

# SHAMROCK DIGEST

March/April 2009

## ***FLEA CONTROL***

People who work at veterinary clinics are generally kind and caring. We even carry spiders and ants outside. However, it is a fact that we enjoy killing fleas.

Fleas are horrible little critters. Just talking about them makes most people itchy. They have developed into almost unstoppable parasites that even when caught are resistant to death by squishing!

Most fleas seen on dogs and cats are actually cat fleas – the dog flea is almost extinct in North America. But as said earlier, fleas are unstoppable little critters, and cat fleas are able to reproduce using blood from dogs, cats, opossums and many other carnivores.

Although fleas are unable to reproduce using the blood of humans, rabbits or rodents, that does not mean they cannot cause problems for other species. Flea bites usually just cause itchiness, but a heavy infestation of fleas can lead to anemia or death for small animals such as rodents, puppies and kittens.

We advise keeping your companion on year round flea control, but if you have decided to take a break from using flea products, now is the time to start using them again. A few fleas picked up this time of year will probably not be noticed, but they will reproduce and cause havoc in the late summer and fall.

There is no one perfect flea product that suits every situation. There are products for applying on the skin, tablets and collars. They all work differently and target different stages of the flea lifecycle. Ask us about flea treatments while you are here for your companions check up or special diet.

## ***CLINIC CLOSURE***

We will be closed for four days over Easter starting on Good Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>. We will reopen on Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>. Emergency care is available by calling the clinic at 339-2026. An answering service will page the veterinarian on call with your concerns.

## ***CONTINUING EDUCATION***

Kristina, Alana, Chris and Cris will be attending a weekend of lectures in Kamloops in mid April.

On the Friday morning, veterinary dental specialist Dr. Loic Legendre will be addressing the use of pain control in dentistry as well as new products recognized for dental home care. The afternoon will continue the theme of pain management with Dr. Matt Read discussing the use of local anesthesia and nerve blocks in companion animals.

Saturday morning, Dr. Read continues his lecture by discussing anesthesia for pets with health conditions such as heart, kidney or liver disease. Saturday afternoon is devoted to Dr. Brian Wilcock, a veterinary pathologist from Guelph, Ontario. Dr. Wilcock will be reviewing the collection and processing of tissue samples for submission and analysis.

Joan and Saskia will be spending an April Sunday in Victoria – but it won't be as relaxing as it sounds. They will be listening to and learning from Dr. Karol Matthews, a veterinary critical care specialist. Dr. Matthews will be discussing the use of fluids and pain control in relation to trauma. She will also address many other issues such as the use of honey and sugar in treating contaminated wounds.

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## **DANGEROUS COLLARS**

Many people are choosing to use 'Martingale' type training collars for their canine companions. These are the collars that are part nylon and part chain. These collars are designed for and work very well as training collars. Martingales are NOT general use collars!! There is no buckle to release these collars – they must be removed over the dogs head. Never use 'Martingales' for off leash play or walks. If the collar becomes caught on something, or if another dog becomes entangled in the collar, strangulation can occur if either the dog panics.

Cats that wear collars for identification should wear either break away or elastic collars for these same reasons. This is especially important for cats that are outdoors unsupervised.



## **FOOD CHANGES**

If you regularly purchase Royal Canin food for your companion, you may have noticed the change in packaging. Both the appearance of the bags and the size of Royal Canin bags have changed.

Both Royal Canin and Medi Cal have new packaging - they have departed from paper type bags and have different logos.

Royal Canin and MediCal brands are both owned by Royal Canin. To help control cost, both brands will be sold in bags of the same size. This means that many Royal Canin bag sizes have changed. For example, the smallest size bag of Feline HP is now 2kg instead of 1.13kg. Although the price per kg has not changed, the cost to buy a bag has increased to reflect the greater amount of food in each bag.

## **ADOPTION AN OPTION?**

If you are considering the addition of a new companion, there are many sources to investigate.

Knowledgeable cat and dog breeders can provide assistance in helping you decide if their chosen breed is for you.

If you decide that you do not need an animal directly from the breeder, the SPCA, newspapers and bulletin boards all advertise pets in need of new caregivers. Veterinary clinics are also often aware of patients needing new homes. In the age of computers, many people will also consult online advertising sites such as Craig's List or some of the many websites established by rescue organizations.

The benefits of adoption are numerous:

- **Choice!** Purebreds, mix breeds, young and old. Often all are available for you to visit with and get to know. An animal might appeal to you visually, but be too active, hairy or large for your lifestyle.

- **A second chance.** The misconception that pets up for adoption have something wrong with them is not always true. Companions are surrendered for many reasons – the death or illness of an owner, allergies in the family, financial hardship, or simply a caregiver that did not realistically anticipate the time, care, effort or expensive of their chosen pet.

- **Save a life.** You will be providing a home for an animal that is in need of a family to call its' own. By welcoming an adopted pet into your family, you are not supporting puppy mills or other uncaring producers of pets. Most adoption organizations recognize that pet overpopulation is a serious issue, so animals adopted will often already be spayed or castrated.