



The Animal Hospital of Lynnfield

AnimalHospital.com

781-334-4161



Winter 2010 Newsletter



Topics Covered

- New Pet Portal Service: ePetRecords
- Future Focus Client Group
- What's New?...Thyroid Awareness and Dental Care
- New Puppy Workshop
- New Pet Counseling
- Halloween Costume Contest Update
- Senior Wellness at The Animal Hospital of Lynnfield
- Seasonal Health Hazards
- Stem Cell Therapy Can Do Wonders for Chronic Pain

New Pet Web Portal

Beginning January 1st all current clients at the Animal Hospital of Lynnfield will be able to utilize our new Pet Portal Service ePetRecords. The link will be operational on our website AnimalHospital.com and available to all current clients.

Future Focus Group

A special "thank you" to those many clients who participated in our Future Focus Group meetings held recently at the Animal Hospital of Lynnfield. We adapt and change to best suit the needs of our clients. Our focus will always be on serving you and listening to the priorities that are of most interest to you. We look forward to continuing these meetings. Invitations are sent to all clients with whom we have an active e-mail in our files.

What's New?...

January is Thyroid Awareness Month and February is Pet Dental Care Month!

Thyroid disease:

1) Hypothyroidism:

What is the thyroid gland and what does it do?

The thyroid gland is one of the most important glands in the body. It is located in the neck near the trachea or "windpipe" and has two lobes, one on each side of the trachea. This gland is controlled by the pituitary gland, which is located at the base of the brain. The thyroid gland regulates the body's metabolic rate. If it is underactive (*hypothyroidism*), the metabolism slows down.

What are the clinical signs?

When the metabolic rate slows down, virtually every organ in the body is affected. Most dogs with hypothyroidism have one or more of the following symptoms:

- Weight gain without an increase in appetite
- Lethargy and lack of desire to exercise
- Cold intolerance (gets cold easily)
- Dry, dull hair with excessive shedding and flaking
- Very thin to nearly bald hair
- Increased dark pigmentation in the skin
- Increased susceptibility and occurrence of skin and ear infections
- Failure to re-grow hair after clipping or shaving

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- High blood cholesterol

How is it diagnosed?

The most common screening test is a Total Thyroxin (TT₄) level. This is a measurement of the main thyroid hormone in a blood sample. If it is low to below normal and clinical signs are present, this is suggestive of hypothyroidism. Definitive diagnosis is then made by performing a Free T₄ by Equilibrium Dialysis (fT₄ by ED). If this test is low, then your dog has hypothyroidism. Some pets will have a low TT₄ and normal fT₄ by ED. These dogs do not have hypothyroidism. Additional tests may be necessary based on your pet's condition.

Can it be treated?

Hypothyroidism is treatable but not curable. It is treated with oral administration of thyroid replacement hormone. This drug must be given for the rest of the dog's life.

2) Hyperthyroidism:

Hyperthyroidism is a disorder characterized by the overproduction of thyroid hormone and a subsequent increase in the metabolic rate. This is a fairly common disease of older cats. Many organs are affected by hyperthyroidism, including the heart.

What are the clinical signs of hyperthyroidism?

The typical cat with hyperthyroidism is middle aged or older.

- Weight loss
- Increased appetite
- Increased thirst and urination
- Vomiting and diarrhea
- Increased blood pressure and heart disease



How is hyperthyroidism treated?

Because less than 2% of cats with hyperthyroidism have cancerous growths of the thyroid gland, treatment is usually very successful. Several tests are performed before choosing any form of treatment. These tests are needed to evaluate the overall health of the cat and predict the chances for treatment complications; such tests include blood tests, urinalysis, x-rays, EKG, blood pressure determination. Cardiac ultrasound or echocardiography may be recommended based on your cat's condition.

Dental – Pets Have Teeth Too!

How often do you brush your pet's teeth? The majority of pet owners would respond that their pets do not get any oral care at home. This can lead to complications such as tartar buildup, bad breath, bacterial overgrowth in the mouth, tooth root abscesses, and bacterial spread through the body to kidneys, heart and more. That's where we can help! We'd love to offer a solution to make your pet's teeth nice and white and their breath fresher. We can offer suggestions for oral care you can provide your pet at home and discuss dental cleanings here at our office. Through the month of January and February we are offering a special discount on dental cleanings. Schedule a dental cleaning and receive \$50 off and be entered in a raffle to win some amazing prizes! We also offer dental work on rabbits, guinea pigs, and other pocket pets as well as beak trims for birds. Call us today to talk with our team about making your pets teeth healthy and clean!

The New Puppy Workshop

Bringing home a new puppy can be both exciting and just a little bit scary. You will likely have questions or concerns and we're here to help. While there are many topics that can be addressed at your puppy's well visits, sometimes that might not be enough for new or unsure owners. The Workshop for New Puppies has been designed to help you and your family adjust to life with a new puppy. Covering a broad range of topics, it has been tailored with your questions in mind. Topics include: Setting boundaries; crate training; feeding; socialization; puppy kindergarten;

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internal and external parasites; what to expect at the vet's during your new puppy's first year and pet health insurance.

Whether you're a first-time owner or a life-long dog lover, the New Puppy Workshop will have something to meet your needs and answer your questions.

New Pet Counseling

Let the animal hospital staff help you pick the perfect pet and prepare for your new family member. We can discuss with you the size, breed, personality and gender that may fit your family's lifestyle best. This appointment will include puppy proofing your home, basic training and supplies you will need.

Halloween Contest Update

Congratulations to our winners!



...and Paula Carpinto, who won our raffle!



Randy Benedetto:
Scariest



Elijah Castonova:
Funniest



Cupcake Cascetta:
Cutest

All winners were sent home with a special gift bag stuffed full of prizes. Be sure to prepare for next year's contest.

Senior Wellness Program Update

Did you know that dogs and cats experience hypertension, or high blood pressure, just like humans? High blood pressure can easily go unnoticed in our pets until it's too late. High blood pressure can lead to sudden blindness and kidney problems. Heart disease and certain metabolic conditions such as kidney failure, hyperthyroidism and diabetes are some common causes of high blood pressure. We are trying to make our clients more aware of the importance of blood pressure testing and therefore are offering it as one of our discounted lab services available with our senior wellness program.

A number of clients have enrolled their cats and dogs in our senior wellness program. Bi-annual exams and routine screenings are a great way to help provide the best preventative medicine for your pet and detect disease early on. To help reward you for your great efforts, we are offering discounted exams and specific discounts on lab work.

Don't forget that our other pets, such as rabbits, ferrets and birds also have age-related changes and they can also join our Senior Wellness Program. Please don't hesitate to talk with our staff regarding this exciting new program.

Winter Health Hazards

Jack Frost is on his way and there are lots of dangers that he brings along with him including:

Holiday Decorations- Decking the halls is festive and fun but can also be fatal. Tinsel ingestion is a one-way ticket to a surgical emergency. Please do not let your pets eat it. Strings of lights may be pretty- pets may think so too. Some pets want to play with them and can get tangled (which may strangle them) or will chew on them (which can lead to electrocution or simple cuts). Poinsettias and Mistletoe are toxic please check our website for other toxic plants.

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Ice- As we all know ice is slippery and pets can fall and hurt themselves just like we can. They can also pull us and cause human injury. Ice can also be sharp and cut our pets' footpads. Some pets can be trained to wear protective booties and we'd be happy to help show you how.

Antifreeze- When temperatures drop we want to make sure our cars run smoothly. Antifreeze (ethylene glycol) is poisonous to dogs and cats. Many pets find the taste sweet and love to lap it off of the garage floor. Even a small amount will cause the kidneys to stop working. Please prevent your pets from ingesting it.

Salt- Avoiding slippery surfaces is easier with salt and other ice-melt products. Not only are these irritating to skin but can also cause digestive upset when swallowed. Please choose pet friendly products.

Rat Poison- It's getting colder outside and that means some of the outdoor furry creatures want to warm up inside. Many people have been putting down rat poison to help prevent mice and rats from living indoors. Our pets love the taste of these blocks and we have seen numerous dogs and other pets eat this poison. We do NOT recommend rat poison since we have seen too many pets accidentally poisoned. Please call if you *ever* suspect your pet has gotten into rat poison.

Candy/chocolate- Valentine's Day can mean sweet treats to share and lots of chocolate and candy around the house. We all know how our pets enjoy chocolate just as much as we do. Unfortunately dogs and cats cannot metabolize chocolate the way that we can and therefore can develop liver damage and other medical problems if they eat too much. Please call if your dog or cat eats something they shouldn't.

Stem Cell Therapy

Several of our doctors have recently been trained and certified in stem cell therapy. This is a process of obtaining your own pet's healing cells that can be placed in other areas of the body that are unhealthy. Current uses focus on treatment for chronic arthritis. This is a new and exciting form of treatment that very few veterinarians in the area are trained in. Please ask us for more information or visit the official website at www.vet-stem.com.

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