



# Animal Health Clinic of Funkstown

*"We'll treat your pet like family!"*

Newsletter

July – September 2010

## Yearly Lyme/Hw/Ehrlichia/Anaplasmosis test & Lyme Disease –

As part of our commitment to our patients' health, we have implemented a new protocol to help deal with the threat of Lyme disease. Lyme disease is caused by the bacteria *Borrelia Burgdorferi*, a spirochete, that is passed through the saliva of an infected tick. There are several known ticks that are carriers of Lyme disease including the deer tick which is indigenous to Maryland. Due to the minute size of the deer tick, they are nearly impossible to detect on dogs or even ourselves. In humans, 85% of cases of Lyme disease were found in the Eastern states from Massachusetts to Virginia making our region a high endemic area. So what does this mean for our pets?

Most dogs go outside at some point in time and therefore are susceptible to Lyme disease. Some symptoms your pet may display if infected with Lyme disease include but are not limited to:

1. Fever (usually between 103 and 105 degrees)
2. Lameness
3. Swelling of the joints
4. Swollen lymph nodes
5. Lethargy
6. Loss of appetite

However, the goal is to catch Lyme disease before the dog is showing symptoms. We do this by testing each dog every year. We already recommend testing for heartworm disease yearly but as an added bonus, we will also be able to test for Lyme disease. The in-house tests that we use to test for heartworms also test for Lyme disease as well as Ehrlichia and Anaplasmosis, two other tick borne diseases.

There are several good ways to help prevent Lyme disease although nothing is 100% effective. We recommend a yearly vaccine as well as monthly topical preventatives such as Frontline Plus. Unfortunately, even with all of the precautions available, Lyme disease is still a very genuine threat to humans and dogs alike.

If you suspect your dog has been infected with Lyme disease please call for an appointment as soon as possible. The sooner treatment is started the better the outcome will be for your best friend. It is imperative that all dogs be tested and vaccinated against this debilitating disease. We will be more than happy to review your pets' records with you and get them protected now.



## Employee Spotlight –

Joshua Gourley is our newest and first male employee in many years. Josh comes to us after working at Kingsbrook Animal Hospital as a technician for 5 ½ years and more recently hiking the Appalachian Trail for 5 ½ months. Born in Hagerstown along with his 2 younger sisters, Josh graduated from South High before joining the Army and served for 8 years spending part of his time in Korea. After being discharged, he attended Hood College majoring in law and society and philosophy.

Although Josh enjoys working with cats and dogs he has a special affinity for reptiles. He has spent many hours educating the public about the importance of reptiles to our eco-system, the truth behind reptiles (snakes aren't slimy), and ways to protect them against extinction. He also takes part in community outreach whenever possible. He will participate in a fundraiser bicycle ride for San Mar Children's Home this month.

When not working for the greater good he appreciates anything outdoors; bike riding, hiking, and Jujitsu. Josh is a welcome addition to our all female staff and we look forward to continuing to work with him..

## Mudd Volleyball –

Our staff, also known as "The Funkstown Hellcats" are counting down the days until Mudd Volleyball, the one time during the year when we can get down and dirty! Sponsored by Citi and benefiting the Washington County Community Free Clinic, this yearly fund raiser draws in hundreds of players all willing to get covered in mud to help the uninsured, working citizens of Washington County.

This year's tournament will again be held at Citi on Saturday July 17th beginning at 9:00 a.m. Coach Erin, who is also on the committee for the event, will have us whipped into shape and ready to compete. This will be our 8th year playing for this worthy cause. Because the community free clinic is not a government funded program they rely heavily on their numerous fundraisers throughout the year and we are ecstatic to be able to help.



We are gladly accepting donations and we always love to have a cheering section the day of the tournament so throw on some old clothes, grab a canned good to pay for your parking and come on down. We will be the ones covered in mud!

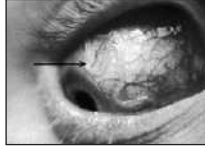
CRITTER'S CHRONICLE



*“...we need to know what types of parasites can cause us problems.”*

## Zoonosis –

It may seem like a silly or trivial request but when we request a sample of your pet’s stool it is for a multitude of legitimate reasons.



Not only do we want to make sure your pet is parasite free but we have your 2 legged family’s health in mind also. Many of the common intestinal parasites carried by our pets are also zoonotic or extremely contagious to humans. Before we can protect ourselves from parasites, we need to know what types of parasites can cause us problems.

• **Roundworms** – Along with being very common among the pet population, roundworms are also a human health concern. Some signs of infestation in our pets may include diarrhea, vomiting, stunted growth, rough coat and bloated belly; however some pets may be asymptomatic and show no signs of infestation. Roundworms are often seen in kittens and puppies having contracted them from their mothers.

• **Tapeworms** – Tapeworms are a fairly common parasite in our pet population. Tapeworm infestations usually occur when a pet eats fleas, mice, or rats that carry tapeworm larvae. Tapeworms resemble grains of rice and may be found in areas where your pet lays, on the pet’s rectum, or on the stool. However, just because you are not seeing them, doesn’t mean they aren’t there.

• **Hookworms** – This parasite is a tiny, thread-like bloodsucking parasite with razor-sharp mouth parts that pierce your pet’s small intestine resulting in tissue damage, blood loss, anemia, and diarrhea. Hookworm eggs are passed through the stool of infected animals and can be ingested by your pet or develop into larvae which can penetrate through your pet’s feet. This is also true for humans; we can be infected if we walk through a contaminated area, such as a garden or sandbox, in bare feet. The larvae will burrow through the bottoms of our feet causing severe infection.

• **Whipworms** – This infestation occurs when your pet ingests whipworm eggs found in contaminated soil. Whipworms cause bloody diarrhea, anemia, dehydration, and loss of appetite. A female whipworm can produce 2,000 eggs daily. Eggs are passed in feces, and can survive for years in the soil. Whipworms are very difficult to eradicate.

• **Giardia** – Is a protozoa, a microscopic single-celled organism that resides in the small intestine. Both humans and animals can be infected by drinking contaminated water from ponds and streams. Just one lap of water or grooming after being in a contaminated area can be enough to cause an infection. Signs of a giardia infection can range from intestinal pain to explosive diarrhea.

The problems for humans caused by these infections can range from intestinal upset to death. It is estimated that 10,000 children in the United States are infected annually with roundworms and approximately 750 will suffer permanent visual impairment or even blindness, when roundworm larvae migrate to the eyes. Children and adults can be infected by working or playing in contaminated soil such as gardens or sand boxes and then accidentally putting dirty hands in their mouths. Approximately 15% of all potting soil is contaminated with roundworms. Sometimes fruits and vegetables growing close to the ground, such as strawberries and carrots, are contaminated. If not properly washed, they can also be a source of human infection.

Our doctors and staff are in compliance with the recommendations of The Centers for Disease Control which state that pets should have a stool sample checked bi-yearly (every 6 months). This will screen not only for the more common parasites but for giardia as well.

As with anything, prevention is always a safer and more cost effective option than treatment. We recommend monthly prevention against the most common parasites: roundworms, hookworms, and whipworms. This comes in the form of a flavor tablet called Interceptor. Interceptor has long been used for, and continues to be used for, heartworm prevention. However, as an added bonus Interceptor will protect your pet against other internal parasites as well.

Although Interceptor does not protect against tapeworms, there are measures you can take to reduce your pet’s risk of contracting tapeworms. The most important thing you can do is keep your pet on a quality, monthly flea prevention such as Frontline Plus. A large flea infestation is not necessary in order for your pet to contract tapeworms; one stray flea when your pet goes outside is enough to cause a problem.

As for parasites you cannot prevent against, a bi-yearly stool check will pick them up so your pet may be treated appropriately. If your pet’s stool has not been checked within the last year, we strongly recommend checking a sample as soon as possible. We also recommend getting your pet on monthly parasite prevention.

For further information on parasite prevalence and protection visit [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/ascaris/prevention.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/ascaris/prevention.htm).

## Senior Pet Month –

It’s that time of year again; the time when we celebrate our senior pets and all of the joy they have brought and continue to bring to our lives. Contrary to the typical stereotypes of being a senior, our goal is to keep our patients healthy and vibrant well into their “Golden Years.” In order to accomplish this goal, we need help from you, the pet parent. The first thing for us to do is to define



*“We celebrate our senior pets and all of the joy they bring to our lives.”*



what a senior pet is. A pet is considered senior once it reaches the age of 7 years (5 years for large and giant breeds). There are numerous age related diseases that, if caught early enough, can be well managed through diet, medications, and follow-ups.

Let's explore the ABC's of seniors:

**Arthritis** – 1 in 5 dogs has arthritis and 90% of cats over the age of 12 have arthritis. Many pets experience arthritis early in life but do not show symptoms until it has progressed to a point that they can no longer handle the pain. As the disease process progresses, the pet may need occasional or more routine pain medication to stay comfortable. DO NOT under any circumstances give your arthritic pet human aspirin, Tylenol, ibuprofen, Aleve, or any other medication for pain. These drugs have serious adverse affects on internal organs and can be fatal.

**Brain degeneration** – Also known as senility, this can happen to older pets. Some signs of senility include: forgetting bathroom habits, no longer greeting family members, getting “lost” in the house, getting “stuck” in corners, or losing interest in toys, walks, etc.

**Cancer** – As with humans, cancer comes in many different forms. Some cancers can be treated just by removing the affected area while others require radiation therapy. Some forms are more aggressive and the sooner treatment is begun the better the outcome for the pet.

**Dental** – Pets as young as 1 year old can have dental disease, however as pets age, dental disease becomes a more serious health concern. This is due in large part to the fact that infection in the mouth can further damage the liver, kidneys, and heart. If a senior pet already has the beginnings of a disease process, dental disease can further exacerbate the problem.

**Diabetes Mellitus** – Diabetes, if caught early enough, can sometimes be controlled through diet alone but some pets will need insulin injections to regulate their blood sugar. Frequent follow-ups either by phone or appointment are essential to maintaining the health of diabetic animals. If left untreated, diabetes can cause blindness and kidney failure.

**Glaucoma** – As with humans, pets can experience increases in eye pressure causing pain and often blindness. Regular screening of the pet's intraocular pressure (IOP) can catch glaucoma before severe damage is done.

**Heart Disease** – Also known as cardiac disease can be diagnosed through physical exam, EKG, blood pressure monitoring or chest X-rays. Symptoms of heart disease include: lethargy, coughing, passing out, and difficulty breathing.

**Joint problems** – To prevent and/or delay the development of joint problems, we recommend putting pets on a joint supplement specifically for animals. This can be

started at a younger age and should not wait until the pet is already having problems as damage to the joints cannot be reversed. There are also prescription diets available that are specifically for joint health.

**Kidney Disease** – Also known as renal disease can be detected both through blood work and urinalysis. There are diets available to aid in the treatment of kidney disease as well as medications. In extreme or advanced cases a fluid regimen may be required.

**Liver disease** – Also known as hepatic disease causes yellowing of the skin, gums, and eye lids. Symptoms of liver disease do not typically appear until 75% of liver function is gone. Regular blood work will indicate changes in liver values hopefully before the liver is damaged beyond repair.

**Ocular problems** – Along with glaucoma, cataracts and dry eye are two other problems sometimes associated with senior pets. If a pet is diagnosed with cataracts, they are referred to a veterinary ophthalmologist for consultation and possible removal.

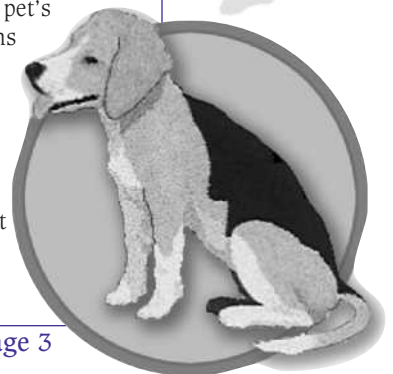
**Pancreatitis** – Animals of all ages can be affected by pancreatitis however it is much more serious in senior pets due the increased chance of dehydration and malnutrition. Sticking with your pet's normal diet and cutting out all people food are two important steps in preventing pancreatitis.

**Thyroid disease** – Cats, in general, suffer from hyperthyroidism meaning an increase in thyroid function which causes increased hunger with weight loss, whereas dogs experience hypothyroidism, a decrease in thyroid function causing extreme weight gain without a change in diet or exercise. In both instances, the thyroid can be corrected through medication and regular monitoring.

**Urinary Incontinence** – Happens when the pet's muscle tone decreases; it is not something intentional. There are medications available to improve and sometimes eliminate urinary incontinence. Often a urinary tract infection is screened for to rule that out as a cause for incontinence.

Old age is not a disease, it's simply a fact of life. However, with some special attention our pets can live longer and more productive lives than ever before. We recommend twice yearly examinations for all of our senior pets starting at the age of 7. Our doctors will make personal recommendations for your pet based on your pet's medical history, age, and any specific concerns you might have.

You as the pet parent are our first line of defense. You are with your pet every day and will be the first one to notice a change in routine, eating habits, or overall attitude. No question or concern is too trivial; the smallest thing can turn out to be a big concern and the sooner it is dealt with the better for your pet.



## Calendar of Events –

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### July-

Wednesday July 7th – Staff Meeting  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m. - Office Closed

Wednesday July 14th – Staff Meeting  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m. – Office Closed

Saturday July 17th – MUDD VOLLEYBALL!

Wednesday July 21st – Staff Meeting  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m. – Office Closed

Wednesday July 28th – Staff Meeting  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m. – Office Closed

### August –

Wednesday August 4th – Staff Meeting  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m. – Office Closed

Wednesday August 11th – Staff Meeting  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m. – Office Closed

Wednesday August 18th – Staff Meeting  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m. – Office Closed

Wednesday August 25th – Staff Meeting  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m. – Office Closed

### September –

Wednesday September 1st – Staff Meeting  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m. – Office Closed

Monday September 6th – Labor Day – Office Closed

Wednesday September 8th – Staff Meeting  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m. – Office Closed

Wednesday September 15th – Staff Meeting  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m. – Office Closed

Wednesday September 22nd – Staff Meeting  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m. – Office Closed

Wednesday September 29th – Staff Meeting  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m. – Office Closed

## Just for Fun –

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### Why dogs are better than women...

Dogs are accepting of all your friends, no matter how smelly or rude.  
Dogs don't care if you shower.

Dogs are happy with any attention you can spare.

Dogs don't lecture when you turn sports on.

Dogs don't need a fancy meal to feel loved.

Dogs don't need expensive gifts.

Dogs will scratch right along with you.

Dogs don't talk back.

### Why cats are better than men...

A cat always hits the litter box.

A cat knows you are the key to his happiness; a man thinks he is.

You never have to spend time with your cat's mother.

It's ok if your cat rubs against your best friend.

You can declaw a cat; try trimming your husband's toenails.

Cats are cheaper to feed.

Cats don't fuss when you turn on a LIFETIME movie.

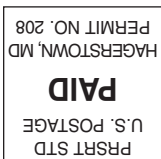
Cats get the attention they desire then walk away.

## Facebook –

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Animal Health Clinic of Funkstown is now on Facebook! Check out our Facebook page for interesting discussions, updates on the latest pet news, pictures from past events, and information on upcoming events

www.funkstownvet.com



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