

The Wetnose News

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What the Heck?

On any given day, we are amazed as to what will happen in the veterinary business or what kind of cases will be presented to our hospital. Over the years, we have seen pets with acute kidney failure, chronic kidney failure, hypothyroidism in dogs, hyperthyroidism in cats, bone cancer, liver cancer, corneal ulcers, heart murmurs, heart arrhythmias, enlarged hearts, tendon/ligament injuries (the most common orthopedic injury in dogs is rupture or tearing of the cranial cruciate ligament – OUCH!), oral cancer, eye cancer, liver cancer, splenic cancer, rectal cancer, colon cancer, liver disease, abscessed teeth, foreign body ingestion (I once removed a roof tack nail from a dog's stomach, and a corn cob from 2 dogs' intestines as well as a penny from a cat), pancreatitis, anal sac impaction, anal sac abscess, perianal tumors, bone fractures, toe nail infections, flea bite hypersensitivity, grass allergy, urinary tract infections, pyometra in dogs that have not been spayed, conjunctivitis, glaucoma, skin infections, ear infections, heartworms, joint sprains, intervertebral disk disease, urinary tract infections, aural (ear) hematomas, Cushing's Disease, Sudden Acquired Retinal Degeneration Syndrome (SARDS), feline leukemia virus, feline acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), mange, dietary indiscretion,

yeast infections of the skin, congenital eye abnormalities, limb deformities, abdominal hernia defects, inguinal hernia defects, congenital defects, ear infections involving bacteria, earmites, yeast, or ear growths/foreign bodies, glaucoma, bone fragments lodged in the gum tissue, testicular infections, testicular cancer, rectal prolapse, penile prolapse, vestibular disease (similar to Vertigo in people), dystocia, skin cancer, elongated soft palates, obsessive-compulsive disorders, fear/territorial aggression, canine and feline lymphoma, congestive heart failure, megacolon, collapsing tracheas (windpipes), patellar ("knee cap") luxations, hip luxations, intestinal parasite infections, intestinal viral infections (Parvo virus) fungal infections, hormonal/endocrine abnormalities, bronchitis, tracheobronchitis, laryngitis, and then some. So, if your pet is "not acting right", not eating, "not him(her)self" or is lethargic, it is important that you have your pet examined because ANYTHING could be wrong with it and it best to diagnose any problem early!



Case of the Month

"Minnie", one of our beloved furry friends, was presented to our hospital for a mid-year examination. During the examination, Dr. Gooding determined that something was abnormal about the way that "Minnie's" abdomen felt, especially in the area where her bladder would be located. Dr. Gooding suspected that "Minnie" may have bladder stones and suggested to her owner that we should take X-rays of "Minnie's" abdomen so that he could evaluate her bladder and other abdominal organs. Lo and behold, X-rays revealed that "Minnie" had 4 large stones in her bladder. Based on the radiograph (see picture), Dr. Gooding suggested to "Minnie's" owners that she have surgery to remove the stones from her bladder. Prior to surgery, we performed a complete blood panel on "Minnie" to evaluate her internal organs and her overall condition for surgery. Dr. Gooding performed a cystotomy (bladder surgery) on "Minnie" and removed the bladder stones. The stones that were removed from "Minnie's" bladder were submitted to the laboratory for analysis. Based on the stone analysis, Dr. Gooding recommended a special diet

that is designed to reduce the chances of "Minnie" accumulating the respective stones in her bladder again. "Minnie's" case is a good example of one of the reasons that we recommend that you have your pet examined at least twice a year and also have its urine submitted to the laboratory and analyzed for signs of infection or other abnormalities. We suspect that many pets may have bladder/kidney stones or urinary tract infections but they do not talk to us verbally so they cannot tell us that they have such abnormalities. In fact, we have found bladder/kidney stones and urinary tract infections coincidentally while examining or X-raying patients for other reasons. Fortunately, we detected "Minnie's" stones and her parents think that she is doing much better!



**Pembroke
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Canine Atopy (Or Is Your Dog Playing the Banjo?)



Do you ever wonder if your pet thinks that it is a musician and is pretending that it is playing the banjo or guitar? Well, don't jump up and put on your party shoes too fast because there may not be anything to dance about just yet. Although we see some very talented furrball friends at our hospital, we have yet to see a patient play some boogie woogie woogie music on a bass guitar. We suspect that your pet is scratching or itching because it has fleas biting its skin, it has infection around the hair follicles with inflammation (pyoderma, folliculitis, or a "hot spot"), it has a skin yeast infection, or it is allergic to environmental allergens (things in the environment that irritate the skin in some way) such as grasses, pollen, certain plants, and mites.

We receive calls almost every day about pets scratching or itching. We also examine patients almost every single day that have a rash of some type on its skin. Unfortunately, there is not always one specific thing that causes a pet to scratch or itch. For example, a person may be allergic to shell fish and also be allergic to a certain medication. Itching (pruritis) can be caused by one or more of the above listed disease processes and then many other things. Because of the complexity and numerous causes of "itching" or scratching, there is usually not a magic pill or miracle cure that will completely "cure" or stop the itching completely. For example, we sometimes examine patients that have hair loss with some minor scratching/itching. After examining the patient and performing some laboratory tests, we sometimes find that a dog has Demodectic Mange which means that the pet has microscopic parasitic mites that are burrowing into the skin causing inflammation (which causes "itching"). We are currently treating two dogs that have this particular type of mange. One of these pets was scratching and the other patient just had some peculiar sores with hair loss. Itching and scratching as a result of mange is treated quite differently than itching/scratching caused by bacterial or yeast infections. This is why it is urgent that you have your pet examined.

We also see many patients at our hospital that are allergic to flea bites. It is sometimes difficult to convince pet owners that their pet has fleas because in some cases the owner had not observed fleas on the pet. It is urgent that pet owners understand that fleas can get on a pet, bite the pet, get a "blood meal", lay eggs on the pet, and then jump off of the pet and lay more eggs or hangout in the environment. We often see "flea dirt" (the black/red/brown stuff on the pet that looks like black pepper) but do not see the actual fleas on the pet. It is no doubt that the flea dirt likely came from fleas. We must understand that fleas are insects and parasites so they survive by hiding close to the skin thereby avoiding detection. We advise you to apply or give your pet flea control products every single month to prevent or control fleas, even in the winter months. We have seen patients at our hospital that had severe flea infestations even in the winter. Perhaps, fleas can live inside during the winter months when there is heat and moisture from homes being heated and closed up.

If your pet is scratching or itching, it is important that you schedule an appointment to have it examined. We usually perform a complete and thorough physical examination and some laboratory tests to help us confirm a diagnosis. Again, this is ever so important since there are a number of things that can make your pet itch/scratch and certain medications or shampoos can also make some conditions worse. We can usually develop a treatment protocol to help most patients gain some relief from itching. For some patients, an allergy injection with corticosteroids is needed to give the patient some immediate relief. We can also prescribe certain medications to supplement the allergy injection that will help an itchy patient to be more comfortable. Some pets improve tremendously with treatment for skin infections and a medicated bath. Other patients need a combination of treatments in order to get some relief. In some of our worst cases, we have prescribed a medication called cyclosporine that is used to reduce the immune system's exaggerated response to environmental allergens.

Ideally, we would like to know what each patient is allergic to so that we can try to prevent exposure to a particular allergen. However, it is impossible to avoid every blade of grass, pollen or mite that exists in the environment. We can collect a blood sample from your pet and submit it to the laboratory for analysis to determine what it is allergic to. The results can then be used to create a solution that can be administered to your pet periodically that will gradually help it develop a tolerance to certain allergens. This protocol is known as immunotherapy and this is what people are describing when they talk about someone getting "allergy shots". We can also refer you to a dermatologist that can do skin testing to determine what your pet is allergic to. In preparation for the upcoming Spring allergy season, we are currently offering a 10 % discount off of the total cost of an allergy test panel. We also recommend that you schedule an appointment to bring your pet in so that we can help you develop a plan to help your pet get ahead of the upcoming allergy season so that it will be more comfortable and have a more comfortable and quality life.



Silent Killers in Pets

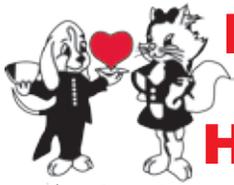


Many of us have heard stories about or know of someone who had a certain health issue or disease process occurring in their bodies but they were not aware that such disease process was occurring until it was detected by their physicians during a physical examination or not until some diagnostic test was performed that detected it. For example, I have heard a number of men

explain that they were not aware that they had prostate cancer until they had a "PSA" (prostatic specific antigen test) done and it came back elevated. Some men also had normal PSA levels but their physician detected a "lump" or nodule on their prostates during a digital rectal examination. Some women also did not know that they had breast cancer until they had a screening mammogram and an abnormality was detected in the breast image. Some of these women had not noticed any lumps in their breasts or signs of discomfort. Just the same, many individuals do not know that they have polyps in their colons or rectums until they get a colonoscopy screening. Have you ever heard someone tell a story about how they had a dizzy spell, was light-headed, had a shortness of breath, or had some chest pain (angina) and were not aware that they had a high percentage of carotid artery (neck) or coronary (heart) vessel blockage until they had an ultrasound or catheterization procedure done? These illnesses are called "silent killers" because they can be causing damage to the body but not causing any obvious symptoms. Believe it or not, we see the same types of "silent killers" in veterinary medicine. For example, we sometimes pre-screen patients before performing anesthesia, surgery, or a dental procedure and detect abnormalities in their blood tests although their owners have not noted any unusual symptoms or abnormalities. A very common observation is that we often detect early kidney failure in cats that have not demonstrated any serious clinical signs. Last year, we had scheduled one of our long-term canine patients for a dental cleaning procedure and we recommended to the owner that we should do a blood chemistry panel prior to the procedure

considering the pet's age and medical history. We discovered that this pet had elevated kidney tests despite the absence of any noticeable clinical signs. We recommended to the owners that we start kidney failure treatment on this patient to slow the deterioration of the kidneys and the pet's health. As a result of early detection and treatment, these pet owners were able to extend the life of their pet significantly and continued to enjoy its companionship. We also have a number of pets that appear to have pain in their joints from suspected degenerative osteoarthritis. However, we sometimes perform blood work on these patients and determine that they have low thyroid hormone. A low thyroid hormone level can cause a canine patient to be weak in the rear limbs or to be lethargic. This weakness appearance makes the owner think that the pet is in much pain than it actually is but the pet is actually weak versus suffering from severe pain. A number of cats that have been presented to our hospital with weight loss and the pet owners thought that these pets had "worms". After doing a thorough physical examination and some blood work, we determine that the cat had feline hyperthyroidism. This disease process can cause a number of symptoms including weight loss. As with any disease process, it is URGENT that a diagnosis be made as soon as possible to increase the chances of successful treatment. Perhaps, you have heard stories about people who have had cancer to spread (metastasize) to other parts of their bodies because they were postponing a trip to the doctor only to find that the cancer had already spread when they finally got examined. Over the years, we have had a number of pets to present to our hospital with advanced cancer, chronic kidney failure, chronic liver disease, cancer of the abdominal organs, severe hyperthyroidism, obstructed bladders, and periodontal disease. We have also detected severe heart murmurs with congestive heart failure in a number of patients. We may have been able to prescribe certain medications to prevent a crisis if we had examined these patients during their annual, mid-year, or geriatric examinations. These are all conditions that we could have treated at an earlier stage and possibly extended the patient's life if the pet had been presented to our hospital for an examination. Therefore, it is URGENT that you have your pet examined if you notice any abnormalities in its eating, drinking or elimination habits, vomiting, diarrhea, unusual coughing, daily routine or a change in its temperament.





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