



THE SOUTHTOWNS JOURNAL

A Quarterly Newsletter

Prepared by the staff of the Southtowns Animal Hospital

Newman, Editor-in-Chief

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SEASONS GREETINGS FROM DOCTOR WINKLE

Happy Holidays to all our patients and the people who care for them! Southtowns Animal Hospital is soaring into cyberspace with our brand new website:

SouthtownsAnimalHospital.com.

Check in often for all kinds of animal care information, and please, keep us informed by contacting us via e-mail. We will be adding new features to the site as time goes on, so let us know what you would like to see. Your questions and suggestions are important.

HE.....IS..... BAAAAAAAACK!!!!



YES! IT'S DENTAL DAVE! OFFICIAL SPOKESTOOTH FOR DENTAL HEALTH MONTH!

The doctors and staff at Southtowns Animal Hospital always want kisses from your pet to be the high point of your day. Sadly, many pets are not allowed to kiss their owners because of doggy breath or tuna breath, both of which can indicate a dental problem. Now that our pets are living longer than ever, it is important for them to have clean mouths. We recommend teaching your pets to have their teeth brushed once a day, and you should ask the doctors about professional cleanings to remove tartar and treat gingivitis before these conditions result in tooth loss or worse, before the bacteria that make up tartar can damage your pet's kidneys, heart, or liver.

For more information, visit Dental Dave on our website:

www.SouthtownsAnimalHospital.com

Call **824-4108** to set up a dental health check or a cleaning today. Your pet will kiss you for it.

BABY IT'S *COLD* OUTSIDE! Antifreeze is Dangerous!

Once the weather turns frosty, we all know it is important to check our cars and make sure they will run well in the cold. Some of us are even handy enough to do some maintenance at home. Unfortunately, car antifreeze is toxic to animals, and to them, it has an appealing smell and a sweet taste.

Ethylene glycol, the major ingredient in most antifreeze is one of the most common causes of poisoning in animals. A lethal dose is very small. Signs of antifreeze poisoning begin with the animal acting "drunk" and then being normal for a short time. Cardiac problems may occur, followed by kidney failure, vomiting, loss of appetite, low body temperature, coma and death.

Immediate treatment is needed for a pet to

survive. The longer treatment is delayed, the poorer the chances for survival.

Some antifreeze contains propylene glycol. The symptoms of propylene glycol are similar to those of ethylene glycol, but the treatment is different. It is important for the doctors to know what type of toxin they are treating.

If you suspect that your pet has consumed antifreeze, contact us immediately! Our number is 824-4108. Have a pen and paper ready in case you are given instructions. Should this happen after hours contact the Emergency Clinic right away.

If possible, have the container handy.

As always, prevention is best. Dispose of antifreeze properly, and be sure that your cars are well maintained to prevent leaks. Keep pets on a leash in case others in the area are not as careful.



ASK NEWMAN

Dear Newman,

We think the newsletter is great, and we think it is a thoughtful way of keeping our humans educated and informed. It is nice to read up on all the seasonal health tips to keep us from illness.

Our humans are wondering about pet insurance. What do you know about that?

--Nelly, Kaylee, & Onika

Dear Girls,

Thank you so much for your praise! I enjoy penning my column. It is rewarding to exercise my keen mind after a long day of keeping the laundry warm. I think many pets would benefit by launching a literary career as I have.

As for pet insurance, I know LOTS about it. I mentioned it in my last column, but I can go into more detail here.

Health insurance for pets has been around since the 1980's. The first pet insurance company was established by a veterinarian to reduce the number of companion animals put to sleep for only economic reasons. There have been great advances in animal medicine in recent years, and we animals are living longer, better lives.

Veterinary Medical Insurance can help your owners to help you in the event you are sick or injured. Pet insurance is similar to the policies your people have. They pay a certain amount each month for coverage. That amount can vary, depending on the kind of plan they want. Some humans only need help with large, unexpected bills. Some would like to have all of your care covered. Just like human insurance, your people will need to pay for a portion of your care, and this amount is called a deductible. Pet insurance is not like an HMO. Your humans pay for your care at the time you are in the hospital, and then the Insurance company reimburses them directly, minus the deductible. By handling things this way the insurance company can keep the yearly premiums reasonable.

I see medical miracles here all the time. Dr. Winkle and Dr. Edinger do complicated procedures such as bone surgery, which requires great strength and precision, and eye surgery where they repair tissues so delicate they are only made from one layer of cells!

Many injuries and illnesses are most treatable in their early stages, and while they are relatively expensive to treat, neglect complicates the case, and raises the cost of treatment.

Now, that's not to say that any of the owners of all you pets out there would ever intentionally neglect you. But, let's face it, none of us want to come in to the hospital, and think if we wait for a while the problem might go away by itself. No one wants to pay for a doctor bill that might not be needed. Tests and medicine do cost money, but if insurance can help defray the bill, then we can treat problems before they get worse.

Have your people call the office and the girls can give them even more particulars about pet insurance, and how to be prepared for an emergency.

--Newman



THE TECHNICAL VIEW

By
Debbie Pawalczek, LVT

THE ANATOMY OF A SPAY

Ovariohysterectomy is the proper name for the surgical procedure removing the uterus and ovaries. This surgery is commonly called a "spay", and is performed on female cats, dogs and rabbits. We like to spay pets at about 6 months of age, before the reproductive organs are fully developed.

First, pre-anesthetic bloodwork is performed to be sure the pet is in the best condition for surgery. Anesthesia is administered either by intravenous or intramuscular injection. A tube is then placed in the animal's trachea, (intubation) to deliver a gas anesthetic which keeps the animal asleep during the procedure. Oxygen levels and blood pressure are monitored electronically. The surgical site is shaved, and scrubbed with a special antiseptic solution to disinfect the skin.

After prep, the animal is transferred to the surgical suite where the doctor begins by covering the animal with a sterile drape, leaving only the incision site exposed. He then uses the same kinds of instruments a human doctor would use to make an incision in the abdomen. He uses his extensive knowledge of anatomy to locate the uterus and ovaries, then delicately sutures off the blood vessels and removes the organs. He then closes the inner incision of the abdomen with sutures that will be absorbed, and then the skin with sutures that we will remove in 2 weeks.

As you can see, even though only a small incision is visible, your pet has just had major surgery! Your pet will need time to recover and it is important to follow our aftercare instructions

Even though this is a common procedure, there are always risks associated with anesthesia and surgery. With the spay procedure, the benefits outweigh the risks. The most obvious is that no unwanted babies will be born. Did you know that some large breed dogs can have 13 or more puppies? Your pet will not have to go through heat cycles, and her risk for developing breast cancer is almost eliminated if she is spayed before her first heat. Spaying also eliminates the danger of an infected uterus, a life-threatening condition called a pyometra. The only treatment for a pyometra is to spay the pet and remove the infected uterus. The risks of spaying an older, sick animal are far greater than when she was only 6 months old. The cost is greater too.

Do your friend a favor and have her "spayed". She will thank you with a long and happy life, a life you can both share together.





HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

The New Year is a time for reflection and change. We often get into ruts and do things because they have always been done that way. Here are a few myths about pet care, and the facts to get you thinking

By Pam K, Office Manager

Myth: Pets that live indoors cannot get diseases

Fact: Animals can be exposed to organisms brought in on your shoes or carried in the air. Animals that go only in the yard can be exposed to diseases and worms from wild animals.

Myth: Cats who stay indoors don't need a rabies vaccine.

Fact: All warm-blooded animals can carry rabies. Bats, mice, skunks and raccoons can all enter your home and possibly expose your pet to rabies. Rabies is fatal. All dogs and cats in Erie County must be vaccinated.

Myth: Cats won't get hurt when they fall because they always land on their feet.

Fact: Cats will instinctively try to fall feet first, but don't always succeed. Even if they manage to land on their feet, they can still hurt themselves or break bones if they fall from a high place. Be sure to safeguard your cat from disastrous falls

Myth: Neutered or spayed pets will gain weight.

Fact: Animals, like people, gain weight from eating too much and not exercising enough. Help your pet stay fit by providing exercise and not overfeeding.

Myth: Cats should have milk.

Fact: Most cats enjoy milk, but lack the enzyme which allows them to digest the lactose in cow's milk. Water is best for kitties

Small Animal Presents

Or

So, Your Kid Wants A Rodent In His Sock

The kids are older now, and they love the dog. They even help clean up poop with out too much fuss. But now they want a pet of their own, a hamster, (they spelled it "hampster" on their list) guinea pig, or perhaps a bird. They have been begging for months, ever since Bobby down the street got a gerbil and brought it to school for the day, and you are weakening.

Pet stores abound with bright, colorful habitats, terrariums and bird cages with more bells and whistles than the Taj Mahal. Mindful that the animals themselves should wait until after the holidays, the equipment offers plenty of gift giving opportunities.

Small caged animals, reptiles and birds do make excellent pets, but they are often seen as easy to care for. Now, it can't be denied that a mouse does not need to be taken for a walk in the middle of a blizzard the way a dog does, but his cage needs to be cleaned every day, and that can become tiresome, especially for a child.

Each kind of pocket pet has its own unique requirements for care and housing, and an astute parent will begin at our office or at the library for information on housing and diet. Often, the most elaborate cages and habitats are not only expensive but difficult to clean.

There are very few complete boxed diets for birds and small animals, and while this is beginning to change, many pocket pets have dietary needs that place a lot of responsibility on the owner. Many need nutritious greens and vegetables, others require live insect supplements. The vast majority of illnesses we see in reptiles, for example, are due to improper diet.

Many small pet owners are unaware that we see the "little critters" here at Southtowns Animal Hospital. Health care for small animals is often neglected due to the cheap price of animal, but a pet rat is just as entitled to a check up and medicine when sick as a purebred cat.

If you are considering a pocket pet for your child, or for yourself for that matter, feel free to call us at 824-4108 and ask to speak to one of our nurses. They would be happy to help you choose the pocket pet which is right for you, and help you with selecting housing which will be best for the health of the pet of your choice.



All of the Doctors and Staff at Southtowns Animal Hospital would like to thank all of you who remembered us at Thanksgiving and brought us goodies and treats. Your kindness was appreciated!

Your pet is #1 with us, even when he goes #2 in our waiting room!

SOUTHTOWNS ANIMAL HOSPITAL

154 Orchard Park Road

West Seneca, NY 14224

Visit us on the web!
www.SouthtownsAnimalHospital.com

THE SOUTHTOWNS JOURNAL

- ❄ Antifreeze poisoning--what you need to know
- ❄ Pocket Pet Primer
- ❄ Everything you ever wanted to know about a spay but were afraid to ask.
- ❄ Valuable information about insurance for your pets.



**Happy Holidays to all
the pets we love,
and Seasons Greetings
to all the caring owners
who love them!**