



SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE EMERGENCY CLINIC

Pet Angels of the night

In September 2002 veterinarians were excited to announce the opening of the new EMERGENCY VETERINARY CLINIC ON HIGHWAY #10. This emergency clinic was the creation of 24 local area veterinarians including those in Georgetown, Orangeville, Bolton and Brampton. The purpose of this emergency hospital was to improve upon the way after hour emergencies were handled for you and your pet. Prior to that, tired veterinarians were trying to treat sick or injured pets alone, without staff to assist them, at night and on weekends. The level of care these pets received was often limited by what the veterinarian could do alone, and the pets were certainly not receiving the constant supervision some of them required. This level of care frustrated most veterinarians who wished to do more for their patients. The Emergency Veterinary Clinic was a huge step forward. Rested, experienced, trained and dedicated staff and veterinarians were now ready and waiting to treat your pet's emergency needs.

The Emergency Veterinary Clinic has been a great success. The level of emergency care provided for our pets has vastly improved; many lives have been saved. However, despite the admiration veterinarians have for the work that is performed at the Emergency Clinic, there is some resistance from clients to go there. On occasion, a client's reluctance to use the Emergency Clinic has been detrimental to their pet.

Because many of the reasons clients refuse to use the Emergency Clinic are based on misconceptions or misunderstandings, we thought we would deal with the issue directly.

Reasons people try to avoid the Emergency Veterinary Clinic	Reasons people should take their pet to the Emergency Veterinary Clinic
After a long hard day I just want to stay home and relax, not run out in the middle of the night or on the weekend to the emergency clinic.	Let's face it, if your pet is sick you won't be able to relax anyway; you are just going to worry or spend the night cleaning up urine, vomit or diarrhea.
The emergency clinic is all the way out in Brampton.	The drive only takes 15 minutes.
What if my pet's condition gets worse in the car on the way there?	If you believe your pet to be that ill, then you are doing the right thing by going to the Emergency Clinic; your pet will not get better at home.

<p>I am uncomfortable going to a veterinarian I don't know.</p>	<p>This is an understandable emotion and an unfortunate reality of emergency situations. But, you already have one thing in common with the staff there; you are all interested in the wellbeing of your pet.</p>
<p>How do I know if the veterinarian and the staff at the emergency hospital are any good?</p>	<p>The Emergency Veterinary Clinic is staffed with veterinarians and animal health technicians that are well trained and experienced in emergency medicine and surgery, and are prepared to care for your concerns immediately. Furthermore, there are 24 local veterinarians that are members of the emergency hospital and many more clinics that refer patients there. The medical records from each patient are faxed to the regular veterinarian the following day to be reviewed. So the doctors, staff and their medical practices are well scrutinized.</p>
<p>The doctors there are not as nice as my regular veterinarian, they are so abrupt and don't care.</p>	<p>This is probably the greatest complaint we hear about the emergency clinic. It is hard enough for clients to bring their pets to a doctor they don't know or trust, let alone one that is abrupt and insensitive. Clients often feel rushed into making decisions about their pet's health care without having the condition thoroughly explained to them. Unfortunately, this problem is not exclusive to veterinary emergency clinics, human emergency hospitals face the same issues.</p> <p>At the very core of the problem are three causes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clients coming to emergency hospital are often tired, frustrated and very worried. They require and deserve more attention, more explanation and more sensitivity in a situation where there is less time to do so. 2. The veterinarians are often under a lot of pressure to keep things moving. Always in the back of their heads is the urgency of this case, the five other people and their pets waiting or the next potential crisis that may walk in the front door. 3. The natural personality characteristics of veterinarians that truly enjoy working at emergency hospital. Most veterinarians that work at emergency hospitals enjoy the solitude of emergency medicine. They are comfortable working nights and weekends. For them, veterinary medicine is more about the animal and the science and they tend to be driven by the task at hand. However, they are often the type of people who do not show empathy or emotion very well and are often less concerned about forming human relationships. They are sometimes even unaware of the whole spectrum of emotions that their clients are feeling. <p>This is by no means an excuse, simply an explanation. The solution is more training, a lot more training, in communications skills. This is being done, both at the university level with veterinary students, and with practicing veterinarians. Despite the current frustrations, the future is bright.</p>

The emergency clinic is so expensive.	The emergency fee is only \$45 more than a consultation fee and the rest of the prices are comparable to most modern veterinary hospitals. Besides, if you wait and your pet's condition worsens, it will cost more to treat him or her anyway.
How do I know if my pet's illness or injury is an emergency?	<p>If you think it is an emergency, then it probably is.</p> <p>If your pet is bleeding, if your pet is vomiting more than a couple of times in an eight hour period, if your pet's diarrhea has lasted more than a couple of days or is frequent, if your pet is in pain, if your pet's eyes are irritated, if there is swelling anywhere, if your pet cannot urinate or defecate or if your pet has been in an accident, then it is an emergency.</p> <p>If you are still in doubt, call the Emergency Clinic at 905-495-9907 and ask them.</p>
If my pet is hospitalized at the Emergency Veterinary Clinic over the weekend, he may be treated by several veterinarians as the day and night shift change, I don't think I like that.	This is actually a good thing. Regular shift changes over the weekend means the staff and veterinarians are fresh and well rested. This also provides the opportunity for a built in second opinion and different perspective on difficult cases.
What if I have a problem or complaint about the Emergency Veterinary Clinic?	Any time you are unsure or unhappy about the care your pet is receiving you are welcome to express that to the veterinarian you have been dealing with. If that is not a comfortable option for you, you can discuss your concerns with your regular veterinarian. Patient care and client satisfaction is everyone's priority.
I hate waiting, how long will we have to wait to be seen?	If your pet is critically ill, you will be seen immediately. Otherwise during a very busy period, you may expect to wait for about one hour. In most cases that type of wait is rare, and certainly less than in a human hospital.
Why can't I just wait to see my regular veterinarian on Monday?	Depending on the severity of your pet's illness, waiting to see your regular veterinarian can be dangerous. By the time you make an appointment with your regular veterinarian your pet's condition may worsen, making the treatment more difficult, more expensive and extending your pet's suffering. Unfortunately, we have seen pet seriously injured by their family's decision to wait until they can see their regular veterinarian on Monday.
Why can't my regular veterinarian take care of my pet's emergency needs?	At one time all veterinarians were responsible for the after hours care of their clients. This was possible when the population density was smaller and people's expectations were lower. Fortunately today, people want the same type of advanced medical and surgical care for their pets as they do for themselves. It is no longer acceptable to just euthanize a sick pet or give an injection of antibiotics and go back home to bed. However, the advanced demands of the profession now require veterinarians to share the responsibilities of patient care; it is not possible for one person to provide that level of care 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Do I need to call first?	You do not have to call ahead, if time is of the essence just get in your car and go. The Emergency Veterinary Clinic is staffed with veterinarians and animal health technicians that are experienced in emergency medicine and surgery and are prepared to care for your concerns immediately. If you have a less urgent problem and wish to call ahead first, the staff at the emergency clinic can likely give you some tips on how to prepare for your visit.
What happens after my pet has been to the Emergency Veterinary Clinic?	All patient medical records are faxed to the regular veterinarian the following business day. If your pet stayed in the Emergency Veterinary Clinic over night or over the weekend, you will need to transfer him or her to your regular veterinarian once the clinic closes, for ongoing care. If your pet went home after your visit, we will follow up with you by telephone to ensure a smooth recovery.
Where is the Emergency Veterinary Clinic?	The Emergency Veterinary Clinic on Hwy 10 in Brampton is located on the South/East corner of Hurontario Street (HWY 10) and Wexford Road, just 1 block north of Bovaird (HWY 7 or Guelph Street) in the Wexford Plaza.

We all hope to never need an emergency hospital, human or veterinary. It is by its very nature an inconvenient, stressful and emotional event. But thank goodness they exist. Avoiding that trip to the emergency clinic may prolong the suffering of your pet and allow the injury or illness to worsen unnecessarily. The veterinarians and staff are well trained, experienced, dedicated and caring individuals; they would not be there at 3:00 am otherwise.

A friend of mine once called me an angel for animals. I was very touched by that statement. It has been my experience that the staff and veterinarians of the Emergency Veterinary Clinic are angels for animals too, maybe with prickly exteriors, but angels nonetheless.

LIFE ACCORDING TO NIKE

Regular followers of Nike's life will know that she has an obsession with food. We have even purchased an automatic feeder so her meals are provided on time and at exactly the same time every day to avoid her dramatic tantrums if we are too busy to feed her on time. We cover or hide any snacks the staff have been munching on; doesn't matter if it is fruit, vegetables, chips, popcorn or cake, Nike will eat it. None of us dare to turn our backs on our lunches for fear she will steal it, including salad. Nike is not even too ashamed to steal food from the sick. She has on more than one occasion been known to stick her paw through the bars of patient's kennels (even dogs) to pull the food dish closer to the front and tip it so the food spills out. Who does that??? She is so bad that when Dr. Swift started working with us, she insisted on performing blood tests on Nike because she was convinced there was something wrong with her; of course there wasn't. We are not starving her, the evidence of that is her chubby little belly. Now her latest culinary obsession are plastic plants. Because Nike will eat any real plants she can reach, we decorated the front window with plastic plants. Nike eats them. We can't image why, they can't very taste good, and they make her vomit. On the up side, the plastic plants probably look more real with chewed ends.

