA, because there are a number of treatment options available that can reduce pain, increase mobility and increase your pet's quality of life. These include nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories, steroids, nutritional supplements (such as glucosamine), laser therapy, surgery (if the OA is secondary to an underlying cause, such as hip dysplasia), physical therapy and alternative therapies (such as acupuncture).

Obesity is a factor, because it adds stress to the joints. One of the most important things you can do for your arthritic pet is keep the extra pounds off!



“We already have invisible fencing. If you could add an invisible mansion and an invisible pool, we could live like kings!”

Super Vision

You're sitting on your couch enjoying a good book and suddenly notice your cat seems to be watching something. You glance in the direction of her gaze, but see nothing unusual. Your cat appears to think otherwise and, tail twitching, her eyes follow something across the room.

Is it possible that your cat can see something you can't? A new study published in *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* suggests that, indeed, cats and dogs can see things invisible to humans: ultraviolet light. Ultraviolet (or UV) light has a shorter wavelength than visible light, and infrared has a longer wavelength. Humans are unable to see within the UV spectrum because the structure of the eye blocks this light, and in fact, UV light can damage our eyes. Interestingly, some humans who have had cataract surgery or traumatic injury that causes removal or damage to the portion of the lens that absorbs UV light later reported detailed vision in part of the UV spectrum.

It has long been known that many insects, such as bees, can see within the UV spectrum, and that this helps them in many ways, such as finding the best nectar on flowers. More recently, scientists have discovered that some birds, fish and reptiles also have this ability.

The study examined other species as well, including hedgehogs, ferrets and okapis, and found that more mammals than expected can detect UV light. In addition to helping nocturnal animals see at night, the study's authors speculate that vision in the UV spectrum may help reindeer detect the white fur of a polar bear against a snowy landscape, for example, or enhance a predator's perception of a urine trail that leads to prey.

“Pets are our seat belts on the emotional roller coaster of life—they can be trusted, they keep us safe, and they sure do smooth out the ride.” – Dr. Nick Trout



Hip Dysplasia

The word "dysplasia" is derived from Greek words meaning "abnormal formation." Hip dysplasia is an abnormal formation of the hip joint, and is one of the most common skeletal problems in dogs. It's also found in cats and people. In a normal hip, the femur (thigh bone) meets the pelvis in a ball and socket joint, where the top of the femur is a rounded ball (called the caput), which fits perfectly into the concave socket (called the acetabulum) of the pelvis. The bones are held together by ligaments, and where they meet they're covered with a layer of cartilage, which acts as a cushion. The joint also contains lubricating fluid. When properly formed, it is stable and strong.

In a dysplastic joint, there is an improper fit of the ball and socket, causing a loose fit (laxity) or only a partial fit (subluxation). In addition, one or both of the bones may be misshapen, causing abnormal friction as the bones move against each other each time the leg moves. Over time, the friction damages the cartilage, which is slow to repair. Inflammation follows as the body attempts to heal. Osteoarthritis typically occurs as the body tries to correct the instability; in fact, hip dysplasia is considered the most common cause of osteoarthritis in canine hips.

Hip dysplasia is an inherited disease, and all breeds of dogs are at risk. It is predominantly seen in larger breeds, although Pugs and some other small breeds appear to have a high incidence as well. Obesity can increase the severity of disease in all dogs. In puppies that are prone to dysplasia, injury, repetitive stress or overexertion before fully mature may contribute to the disease, as can rapid growth and inappropriate nutrition.

Signs:

- Decreased activity/exercise intolerance
- Difficulty rising
- Reluctance to climb stairs
- A "bunny-hop" gait
- Intermittent or persistent lameness
- Decreased muscle tone in the back legs

Veterinarians can determine whether a dog is dysplastic, and the degree of the problem, using x-rays.

Treatment options depend on the size of the pet, age of onset and severity of the condition. Medical management entails maintaining proper weight, nutritional supplements, moderated exercise, physical therapy (to keep supporting structures strong) and medication. There are several surgical options that aim to modify, repair or replace the hip joint, and again, the type of surgery depends on the specific patient. If caught early enough, the prognosis for a high quality of life following surgery is usually very good.



Normal hips (left) and Dysplastic hips (right) Images courtesy Orthopedic Foundation for Animals

Feline Hip Dysplasia

Hip dysplasia has long been thought to be a disease that only plagued dogs, but we now know that cats can suffer from this condition as well. As with dogs, it is more likely to affect larger breed cats such as the Maine Coon, but smaller cats can be dysplastic.



Because of their smaller size, great agility and the fact that they're not exercised in the same manner as dogs, many cats with hip dysplasia will show no obvious signs of the disease. Others will show occasional lameness and a reluctance to jump or climb stairs, which gets worse as osteoarthritis progresses. Inappropriate litter box habits are sometimes the first indication of a hip problem, due to the cat having difficulty entering the box or squatting comfortably.

As with dogs, both medical management and surgery are options to help alleviate pain and improve quality of life for affected cats.

Hip Evaluation

Conscientious breeders of dogs and cats are careful to avoid breeding pets that may pass on this painful inherited condition. There are two standard methods of evaluating hips, known as OFA and Penn-Hip.

The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) will assess x-rays submitted by veterinarians, and they maintain the world's largest all-breed registry. OFA categories are: **Normal** (Excellent, Good, Fair), **Borderline**, and **Dysplastic** (Mild, Moderate, Severe). You can learn more, see statistics for your breed and see sample x-rays of canine hips in each category on the OFA website, at www.offa.org/hd_grades.html

The University of Pennsylvania Hip Improvement Program (PennHIP) uses unique radiographic views of hips to identify and quantify joint laxity. Learn more about this method at www.info.antechimaging.com/pennhip.



PROUD TO MAINTAIN AAHA ACCREDITATION

East Valley Animal Clinic is very proud to announce that we once again passed our accreditation for the American Animal Hospital Association. We were originally accredited on January 4, 2006, and now undergo re-accreditation every three years. Being an AAHA-accredited veterinary hospital means we hold ourselves to a higher standard. Pets are our passion, and keeping them healthy is our #1 priority. Here, we strive to deliver excellent care for pets, because your pets deserve nothing less.

Learn more about AAHA accreditation and why our accreditation is important to you and your pet. Visit www.aaaha.org/pet_owner.



HAND WARMERS: Useful in Minnesota but harmful to our pets

It is getting to be the time of year where we are out and about in cold weather. Hand warmers are useful at sporting events, while hunting or just spending time outside. While wonderful for keeping our hands and feet warm, they can cause problems for our pets if ingested.

Most commonly, disposable warmers contain large amounts of elemental iron. Iron is toxic in large quantities, and ingesting too much can affect the entire body, including the central nervous system. Initially you'll see gastrointestinal problems, such as vomiting, diarrhea and possibly bloody diarrhea. Additional signs include lethargy, panting, tremors and an elevated heart rate.

It is very important that hand warmers are stored and disposed of in places where pets cannot get to them. If you suspect your pet may have ingested one, seek veterinary care immediately.

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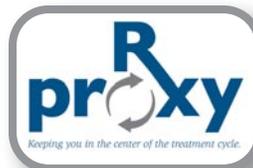
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trust for your household
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Dave Ranzinger

YOUR PET'S NEEDS ARE JUST A CLICK AWAY

East Valley Animal Clinic is excited to introduce Proxy RX online pharmacy. Proxy RX is a veterinary exclusive pharmacy that allows you to fill your pet's prescriptions from the comfort of home, knowing that the medications you get come directly from the manufacturer. Medications purchased through Proxy RX are also covered by manufacturer guarantees, unlike medications purchased through other online pharmacies.



You can also have prescription foods and even collars and leashes shipped directly to your home!

Check out Proxy RX on our website, eastvalleyanimalclinic.com and click on the Proxy RX link to get started. Don't worry, if there is a problem with your prescription, we'll give you a call.