The EVF Times

Eglinton Veterinary Facilities March 2013

Ontario's spring and summer season

As the weather starts to warm, all of us look forward to time outside with friends, family and our pets. However, a veterinary team has a unique perspective on the warm weather. The impending changes in temperature also mean that we will be faced with a list of parasites and other diseases that are generally not an issue for your pets during the cold weather months. We would like to highlight these issues here. We want to remind all pet owners (particularly those with dogs) that it is a very important time of year to come to see us for preventative medications.

Heartworm disease: As mosquitoes appear, so does the potential for our pets to be exposed to Heartworm. This is a parasite transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito, introducing worms which subsequently invade an animal's heart. Heartworm is endemic in the U.S., with thousands of pets treated yearly. Through rigourous testing programs in Ontario, we are able to recognize dogs with heartworm before they are sick, allowing for potentially life-saving treatment. We also advocate that all dogs be on monthly preventative medications through the mosquito season (June through October), as these products safely protect pets against Heartworm infection and control the spread of infected mosquitoes. We cannot help our medical colleagues with West Nile Virus, but we seem to have this animal disease well in hand!

Ticks: Ticks and the potential diseases that they carry are one of the emerging issues for people and their pets in Ontario. The most well known of these diseases is Lyme disease, which is carried by ticks in areas populated by deer (for a unique perspective on Lyme disease, see page 2).

Ticks will become active as soon as the weather starts to warm, and are most active in spring and fall. Ontario has had pockets of heavy tick populations for years (Thousand Islands, Point Pelee). However, in the past few years we have seen numbers rise along Lake Ontario both east and west of Toronto as well as in the city itself. All of the dogs that we screen yearly for heartworm disease are now screened for Lyme disease via a test called the 4DX test. This allows us to recognize exposed pets, whether or not a known tick bite has occurred. If necessary, a Lyme infected dog can receive treatment before signs of illness arise. We can also then counsel families on tick control and bite prevention.

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New online pet portal available

Clients with email can now access their pet's medical records and reach us at any time of day via our new pet portal

Calling all dogs... You and your owners will be receiving a letter reminding you to come in for your spring visit. We need to see you all for an exam and heartworm/lyme test. We will then send you home with your anti-parasitic medication for the summer. ***Please ask your owners to call the clinic to book your spring visit!***

And our feline friends... Don't forget vaccines and flea control before you or your family are spending more time outdoors.

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SPRING AND SUMMER…CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Intestinal parasites: Our pets share the environment with each other and with a growing list of wildlife species. This is true whether our dogs or cats spend time in a backyard, in the ravines in the city, or in the country outdoors at cottages or farms. In Ontario there is a list of common intestinal parasites that we encounter, all spread through contact with the residues of animal feces on the ground. As the ground begins to thaw with the spring rains, our pets are at risk of contact with parasites such as roundworm, giardia and hookworm.

All of these parasites also have the potential to infect people, especially those members of our families who are young, old or immunocompromised. When our team asks that we screen a fecal sample (requested one to three times per year depending on the pet) or talks about the 'deworming potential' of our heartworm preventative medications, these are the creatures that we are trying to control.

Fleas: Although we do see fleas year-round in Toronto now, we expect a surge in the warmer months, especially as we approach the fall. Fleas are a nuisance to pets and their families through irritating bites, and can also spread disease (such as Tapeworms). Many of our monthly preventative medications used for pets in the summer will include flea control, and our vets will always talk about a family's potential risk for a flea infestation.

DID YOU KNOW? FLEAS CAN CAUSE TAPEWORM INFECTIONS IN DOGS & CATS. THIS IS ANOTHER REASON TO PROTECT!

The bottom line is that warm weather brings many moments of joy for our pets and families. However, our pets are at risk from a number of parasites and diseases while out and about. We would recommend that each and every dog come to visit us in April and May to have their annual Heartworm/Lyme test and to discuss the best monthly product (topical or oral) to protect them from discomfort and illness.

DVM CORNER: LYME DISEASE-A NEW PERSPECTIVE DR. BEV BATEMAN

When I graduated from veterinary school a decade ago, ticks and their potential to carry disease was a topic confined to obscure, foreign lands. About five years ago, vets in Ontario began to realize that we were starting to pick ticks off of pets more often, and that the issue had exploded on the east coast of the U.S. This meant that we had to pay attention to the issue to help our clients who traveled. Three years ago, Eglinton Vet was part of a pilot project in which all of the blood collected for heartworm testing in dogs was also analyzed for Lyme disease exposure by our lab at no cost. We were shocked that a significant number of our patients showed exposure to the bacteria that causes Lyme, even pets which the owner claimed had never been to tick heavy areas of the province. We changed our protocol in 2011, and started to routinely test all dogs for Heartworm, Lyme and two other illnesses also potentially transmitted by ticks in Ontario. We feel that vets have a unique role in helping our Public Health officials to identify potential "Lyme areas" and to protect families and pets. Our perspective in 2013 has changed even further, as I personally have been diagnosed as having Lyme disease and two other tick-borne illnesses; the clinic team has watched as I have struggled with this potentially career-ending and difficult health situation, evolving over the last four years.

Veterinarians in Ontario need to be part of tick surveillance programs. We have a unique connection to families that spend time outdoors with their pets. We help our clients to pick ticks off of their dogs, and we are lucky enough to have tests available that help us to recognize Lyme exposure. Where appropriate, we can prescribe safe and effective products to prevent pets from carrying ticks and spreading the potential for disease.

Not all veterinary clinics have embraced this issue in quite the same way. We think that they all should, and are proud to be on the leading edge of this issue in Ontario.

AREAS OF ONTARIO WITH HIGHRISK OF TICK EXPOSURE: Point Pelee, Thousand Islands/Prince Edward County, Wainfleet Bog
FOR MORE INFORMATION: www.health.ny.gov/publications/2825/ OR www.dogsandticks.com

TECH TALK: LEPTOSPOROSIS

As spring arrives, the snow starts to melt and puddles begin to form on the ground, our canine friends will be at increased risk of Leptospirosis.

Leptospirosis is a disease caused by a spiral-shaped bacteria called *Leptospira* that live in water or wet soil. This bacteria can infect both humans and animals. Many wild animals such as mice, rats, rabbits, raccoons, skunks, cows and sheep are able to carry the disease and pass it to dogs. Animals are at risk of contracting Leptospirosis through drinking out of a puddle or pond that an infected animal has urinated in, or eating wet grass with infected urine on it. Humans can become infected by consuming contaminated water or meat (with an increased risk in people who swim in ponds or rivers). Once a dog has become infected, the bacteria multiply and begin to spread to other parts of the body and can cause liver and kidney failure.

THERE IS AN EFFECTIVE VACCINE AGAINST LEPTOSPOROSIS AND MANY OF OUR PATIENTS ARE VACCINATED. HOWEVER, THERE ARE CERTAIN BREEDS OF DOGS (MANY SMALL DOGS) WHO ARE SENSITIVE TO THE VACCINE. PLEASE TALK TO A VET IF YOU ARE NOT SURE ABOUT WHETHER YOUR DOG IS VACCINATED

The symptoms of a dog ill with Leptosporosis can range from mild (no symptoms noted) to severe; severe cases can be fatal. Symptoms may include:

- Anorexia
- Increased thirst
- Weakness
- Fever
- Muscle tenderness
- Vomiting
- Depression
- Dehydration

In severe cases when the liver has already been damaged, the pet's skin may appear yellow (jaundice) or if the kidneys have been damaged the pet may produce small amounts of urine.

Diagnosis is made through blood and urine testing, including specialized cultures to examine for presence of the bacteria. We look for typical signs on general lab work including elevated white blood cell counts and/or blood chemistry abnormalities showing changes in liver and kidney values.

More than 80% of dogs with Leptospirosis develop serious (but short term) kidney problems. Many patients do get better with prompt treatment, but dogs that suffer severe kidney or liver damage can die within a few days. It is very important to remember to wear gloves and be extremely careful when handling animals infected with Leptospirosis due to its potential to infect humans.

Treatment includes hospitalization on intravenous fluids to reverse dehydration, with anti-vomiting medications administered if the patient is vomiting. Antibiotics are prescribed depending on the stage of infection (and may be used for up to four weeks).

You can protect your dog from Leptosporosis by restricting them from drinking water from puddles or rivers and also by getting them vaccinated. Our protocol involves administering the vaccine every year to most dogs. This can be done at your dogs yearly annual spring check up and heartworm prevention appointment if not done yet.

TRIVIA FUN: EVF TRIVIA

ANSWERS ON PAGE 4

1.Can you guess how many pets our Eglinton Vet team own all together? **a)** 15 **b)** 20 **c)** 27

2.EVF opened its doors at its current site in what decade?
a) 1920s **b)** 1950s **c)** 1980s

3.Drs. Jen and Paul Hodges have what kind of dog?
a) Poodle **b)** Boxer **c)** Weimeraner

4.True or false? Three of our four veterinarians have worked at EVF since their graduation from vet school?

5.During vet school, Dr. Bev did veterinary work in what part of the world outside Canada? **a)** South America **b)** United States **c)** Africa

6.One of Dr. Bob's favourite pastimes outside of his vet work is?
a) Origami **b)** running **c)** golfing

What have our vets been up to?

Dr. Jen Hodges recently returned from the Western Veterinary Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. She attended several lectures on new advancements in veterinary medicine given by board certified specialists. Jen brought back lots of information for our team to use to improve patient care, including valuable tools and innovative new diets to help our patients with weight management. Jen also had the opportunity to see friends and colleagues and even have a little fun while she was there!

If weight management is an issue with your pet, Dr. Jen is the doctor to see.

Featured Products

Advantage, Advantage Multi and K9Advantix

The Bayer family of parasite protection.

EVF TRIVIA

QUESTIONS ON PAGE 3

1. b) **Our team owns a total of 20 pets**. Some of us have multiple pets from multiple species.

2. a) **EVF opened its doors in the 1920s.**. We have been serving North Toronto for almost 90 years!

3. b) **Drs. Jen and Paul own a Boxer.** Sawyer is a wonderful 3 year male. He comes to work at the clinic too.

4.**True.** Drs. Jen Hodges, Bev Bateman and Bob Watson have all practiced at EVF since graduation. This is very unusual.

5. **Africa.** Dr. Bev has visited Africa twice, once in 1999 to work with local veterinarians.

6. c) **Golfing**. Dr. Bob loves his golf. If he's not at the clinic he loves to be on the course!

Eglinton Veterinary Facilities

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Healthy pets are happy pets!

PETSITE LOGIN

Don't forget to sign up for your free Petsites portal for on-line access to your pet's medical records.
If you have an e-mail address on your account with us, you will have received an e-mail with login instructions. PLEASE CHECK YOUR SPAM FILE if you did not receive an e-mail or contact us and we will get you set up with the info you need.

Curtis Counter

Eglinton Vet has a resident cat who we adopted in 2010. At that time, he was obese, weighing in at over 30 lbs! ***Curtis weighed in at 7.58kg (16.6lbs) on March 4, 2013. We are very proud of him.*** *We have recently had to adjust his food intake again to continue weight loss. Curtis knows that weight loss is hard!*