

THE SOUTHTOWNS JOURNAL

A Quarterly Newsletter

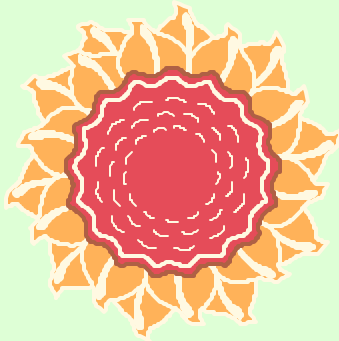
Prepared by the staff of the Southtowns Animal Hospital

Newman, Editor-in-Chief



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SPRING, 2002



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Spring has sprung!

It is time to think about
a "spring cleaning" for your pet!

For many pet owners, spring time means shedding! Frequent brushing of our furry companions has benefits for both the animals and their owners.

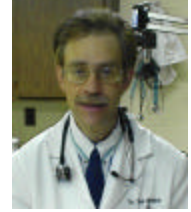
Cats, especially long-haired breeds, should be brushed regularly all year, and daily in spring. Eliminating all that loose hair makes a cat feel good and reduces the risk of hairballs.

Dogs with double coats, such as huskies, will lose large clumps of hair in the spring, and their dense coats are so thick an ordinary brush won't do the job. Owners of heavy shedders should invest in a long-toothed metal rake comb and a shedding blade. If the hair is off the dog, there will be less on your furniture.

Some breeds of dogs, such as Yorkies and Shih Tzus should go to the groomer for their spring haircuts. These types of dogs have hair that grows very long, and it can become matted quickly.

Rabbits also have a shedding season in the spring. A shedding rabbit is said to be "blowing coat" and can look bedraggled without regular brushing. Bunnies are also prone to hairballs, but unlike cats, can only pass them rectally. Make sure your bunny has lots of timothy hay for roughage to help prevent intestinal problems.

SPRING GREETINGS FROM DOCTOR WINKLE



I hope everyone came through the winter relatively unscathed, with the blizzard and then the ice storm. I apologize for the condition of our landscaping here at the clinic, but the bushes took a heck of a beating from all the snow.

In this issue is the final part of our "handbook" on dog behavior. Given the fact that behavior problems are the #1 reason dogs are surrendered to the SPCA, it is not surprising that behavioral medicine is becoming a larger aspect of our practice here at Southtowns Animal Hospital.

Please ask about any problems you may be having at your next appointment, so we can help. You may need to set up a second, longer appointment to go over the treatment aspects of some of the more difficult situations.



Kudos to you, Dr. Winkle, for being elected Treasurer of our local West Seneca Kiwanis Club! We know you'll do a great job!



CANINE KIDNEY FAILURE MAY BE LINKED TO RAISINS AND GRAPES



The ASPCA Animal Poison Centers looking into a possible connection between kidney failure in canines and the digestion of raisins or grapes.

A recent review of the center's database showed 10 dogs with evidence of developing kidney dysfunction after eating large amounts of raisins or grapes.

The estimated amount of raisins or grapes eaten by the dogs ranged between 9 ounces and 2 pounds.

Vomiting within a few hours of ingestion was reported in all dogs, and some

also experienced anorexia, diarrhea, lethargy or signs of abdominal pain.

All the dogs received aggressive treatment, but half died. The reasons that the fruit caused these is unclear, and studies are underway.

When asked if any amount of grapes or raisins would be safe for dogs to eat, Jill Richardson of the Poison control center said:

"I don't know if there is a safe amount, but until we can find out, I wouldn't recommend giving dogs any raisins or grapes."

ASK NEWMAN



Dear Newman,
HELP! I was taking a nap in a sunbeam and I heard my people say they are getting a kitten! What about me? Will they still love me? What should I do?
--Only Kitty In Hamburg.

Dear Only,
Do not fret! Most new felines added to a single cat household become lifelong friends in a few days and provide hours of fun and excitement for you and your owners.

There are a few things we need to check before we add to your family. Any new kitty should be checked for internal and external parasites. Testing for both feline leukemia and feline immunodeficiency virus is a must for a new addition.

So, don't pack your bags and go looking for open doors. Your trepidation will soon be overcome by the companionship of a new friend!

--Newman

Dear Newman,
Since you are a cat and I am a beagle, I don't expect you to be able to help me. This is very embarrassing, but there seems to be something wrong with my bottom. I itch, and my people scold me when I rub my bottom on the rug.

--Anxious in Orchard Park

Dear Anxious,

From my vantage point in Fort Newman, high atop the Intensive Care cages in the Treatment Room, I see many itchy bottoms.

The vast majority are caused by distended anal glands, which are located at 4 and 8 o'clock relative to the anus. Usually they are easily emptied by people who know how, and our technicians would be happy to apply the technique, if this is the cause of your uncomfortable bottom.

Other causes include: skin infections, especially in chubby female dogs and a tapeworm infestation.

An exam at the hospital can help keep all of our bottoms up!

--Newman

Write to: asknewman@aol.com

The Truth About Easter Bunnies

Easter is another of those holidays when a cuddly warm new pet seems like a good idea. Rabbits do make good pets, but they require some specialized care, so think carefully before having a permanent Peter Cottontail in your house.

Many people have the mistaken notion that rabbits are easy to care for.

It is true that a rabbit won't ask to go for a walk at three o'clock in the morning during a December blizzard, but Mr. Bun needs his cage cleaned daily, and that is a chore that can soon lose its charm.

Bunnies also have specialized dietary needs. Pellets and carrots are not all that is needed to keep them healthy. Large amounts of fiber is necessary for them to have a healthy intestinal tract, so they require lots of fresh dry timothy hay every day. Vegetables and lettuce are not good dietary choices for rabbits, contrary to what people believe. Lettuce has a very high water content, and

very little fiber, and can contribute to diarrhea.

Rabbits can be litter-box trained, but they do not take to it like a cat will. It is the owner's job to teach the rabbit where it is allowed to go, almost like a puppy. Even if you litter-train your pet bunny, you still cannot allow him to roam the house.

Rabbits like to chew, and many things in a house are dangerous to him. Wires look like roots or grasses to a rabbit, and the danger of electrocution is very real. A rabbit's teeth grow throughout its entire life; they chew to keep them in good condition. To a rabbit the leg of your antique dining room table looks just like a tree.

Most bunnies require regular brushing, and some breeds, such as the Angora, need to be groomed daily.

Our hospital regularly sees pet rabbits, so if you think a bunny is for you, give us a call at 824-4108 and we can help you make an informed decision.

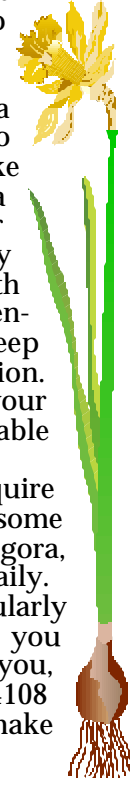
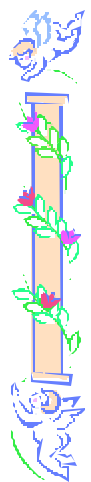


We send our thanks to everyone who remembered us at the festive holiday season! Your cards and treats were so nice & thoughtful!

CONGRATULATIONS!



To our Lead Technician & Mom-to-Be,
Darlene Sciandra!
She and her husband Jim are expecting their first baby!
The stork is due in May!



THE WELL-HEELED DOG

or, A Beginner's Guide to A Properly Socialized Pet Canine, PART THREE

This is the last in our series of articles on training pet dogs. In this article we will be discussing some of the more difficult behavior problems to treat. Many of these have psychological involvement

SEPARATION ANXIETY

This is one of the most difficult behavior problems to diagnose properly. Generally, a lengthy consultation is required, and the doctor will probably have you videotape your dog while you are away. Some of the symptoms of separation anxiety are destructiveness, inappropriate elimination, vomiting, and excessive salivation.

The treatment for separation anxiety requires much effort on the part of the owner, and all members of the household. The dog must be taught to accept anxiety-provoking actions such as picking up keys, wearing coats, carrying purses or briefcases as non-threatening actions. Dogs associate these actions with being left alone. Handling keys without leaving, and rewarding the pet for remaining calm while doing so is a major behavior modification, and it will take time.

Step two involves crating the dog while the dog is alone. If the dog is large and cannot handle being left in a crate, the dog may be confined to a small room, such as a bathroom. Small and medium sized dogs should not be left alone in a bathroom due to the risk of drowning. The crate or room should be brightly lit--not the garage or basement! The dog's area should never be associated with punishment, and many people and dogs find that leaving a radio or television playing is helpful.

Punishment for the symptoms of separation anxiety is often counterproductive, since the correction serves to make the dog more anxious.

Many of these dogs require some form of medication, but drugs are not a cure. They only serve to help make the dog a little less stressed while behavior modification takes place.

SUBMISSIVE URINATION

This problem usually first presents itself when the dog is a puppy, and can persist into adulthood if the behavior is not changed. Dogs who have this problem usually urinate when they are approached, and they usually urinate while on their back or from a low crouch. Punishment can make the problem more severe. This form of urination shows submission to a more dominant member of the pack. Punishing the dog for urinating is a dominant action and the dog will respond by urinating, which results in more punishment and a vicious cycle develops.

Dogs which exhibit submissive urination should not be punished when it urinates in the house, and it should be praised when it goes outside. Praise should not be overly enthusiastic. Actions that the dog will perceive as

aggressive such as hitting, yelling, and bending over the dog are best to be avoided.

DOMINANT AGGRESSION

This behavior problem requires time to correct, and we can only cover the bare minimum here. It is far easier to nip dominance in the bud than try to change the behavior pattern afterward.

Domestic dogs are descended from a wolf-like ancestor. A hierarchy of individuals is formed as pack members challenge each other for relative authority. This social order is determined by each individual's motivation to assert itself. Pack members test each other beginning with play between littermates.

Dogs perceive human families as their pack. Problems arise when a dog assumes an inappropriate position of leadership within a human family. A dominant dog can become aggressive toward family members that, intentionally or not, challenge its position. This type of dog may perceive prolonged eye contact as a direct threat. Dominant dogs resent being petted or brushed, especially on the top of their head, neck and back. We must remember that they are dogs, not humans. Dog owners should be aware of how to interact with their dog.

One of the ways that a dog asserts its dominance is to assume a physically superior position over a subordinate. Mounting does not always have a sexual connotation, and some owners find it humorous. Unless the animal being mounted is a female dog in heat, mounting is probably a display of dominance. By tolerating this behavior, they encourage it. The dog then views this as confirmation of its dominant status.

By the time they are adopted by human families, puppies have already practiced the skills needed to manipulate the beings around them. Other behaviors can indicate dominance. One subtle way dogs display dominance is by reluctance to assume physical positions of submission. This is seen as hesitation to obey the sit command, and is most obvious with the down command. A dog may pull at its leash with its mouth to challenge your dominance.

Games that encourage uncontrolled behavior, like chasing, wrestling and tug of war lead can increase the chances of an aggressive outburst. Alternative activities should include applications of obedience skills. From an early age, dogs should be taught to assume submissive positions in the presence of humans.

Use your dog's desire for acceptance to your advantage. Make your dog earn your attention by



CONGRATULATIONS!
To our receptionist Shannon, who
was recently married!
Join us in wishing her all the best!

CONGRATULATIONS!
To Marsha, our receptionist. She is
a Grandma! Her daughter, (a twin)
has just had twins!



**SOUTHTOWNS ANIMAL
HOSPITAL**
154 Orchard Park Road

THE SOUTHTOWNS JOURNAL



Easter Bunnies--The Untold Story



***Happy News About Some of Your Favorite
Staff Members!***



More of Newman's Helpful Advice



We love to treat your pets!