

Village Veterinary Practice Newsletter

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Glaucoma: Seeing Human Diseases Affect Our Pets

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Hours

M—Th: 7:45am—5:30pm
Friday: 7:45am—5:00pm
Call for Saturdays
House Calls Available

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Glaucoma is a common disease that affects the eyes of generally older individuals. This is caused by a rise in the pressures from within the eye causing pain, visual deficits and damage.

Dr. Ralph Hamor, veterinary ophthalmologist at the University of Illinois Veterinary Teaching Hospital in Urbana, IL., reminds us that, "When a person is afflicted with this disease, he or she often visits the doctor's office with subtle eye deficits. By the time we notice it in our pets, the eye is usually fairly severely damaged."

Dogs are the most common animals afflicted with this disease. Although rare, cats and horses are also subject to glaucoma. Several dog breeds are predisposed to some of the problems associated with glaucoma. Cocker spaniels, terrier breeds, poodles, shar-peis, chow-chows and basset hounds are some of the breeds that are most prone, although glaucoma can affect any breed. Although it may affect pets at any age, it is usually diagnosed in middle-aged dogs, approximately four to six years old.

Dr. Hamor notes that, "The eye can only respond in a few ways to disease. It gets red, cloudy and painful." And this disease is no exception to that rule.

Intraocular pressures are the pressures that occur within the eye itself. This pressure is kept pretty constant as fluid is created and circulated into the eye. A drainage system drains equal amounts from the eye, leaving the organ at a steady pressure. If the fluid from within the eye can't escape, as is the case in primary glaucoma, pressures will rise and cause glaucoma.

The cause for primary glaucoma is that the drainage system is formed incorrectly or blocked for some reason. Secondary glaucoma occurs when an animal has a normal drainage system, but that drain is blocked. Secondary glaucoma can be due to a number of reasons, among which are chronic-inflammation of the eye, a tumor or a systemic disease such as a fungus.

Glaucoma: Seeing Human Diseases Affect Our Pets

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An important hallmark of glaucoma is that intraocular pressures will start to increase in the eye long before we notice any clinical signs. This is important because, if your pet is around five or six years old, it may be a good idea to have your pet's eye pressures checked during its yearly physical exam.

Treatments for this disease include a myriad of medical and surgical treatments. Secondary glaucoma is due to some other disease process which, when cleared up, may solve the glaucoma problem. For primary glaucoma, there are many anti-glaucoma drugs on the market. These drugs are generally good and will extend the vision of your pet. In fact, the medical drugs are the same as those used on humans. Unfortunately, this makes them very expensive and most pets end up requiring surgery anyway.

Dr. Hamor explains, "The objective of surgery is to find a way to turn off the faucet because the drain is simply not working." Trans-scleral lasers or internal lasers can be used to kill fluid-producing cells, which reduces the amount of fluid produced. There are also a number of shunting procedures which enable fluid to be diverted from the eye through a valve system to the sinuses or behind the eye.

"One eye will go first and, through no fault of the owner or veterinarian, that eye will most likely be in bad shape. The other eye is likely to follow, and if you want to extend the vision span for any real length of time, you will need surgery," says Dr. Hamor.

If your pet is blind as a result of glaucoma or any other eye disease, and it is still in pain from that disease, removal of the eye is a very humane and simple surgery to restore a pain free life to your pet.

Glaucoma is a relatively common disease for pets and humans alike. Fortunately, there are a number of treatments that can be considered for your pet.

For more information about glaucoma or treatment options for a pet suffering from this disease, consult your veterinarian.



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Prevent Your Pet from being Hit by a Car

With Spring and her warmer weather right around the corner, more and more people and their pets will be emerging from their winter cocoons to embrace the change of season. As we venture outdoors to enjoy the sunshine and play again, our pets will want to join in the fun. For many pet owners it will be tempting to let their furry friends off leash for a little extra freedom to run. Although there is good intention, it is during this time that accidents can frequently occur.

Each year, Village Veterinary Practice sees numerous patients that have been hit by a car. Some of these patients are lucky enough that their injuries are very minor and require little or no treatment. However, some of our patients are not so fortunate. More severe cases may require surgery to repair lacerations, fractured bones or damaged internal organs. In the worse case scenarios, injuries are so extensive that a humane euthanasia may be the only option or immediate fatality will be the result of impact.

Though accidents will always happen, there are some basic things you can do to help see that this tragedy does not happen to your family.

First, practice good training. Good training can help prevent pets from having that immediate desire to bolt as soon as the front door of your house opens. Likewise, if your pet does escape from the house, or gets loose while outside, good recall training will help when you need your pet to come back. VVP has a list of trainers that will be able to help you with your pet training needs, just ask us!

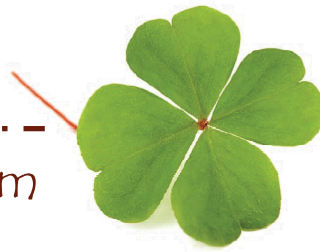
Second, regardless of how obedient your pet is, he or she is still an animal which means animal instinct can take over at any time. Please keep your pets on a leash at all times when outside of a fenced area, and yes, this means even in the front yard. Accidents can happen in your own driveway.

If your pet has been hit by a car, please call our closest office immediately regardless of what the injuries may appear to be. Pets that appear to be fine after being hit by a car may in fact have internal injuries that will progressively get worse if left untreated. For pets in more severe situations, a phone call (if possible) to the hospital will allow our staff to prepare for an incoming trauma.

Always use extreme caution when handling an animal that has sustained an injury from being hit by a car. Painful injuries may cause the pet to become defensive and bite the person trying to help, even if this person is their owner. If need be, a makeshift muzzle can be made using a leash or belt gently wrapped around the muzzle. Gently move the patient to a vehicle and get to us or the closest animal ER as soon as possible. When you get to the hospital, the staff will have the tools and technique to safely get your pet out of the car and to the treatment area when he or she can be assessed and treated.

Having a pet that has been hit by a car, or even hitting a pet with your own car can be a devastating experience. So please practice good training and make sure your pet is on the leash at all times to prevent this traumatic event from happening to you.



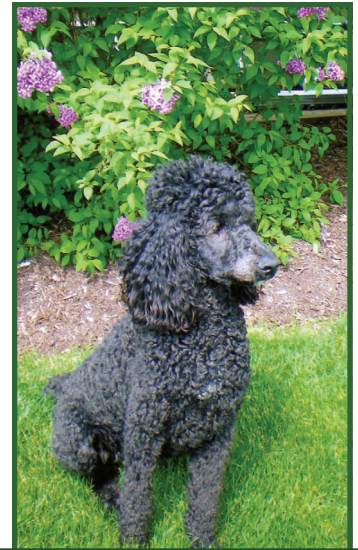


A Case of Hypothyroidism

Daphne came to our office because she was having multiple ongoing problems. Her history and exam revealed lethargy, poor skin and coat, and intestinal problems. Daphne had also become 25% overweight. Senior testing was performed and Daphne was diagnosed with low thyroid hormone levels.

Hypothyroidism is the most common hormonal disorder in dogs. Thyroid hormone helps to regulate metabolism and affects virtually every cell in the body. Levels usually decrease gradually over time but the impact is felt by multiple body systems. Symptoms of hypothyroidism develop slowly in most cases. Daphne was started on thyroid supplementation and her response was remarkable. She has lost 10 pounds, has normal intestinal function, is more energetic and has a beautiful coat!

Senior Screen visits include history, physical exam and laboratory testing (blood, urine and glaucoma testing). Many conditions, like Daphne's, will be silent in the early stages. These Senior visits help with early detection of problems and diseases that occur more frequently as our pets age. More treatments and therapy options are available early on with almost all senior conditions. As with human diseases, early detection gives our pets better and longer lives.



VVP Patient Buddy is patiently waiting for the Lilacs of Spring to arrive!



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The Village Veterinary Practice Vision

Village Veterinary Practice was founded with the belief that companion animals deserve the best quality of life possible. Our vision is inspired by our patients, the devotion of their human families and the commitment of our veterinarians. It is sustained by the contributions of our compassionate, knowledgeable and dedicated staff and built upon a strong tradition of providing unsurpassed veterinary care for companion animals.

The Village Veterinary Practice Mission

Village Veterinary Practice was established to care for your pet as a family member. By utilizing the latest medical advances, sound guidance and desire, we strive to make the family pet bond an enjoyable, healthy and life enriching experience.