



# THE EVF TIMES

EGLINTON VETERINARY FACILITIES

MARCH 2012

## PREVENTATIVE HEALTH CARE FOR YOUR PET

If you spend any time in our office or on the internet looking at information sites for pet owners, you will frequently see veterinarians and other animal health care professionals talking about *preventative health care*. Much of this edition we devote to ways to protect your pets from disease over the warm months of the year, especially dogs. However, it is important that our clients work with us throughout the year to keep their pets healthy by considering the importance of the following...



### Calling all dogs...

You or your owners should have received an email or letter reminding you to come in for your spring visit for an exam, heartworm test and preventative medication for the summer.

**Please ask your owners to call the clinic to book your spring visit!**

**Regular visits to the clinic for a physical examination:** We are always here for pets when they are injured or ill, but we also recommend that we see your pet for wellness visits. In younger pets this may be a visit once per year when healthy. However, it is ideal for us to see pets at least every 6 months once they are seniors (*see chart page 4*). During these visits our vet will perform a complete physical exam, looking your pet over thoroughly for problems that you may not have perceived at home.

**Wellness blood testing:** We recommend that all pets have blood testing done at least once per year. By routinely doing blood testing (just like your family doctor), we may be able to help your pet with problems early on. *Please see the article on Page 2 for more details on wellness blood testing.*

**Vaccination of pets when appropriate:** Although vaccines may not be our main focus during a wellness visit, we do feel that all pets should be vaccinated according to their age, health and

lifestyle. There is a long list of available vaccines for all species; however, our doctors have chosen those vaccines that we consider core to your animal's health and we will discuss these with you. Of course, rabies vaccination is legally required for **all pets** (every year for cats whether indoors or outdoors and every 1 to 3 years in dogs depending on their age). All of the other vaccine recommendations will be based on your pet's potential contact with wildlife and other pets.

**Regular testing or treatment against parasites:** Any pet spending time outdoors has the potential to come into contact with intestinal parasites. If left untreated, these parasites can cause nasty problems for your pet. We also want to protect your pet against problems with heartworm disease (mosquito-borne), ticks (which may carry disease) and fleas.

**Good nutrition & weight management:** During every visit to the clinic we will weigh your pet and discuss what they are eating. Pets are just like us in that they will live a longer, healthier life if they are eating a good diet and maintaining a proper body weight.

**DON'T FORGET ABOUT OUR UPDATED WEB PRESENCE**

**INCLUDING**

*Regular updates to our website*  
[www.eglintonvet.com](http://www.eglintonvet.com)

*On-line forms via the website that allow you to*

*Send appointment requests*  
*Send medication refill requests*

*Register a new client*

*Fun articles and information at our Facebook page*

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[www.facebook.com/EglintonVeterinaryFacilities](http://www.facebook.com/EglintonVeterinaryFacilities)



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## WELLNESS BLOOD TESTING (CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Wellness blood testing is one part of a comprehensive program of preventative health care for your pet. We recommend this series of blood tests to all patients when in for their routine physical examinations. We believe that all pets should have this blood testing done at least once per year (in senior pets or pets on chronic medication, we may recommend or require some

level of blood testing 2 to 3 times per year). Wellness blood testing is important because many pets that appear healthy to their owners and veterinarians at their annual checkups are found to have hidden diseases. This is



because animals were designed to keep illnesses hidden from those around them. Many chronic problems have no outward clinical signs of concern until they have progressed.

We all know that pets age much more quickly than we do, and major health changes can happen quickly.

In the end, our goal with wellness blood testing is to possibly detect a medical problem early, allowing for treatment and a better chance at a positive prognosis.

**Continued on Page 4**

## DVM CORNER: LYME DISEASE IN DOGS DR. JEN HODGES

In 2011, our doctors made the decision to test all dogs in for their heartworm blood test for heartworm along with three other tick-borne diseases including Lyme Disease. We did this at no cost to our clients as a trial in 2011, and we were astounded by the results. Testing revealed more than 15 dogs in our practice who had been exposed to Lyme Disease. These dogs were tested further, and many were treated for Lyme or vaccinated against the disease. The most interesting things for us were the number of positive dogs, how often the owners had no idea about tick exposure and how some dogs had chronic health symptoms resolve after treatment.

**General Information:** Dogs acquire Lyme Disease from the bite of a deer tick (*Ixodes*) infected with *Borrelia burgdorferi*

bacteria. Lyme Disease is most common in the Northeastern United States, but infected tick populations are expanding and becoming established in Ontario as well.

**Clinical signs:** Few dogs actually show clinical signs of Lyme Disease, and these signs can take weeks to months to become evident. The most common clinical signs are decreased appetite, lethargy, intermittent lameness, painful or swollen joints, and fever. In some cases, more serious kidney, heart, and neurological disease can develop.

### **How do we test for and treat Lyme Disease?**

A simple blood test can indicate whether your dog is positive for lyme antibody (this blood test is done in

conjunction with the annual heartworm test). A positive test indicates exposure to the bacteria and should be followed up with a more specific test to determine whether your pet has an active infection and requires treatment with antibiotics.

**Prevention:** Several products are available for tick control including *Advantix* topical treatment and *Preventic* collars. These options should be discussed with your veterinarian, who will take into account risk of infection and other pets in the household such as cats. Checking your dog for ticks after they spend time in grassy or wooded areas is very important as rapid removal of the ticks (using



Dr. Jen Hodges

tweezers or a tool called a Tick Twister) decreases the risk of disease transmission. Vaccination is also available for dogs at high risk, such as those that travel to areas endemic for Lyme Disease.

Good websites with info:

[www.lymeinfo.ca](http://www.lymeinfo.ca)

[www.dogsandticks.com](http://www.dogsandticks.com)

**TECH TALK: TO INSURE, OR NOT TO INSURE... BY BLAIR, VET TECH**

Our team is routinely asked about pet health insurance by new and existing pet owners. Our veterinarians recommend insurance for most pets, as it takes the financial burden of care out of your hands when a pet is seriously ill or injured. With many companies now offering health insurance to our four-legged friends, deciding which type of coverage is right for you and your pet can seem like an overwhelming and confusing decision.

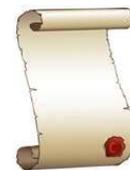
It is best to shop around and ask questions of a potential insurance provider, and it is important to carefully review the terms and conditions of a policy. Like all types of insurance, each company and policy will differ in the

monthly fee, levels of coverage and specific conditions such as breed exclusions and the deductible required with claims.

As part of the insurance application process, you will be required to provide all medical records for your pet upon purchasing your policy. To prevent any delays in processing any claims it is best to provide this information, even if you have gone to multiple clinics. We assist our clients with this by faxing records directly to insurance companies.

Aside from pure economics, there are a few things to remember when considering if insurance will benefit you and your pet, including:

- Coverage for preventative care:* Remember that services such as vaccinations, routine wellness testing, parasite medications and routine dental cleanings may not be covered.
- Pre-existing conditions:* The best time to insure your pet is at a young age. Most policies will not cover ‘pre-existing’ conditions, meaning any illness (or a similar one) they have had prior to taking out the policy.
- Bilateral diseases/conditions:* These are medical conditions commonly found on both sides of the body, such as ligament tears in the knee, and conditions with eyes and ears. In some cases, insurance will not cover treatment of a condition on the opposite side once one of these ‘bilateral conditions’ occurs.



•*Limits of coverage:* Companies may divide a policy into illness categories, which define problems in groups based on the organ system involved (such as the digestive system, musculoskeletal system, etc.). There are often yearly or life-time maximums for the amount you can claim for each category.

We hope that none of our patients are faced with serious medical problems; however, accidents and illnesses do occur. Research is important when purchasing a policy to protect your pet and to insure the best coverage possible.

PLEASE ASK US IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT PET HEALTH INSURANCE

**CASE STUDIES: LAPAROSCOPIC SPAY AND DENTAL MONTH** MORE INFO AT [WWW.EGLINTONVET.COM](http://WWW.EGLINTONVET.COM)

**Case #1: Laparoscopic spay in a mature Boxer:** ‘Gigi’ (here on the right with her friend Tucker) presented to us at the age of 6.5 years for ovariohysterectomy after having had a litter of pups. This type of spay has traditionally been a nightmare for



both the dog (large incision, long recovery time with pain) and for the surgeon (large dog with swollen tissues). But our laparoscopic spay has changed this! Like all dogs who have a laparoscopic spay, Gigi was standing 2 to 3 hours after surgery, looking for food. Rather than staying in the clinic overnight, Gigi was home with Tucker that same afternoon (with no E-collar to wear) and back in the park in 2 days. Our team loves the fact that dogs now come through their spays so quickly and so comfortably!

**Case #2: A collection of dental cases:** Most people are well aware of their own dental health, but are surprised when they are faced with oral disease in one of their pets. Our team checks your pet’s mouth at every visit to our clinic and we treat dental problems daily. In honour of ‘Dental Health Month’, we put together a description of the dental problems that we saw in the month of February. More detail about these dental conditions can be found on our website under *case studies*.



- ☑ **Periodontal disease:** the most common medical condition in pets.
- ☑ **Oral foreign bodies/fractured teeth:** seen most often in dogs due to chewing, or following trauma.
- ☑ **Dental abscesses:** due to periodontal disease or traumatized teeth.
- ☑ **Oral cancer:** such as squamous cell carcinoma, a very aggressive disease.
- ☑ **Feline stomatitis and resorptive lesions:** painful

## WELLNESS TESTING (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

There are two main components to the wellness blood testing. Similar tests are performed in all sick pets, although blood and urine tests may be necessary in addition to the panels outlined here if a pet is not well.

**How old is your pet, really? Use this table to determine their "true" age**

Age	Feline weight (lbs)	Canine Weight (lbs)		50-90	>90
	0-20	0-20	20-50		
1	7	7	7	8	9
2	13	13	14	16	18
3	20	20	21	24	26
4	25	25	27	31	34
5	33	33	34	38	41
6	40	40	42	45	49
7	44	44	47	50	55
8	48	48	51	55	64
9	52	52	55	61	71
10	56	55	60	66	78
11	60	60	65	72	86
12	64	64	69	77	93
13	68	68	74	82	101
14	72	72	78	88	108
15	75	75	83	93	115
16	80	80	87	99	123
17	84	84	92	104	131
18	88	88	95	109	139
19	92	92	101	115	
20	96	96	105	120	

Table courtesy of Idexx Labs and Fred L. Metzger, DVM, DABVP

COLOUR KEY	ADULT	SENIOR	GERIATRIC
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**The complete blood count (CBC)** is a common test performed on both pets and people. It can give invaluable information about hydration status, anemia, infection and the body's ability to form blood clots or to mount an immune response. A CBC is essential in pets with fevers, vomiting or diarrhea, weakness, pale gums, loss of appetite, etc. The CBC is useful in pre-surgical evaluation to detect bleeding disorders or other abnormalities.



**Blood chemistry tests** are tests performed to assist in evaluating system organ function, electrolyte status, hormone levels and more. This extensive panel of tests (10 to 25 values) is important in evaluating your pet's health in all life stages. It allows us to see how their system reads when well and becomes even more important during times of illness, allowing for diagnosis, monitoring when on long term medications and prior to administration of anesthesia.

**Healthy pets are happy pets!**



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### FEATURED PRODUCT: TRIFEXIS

Trifexis is a **monthly, chewable tablet** for dogs that kills fleas, prevents heartworm disease, and treats



and controls adult **hookworm, roundworm and whipworm infections**. Unavailable until 2012 in Canada, Trifexis is one of the many options that our vets now have to help our canine friends avoid parasite infections. We are excited to be able to offer a variety of products to our clients. Please ask us about alternate options if you have not been 100% pleased with your heartworm and flea prevention.

**Elanco**

#### 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 8kg (17.6lbs) on March 1, 2012*

*We are very proud of him and see real improvements in his mobility.*

*Please ask us to meet Curtis if you would like.*