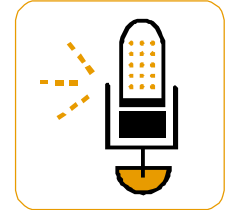


Avonlea Animal Hospital . Brittany Glen Veterinary Services

Special Interest Articles

Why do Dogs Bite?

Separation Anxiety



2004 in Review

It has been another fabulous year at Avonlea Animal Hospital and Brittany Glen Veterinary Services.

As some of you may already know, after three years with us at Avonlea, Marissa has embarked on a new adventure. She is enjoying her student life with all of its fun, deadlines and tests. We all wish Marissa success with school and we will sadly miss her smiling face.

Renata, a recent graduate of the Animal Care Program at Sheridan College has proven to be a wonderful addition to our hospital family. Renata has an excellent animal care background as well as a lot of veterinary practice knowledge. She looks forward to using this knowledge as she gets to know you and your pet(s).

Congrats to Michelle, who has successfully completed courses, with above 95%

average, in Small Animal Dentistry and Small Animal Medical Emergencies. Many of you will be seeing more of Michelle's smiling face as she helps the veterinarian with vaccinations, blood collection and other nursing duties. Additionally, we encourage you to ask Michelle any general health care, pet insurance, and dietary related questions that you may have regarding your pet.

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Healthy Weight Loss in Cats and Dogs

How many of you have been advised to start a diet for your pet? How many of you have been diligent with the recommendation only to find that your pet's weight has gone up or at best has not changed at all???

Fear not, we are here to change all your doubts about successful weight loss in pets! To start a weight loss program it is essential that we identify any health concerns that may impact our diet and exercise recommendations. A blood screen for liver, kidney and possibly thyroid function may be recommended

prior to starting a weight loss program. A specific diet and treats, including amount of food and frequency of feedings will be advised. An exercise program will be advised based on your pet's general physical examination and current activity level. Biweekly weights should be recorded on a chart. When we visualize change we can measure success and failure. Through this we can institute change that will ensure success as well as allow early detections of concerns such as excessive weight loss. In general, weight loss should be slow and stable. For large, dogs about 1 lb every 1-2

weeks to start is okay. For cats, about 1 lb a month is good. Your pet's ideal body weight and target time to reach this will be discussed with you. A slow transition to the new diet is a must. This will improve acceptance of the new diet and help prevent gastric upset with sudden diet changes. Canned food should be mixed with kibble to increase texture and smell acceptance for pets not accustomed to canned diets. Most cats will be advised to use primarily canned food with only minimal dry food. Dry cat food contains a

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"Our new website
 AvonleaAnimalHospital.ca
 is currently being
 developed."

...Healthy Weight Loss

higher portion of carbohydrate calories compared with canned cat food. Because cats are true carnivores, their body will preferentially convert protein into energy over carbohydrates. When the energy demand of the body is met, the excess supply of food energy, mostly carbohydrates, is converted into fat for later use. So why don't we just starve the cat and get him to convert that fat into energy? Because cats are unique in that they are susceptible to a potentially fatal condition called FATTY LIVER SYNDROME. Cats must eat protein every day to allow for fat to be

converted into energy. No food means no protein. Because the body demands energy it will continue to attempt to convert the fat into energy via the liver. This process continues until the liver is full of fat. When this occurs, the liver starts to fail and the cat feels sick which further decreases appetite causing the vicious cycle of fatty liver syndrome. To prevent fatty liver syndrome, it is essential that CATS EAT EVERY DAY. If your cat is finicky, you must slowly change over to the new diet. This may take weeks, but be patient it will happen. If your pet is more than 20%

above his/her ideal body weight, he/she needs a weight loss program. Improved energy, decreased joint strain, improved hind end cleanliness and diabetes prevention are but a few of the health benefits that your pet will realize when he/she maintains a healthy weight. We will help you every step of the way. You just need to take that first step!

...2004 in Review

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Entering her second year with Avonlea and Brittany Glen, Dr. Dana Dolinsek continues to enjoy helping all of you with your pet's health care. She has proven to be an invaluable addition to our team. Dr. Dolinsek has recently had the honor of having a medical article published in the Canadian Veterinary Journal. We are very proud of Dr. Dolinsek's diligence and hard work that went into writing the article titled "Canine calcium oxalate urolithiasis: surgical management and preventive strategies".

Dr. Sandi Rosely continues her ambition of providing

you all with the best veterinary care and customer service. To this end, she has successfully completed two specialized surgical courses, including Cranial Cruciate Ligament Repair and Perineal Urethrostomy surgery. Cruciate rupture is a common injury involving the knee ligaments of dogs that causes pain, arthritis and lameness. The urethrostomy surgery is a life saving technique performed on male cats that have repeated penile urinary tract blockage. The ability for Dr. Rosely to perform these procedures in the clinic will decrease the need for referral to a specialized veterinary hospital and therefore,

reduce waiting times prior to surgery.

Our new website AvonleaAnimalHospital.ca is currently being developed. Our plan is to change from paper mail to email correspondences, including examination, vaccine and heartworm reminders. Please give us a call so we can update your file with your e-mail address. All of us at Avonlea and Brittany Glen wish to thank you for trusting us with your special pet's health care and for your referrals to our hospitals.

Enjoy the snow and make the most of the New Year!

Digit's Humor Corner

How to Pill a Cat:

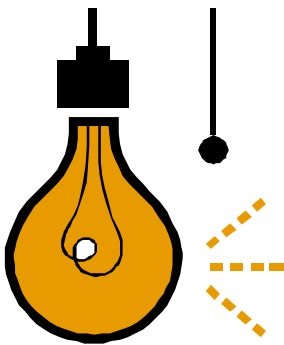
1. Pick cat up and cradle it in the crook of your left arm as if holding a baby. Position right forefinger and thumb on either side of cat's mouth and gently apply pressure to cheeks while holding pill in right hand. As cat opens mouth pop pill into mouth. Allow cat to close mouth and swallow.
2. Retrieve pill from floor and cat from behind sofa. Cradle cat in left arm and repeat process.
3. Retrieve cat from bedroom, and throw out soggy pill.
4. Take new pill from foil wrap, cradle cat in left arm holding rear paws tightly with left hand. Force jaws open and push pill to back of mouth with right forefinger. Hold mouth shut for a count of ten.
5. Retrieve cat from curtains. Throw away soggy pill. Call spouse.

6. Take new pill from foil wrap. Wrap cat in large towel and get spouse to lie on cat with head just visible from below armpit. Put pill in end of drinking straw, open mouth and blow down drinking straw.
7. Check label to make sure pill not harmful to humans and drink large glass of water to take taste away. Apply Band-Aid to spouse's forearm and remove blood from carpet with cold water and soap.
8. Retrieve cat from neighbors tree.
9. Take last pill from foil wrap.
10. Call vet to make a house call.

How to Pill a Dog:

1. Wrap it in bacon.

All kidding aside, if you are having difficulty or you anticipate that you will have difficulty "pilling" your cat or even your dog, please let us know. Suspensions, flavour tablets, suppositories and transdermal formats can be compounded for some medications. Medicating your pet should not create stress for you and your pet. Your loving bond is what is needed during times of illness. Be sure to let us know if you need a little extra help with your pet's home care.



Why do dogs bite?

"The dog is man's best friend". Most dog lovers agree whole-heartedly with this statement. However with the media reports of late some skepticism is surfacing in many of our minds. How should we respond to anti-pitbull editorials in the media? Breed discrimination...is this the answer? To answer this, we must first educate ourselves regarding the issues at hand and then formulate educated opinions regarding the dog-biting problem at hand.

Let's start with...why does a dog bite? Dogs bite as a means of defense and as a tool for acquiring food. Defense may include themselves, their pack, their food and their territory. In some situations, dogs may bite because of learned behaviour and because of their genetic predisposition for biting. Did you know that the adorable Pomeranian is genetically very territorial and was bred for this trait so that it could protect the person whose lap he/she was sitting upon? During development dogs learn how to properly use their mouths and teeth when they play, and when they chew on objects in their surroundings. During play they learn what type of biting is acceptable. If

the bite is too hard the playmate will cry and move away from the biter. When the puppy is removed from siblings prior to learning good biting behaviour it is the human companion's job to teach appropriate biting habits to the puppy. Effective and successful puppy and dog training can only be accomplished after the human learns "dog language and behaviour". Obedience training through formalized classes, videos and books, will ensure that the human companion has the necessary education enabling him/her to successfully train his/her dog or puppy. We are 100% confident that when humans understand dog behaviour and use this

...Why do dogs bite?

knowledge to train their dog, the number of dog bites will decrease. Dog bites are reported as the number one public health concern for children, with as many as 76% of victims being under the age of twenty. This is a very scary statistic. But is it really telling us anything at all? It certainly is not telling us why the bite occurred. This particular statistic would be more meaningful if it contained additional information like 1. What breed of dog did the biting? 2. How severe was the bite? 3. Was the dog on or off a leash? 4. Was the owner present? 5. Did the bite occur inside or outside of the home? 6. Was the bite sustained by a family member or a stranger? 7. Did the dog have basic

obedience training? 8. Was the bite provoked or unprovoked? and lastly 9. Was food or a toy involved? As you can see, many factors can be implicated in why a dog bites. If the reason behind why the bite occurred has not been indicated, we should start asking more questions so that we do not make false judgments. When people are properly informed about the situations that lead to bites, they can take the necessary precautions to prevent biting. Understanding dog behaviour, implementing obedience training techniques and selecting the appropriate breed of dog with the genetic traits that suite the family would be a good first step in the

attempt to reduce the number of dog bites. The "gentle leader" is a humane, safe, effective and veterinary approved tool for dog training. This collar trains the dog naturally using head control. As a general rule with dogs, whoever has control of the head is the one in charge. Because larger dogs pack such power with their bite, it is very important that they are obedient and respond to their companion owner. The gentle leader along with ongoing training will ensure success with obedience. Banning select breeds of dogs will not help to minimize dog bites. No doubt, as one breed of dog is banned another breed will be quick to follow on its heels.



"Did you know that the adorable Pomeranian is genetically very territorial and was bred for this trait so that it could protect the person whose lap he/she was sitting upon?"

Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety is a common behavior complaint of pet owners. When a pet is left alone at home they may vocalize excessively, become destructive, or have inappropriate defecation or urination. The following tips are designed to help your new puppy or kitten adjust to being "home alone" as a means of preventing separation anxiety later in life.

When you leave your puppy unsupervised:

1. Designate an area where he/she will be allowed to roam and ensure it is safe and hazard free. A crate with the door left open can be used in this area if you will be away from the home for prolonged periods. The flooring should have an easy to clean surface in case of any bathroom "accidents". "Pee-pads" can be purchased in pet stores to help with reducing accidents.
2. If you pet is alone for more than 6 hrs allow access to water and food. You may want to consider having a dog walker or neighbour come in to help out with toilet training.
3. Crate training your puppy is ideal. The crate should be large enough for your puppy to stand, sit, lie down and turn completely around. For toilet training purposes your puppy can hold his/her urine for the number of months plus 1 in hours. For example a 2-month-old puppy can hold his urine for approximately 3 hrs.

When you leave your kitten unsupervised:

1. Designate an area where they will be allowed to roam and ensure it is safe and hazard free.
2. Make sure the litter box is accessible. They may not be able to tackle those basement stairs yet.
3. "Free choice" access to food is ideal as kittens enjoy consuming multiple small meals through the day. If you elevate your food bowls, so your doggy companion does not eat the food, then make sure it is at a suitable height, well within your kitten's vertical jumping range.

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"It is our goal to provide comprehensive, excellent veterinary service and patient care, while providing our employees with desirable and fulfilling employment."



We're on the Web!
See us at:
avonleaanimalhospital.ca

...Separation Anxiety

Allow opportunities for independent activities (that do not require owner interaction):

1. Invest in a few good chew toys, play items or scratching posts. There is nothing worse than finding your furniture, curtains or favourite pair of shoes damaged!

Make leaving and returning home a "non-event":

1. Leave the house in a calm manner and redirect your pet's attention to a toy or treat as a distraction. The first 30 minutes after you leave is the hardest for your pet, so keeping them occupied is the ultimate goal. Come into the clinic to check out our wide variety of KONG toys. These gadgets make for excellent chew toys but can also be stuffed with treats or peanut butter to keep your pet occupied long enough for you to leave without getting noticed.
2. When returning home, enter in a calm manner and do not greet your puppy or kitten until you have been home for 2-5 minutes. The initial entry into the home is the most exciting and stressful time period for dogs. Your pet will look adorable as he/she runs to you ready to lavish you with kisses. We must control our need for unconditional love in exchange for the knowledge that we are raising a confident and independent adult dog or cat.

Well-intentioned pet owners often take holidays from work to help welcome their new pet into their home. Ensure that you take short leaves of absences from your puppy or kitten during this initial homecoming. This will help your pet to get used to your regular schedule and learn to be alone and be happy when alone. Start with a few minutes and work up to a few hours.

Looking Forward

We are very excited about our addition of a blood pressure monitor and dental x-ray unit. Both specialized diagnostic pieces of equipment will be ready for use during winter 2005. The blood pressure monitor will enable us to monitor blood pressures in cats and dogs. All cats with hyperthyroidism and all dogs and cats with renal insufficiency and/or heart concerns will benefit from blood pressure monitoring. Many medical conditions can be prevented and the progression of an existing

problem can be slowed down when the blood pressure is stable. Just like for people many medications are available for your pet's blood pressure maintenance. Our dental x-ray unit will allow us to view all the teeth, teeth roots and the jawbone. The diagnostic dental x-ray can then be used to determine if dental, periodontal, or endodontal pathology is present. When we have this information, we can chose the appropriate treatment that will ensure good oral and

body health for your pet. We hope that you have learned something about healthy weight loss, dog behaviour, separation anxiety and yes even how to not pill a cat. Our goal is to help you and your pet(s) live a happy life together. So if you have any questions regarding your pet's health, do not hesitate to call. We wish you all the best in the New Year from the Avonlea Animal Hospital and Brittany Glen Staff.

