



# www.edinburghpets.com

## The newest place to visit!



of any new services or therapies available for your pet and won't be limited to just the newsletters.

You will be able to conveniently sign up for newsletter alerts and announcements through our website. There is no charge for this service and you may unsubscribe at any time. We do not share or sell email addresses ever, so your contact information is private at all times.

Our website was professionally designed to be very easy to navigate and find the information you need. If you have suggestions for how we can improve our website, please contact us.

We are excited to join the internet age with our comprehensive website and we hope you will find it a useful tool for helping keep your pet healthy and happy.

Edinburgh Pet Health Center is proud to announce our newly designed website located at [www.edinburghpets.com](http://www.edinburghpets.com). We hope you will find this a valuable resource for information on pet health as well as a source for timely news. Our new on-line presence means added convenience for you as well. Prescription refills can be requested via our website and you can contact us via email on our contact page with general questions and appointments requests. We have links to the local emergency clinic as well as to on-line resources we feel provide important roles in pet health. Some things you will find on our website: a list of our lending library books, handouts

on a wide variety of diseases and disorders, preventative care recommendations, pictures of our hospital, information on our professional staff and team members, information on the services we offer, hospital policies, and many other useful tidbits of information.

Due to the way more and more pet owners get and use information, we will be concentrating our efforts on the website and discontinuing our mailed newsletters. We will, however, be continuing to produce our newsletters and publishing them on-line. Back copies will be archived on the website for future reference. News from our hospital will be updated frequently to keep you abreast

**If you wish to be notified when a new newsletter issue is published on our website, please sign up for our free announcement list. Go to [www.edinburghpets.com](http://www.edinburghpets.com) and click on the e-newsletter subscribe button on our home page.**

# What is Wrong with My Pet?

## Solving the puzzle and getting a diagnosis



Whenever your pet becomes ill, the first thing you ask yourself is, “what’s wrong”? You wonder whether this is a one-time problem or the start of something more serious. Usually, this results in a call to our hospital for more information.

In most cases, the only thing we can recommend is to bring your pet in for an exam. Without a physical exam, we cannot be sure that our advice will be based on your pet’s true condition. Consider your pet’s condition a puzzle and we need to find and put together the pieces.

An exam entails a nose to tail evaluation of your pet’s physical condition. Is there a fever, dehydration, weight loss, eye or ear problem, dental disease, pain, lameness, skin disease, abdominal discomfort, heart murmur, enlarged lymph nodes, etc? This is the first set of clues we need to find.

An exam also includes asking questions and taking a history. Has the pet been gradually getting worse? Suddenly sick? Any vomiting, diarrhea, coughing, sneezing, changes in appetite or water intake, limping, itching? Your knowledge of your pet’s daily habits is crucial to helping us narrow down the possibilities.

After the exam and history, we often recommend laboratory testing and x-rays for many cases. Blood work and urine testing will help to assess many parameters, such as liver and kidney health, electrolytes, blood cell counts, protein levels and many other indicators. Although normal results do not always indicate health, it can help rule out many problems and allow us to focus on more likely conditions. Stool sample tests can check for intestinal parasites that may be the cause of diarrhea. Skin scrapings, cytology, biopsies and fungal cultures can rule out skin parasites, ringworm and cancers of the skin. Radiographs are important in cases of foreign body ingestion, neoplasia, abdominal pain and many other diseases. There are also many specialized tests that can be done depending on the symptoms the pet is exhibiting.

When we have all the information from the exam, history, labwork and x-rays, we are able to make a tentative diagnosis in most cases as to what is most likely wrong. Unfortunately, many diseases do not have a specific test and we rely on probability and the absence of other disease signs to form a diagnosis.

If we are unable to do testing, or do not have a good history, we have to make more assumptions which often lead us

to wrong conclusions. This may hurt your pet’s chances for recovery. In some cases, we can make an educated “guess” and if the pet responds, then that response to treatment can be very revealing. Alternatively, if your pet’s condition worsens, it increases the risk that we will be at a disadvantage in having a positive outcome.

It is very important to realize that you, the pet owner, and your veterinarian must work as a team to help solve the puzzle, and the more pieces that are missing, the less likely we are to see the whole picture. With a proper, systemic approach, we can help your pet’s puzzle get solved.

## Warm Weather Parasite Prevention

The return of warm weather heralds the arrival of mosquitos, fleas and ticks in our life again. Mosquitos carry the heartworm larva which infect dogs and to some degree, cats. Ticks can carry a number of serious disease-causing bacteria, such as Lyme disease and Anaplasma. Fleas can cause dermatitis and transmit tapeworms. To keep your pet free of these diseases, we recommend an annual heartworm test and starting on a heartworm preventative such as Heartgard Plus by June 1st. In addition, if your pet will visit tick or flea-infested environments, we recommend Frontline Plus spot-on preventative. Both of these medications are safe and effective parasite control products. To schedule a heartworm test, please call our office.



# PETS GO GREEN



Changes in our environment have made many of us adjust the way we live. Recycling has become mainstream. Products can be purchased which are friendlier to our environment. Organic has become an everyday word. But have we overlooked our pets' carbon pawprint?

Here is some food for thought. Using a plastic sandwich baggie to pick up dog droppings will not allow it to degrade. The droppings will just sit in that baggie in the landfill. Many pet toys are not biodegradable, once you throw them in the trash, they also will just sit in the landfill.

Here are some of the changes you can make and products you can use so that your and your pet can go green.

\*Purchase or make environmentally friendly accessories.

\*Make your own treats. Not only will your pet have a tasty treat, but you will reduce the amount of packaging and you won't have the preservatives found in commercial treats.

\*Pet toys can be made from old sweaters, t-shirts or fleece blankets. Cut long strips of a sweater or old fleece blanket and braid them together to make a tug toy for your dog. For cats, grow and dry catnip then sew (or use fabric glue) small pouches to stuff the catnip into. Many pet companies now use earth-friendly materials and ingredients for their products.

ecopetlife.com makes toys from recycled pop bottles as well as pet beds made of organic cotton. onlynaturalpet.com uses hemp to make their collars and leashes,

including break-away collars for cats. leashwecando.com uses hemp for it's collars and leashes, as well as making toys that are recyclable.

\*Use biodegradable disposable bags and cat litter to ease our landfill burden. biobagusa.com makes biodegradable cat pan liners as well as dog poop bags. Many places also have available a biodegradable cat litter. This litter is made from pine and is a scoopable litter. (Beware that anytime you change to a new cat litter you should do it slowly to avoid a litter box aversion problem).

\*Microchip and have your pet wear an id tag. By having your pet returned to you quickly, you could avoid printing flyers and using gas looking for your lost pet.

\*Protect wildlife by leashing your pet. Cats can be damaging to the wild bird populations. Our four-legged friends can also introduce intestinal parasites into the wilderness. Parasites can cause damaging health issues to wildlife.

\*Recycle the cans from your pet's food.

\*Spay/neuter your pet. There are millions of pets that are euthanized every year due to overpopulation. The extra food and products used (and poop produced) by rescue organizations could be reduced if they did not need to care for as many animals.

Taking these small steps can help everyone, pets and people alike, enjoy our world for a long time.

The staff has been busy attending continuing education seminars to better serve you and your pets. Certified veterinary technicians, **Lynsy Jameson, Diane Paulus** and **Jessica Hallman** attended the Minnesota Association of Veterinary Technicians convention in February. Topics that were attended included hematology, chronic kidney disease, zoonoses, diabetic management, management of spine injuries, pregnancy and whelping and others. Our technicians are an important part of our patient care team and continuing education helps them stay current.

**Dr. Lisa Carpenter** attended an all-day conference on animal abuse and the role of veterinarians in confronting this problem in our community. She also

attended an evening lecture on biopsy techniques. In March, she attended the American Animal Hospital Association's annual conference, held in Phoenix, Arizona. She attended lectures on behavior problems in pets, accounting, management, dermatology, neurology and gastrointestinal problems. **Dr. Jennifer Hale** will be attending the ACVIM internal medicine conference in Montreal, Canada in June.



**Corrie Barrows, CVT** is happy to share that her 9-year-old Labrador earned his Flyball Master Excellent (FMX) flyball title. She is very excited about this milestone as he has struggled to stay on track with two knee surgeries and treatment for Cushing's disease. Congrats Corrie and Beef!

## Welcome Kandy and Mandie



Our two newest veterinary assistants joined us in August 2008.

### **Kandy Akervik**

Kandy's love for animals drew her to the role of veterinary assistant.

She looks forward to meeting new patients and learning new things every afternoon she is working. Kandy's favorite

subject at Champlin Park High school is American Sign Language and she also likes dance and soccer. Kandy has two dogs. Koda is a miniature smooth-coated dachshund and Patches is a terrier and toy poodle mix.

**Mandie Mattson** Mandie Mattson became a veterinary assistant because she knew it would offer her many new and exciting learning experiences that she couldn't get working a typical after-school job. Mandie's Maine Coon cat is named Oliver but he



has so many nicknames that he'll come to just about anything you call him. Her Bombay cat, Shadow, likes to play fetch. Mandie enjoys

reading and writing her own short stories so it's no surprise that her favorite subject at Park Center Senior High is English.



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