

## Mountainview Animal Hospital

### SPRING NEWSLETTER

## The bottom Line

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Degenerative joint disease or arthritis is the accumulation of the daily wear & tear of the joint causing inflammation, pain, damage to the cartilage and bones and eventually wasting of the muscles.

Recent studies have found that 9 out of 10 cats over the age of 12 years show evidence of arthritis on x-rays, yet only 4% of cats are diagnosed with arthritis. That leaves a lot of cats with undiagnosed pain. (NBVMA/EVTA Fall Conference)

Our aging pets often have poor vision, even the cats. It is particularly difficult for them to see at night. Leaving a light on in the hall or putting a night light near the cat's litter box will help them find their way.

## ARTHRITIS PAIN IN CATS

Recently a family brought their older cat in to see us for a check up. The cat had been soiling around the house for a few weeks and the family was fed up with cleaning up the mess. In fact, they were so frustrated that they were strongly considering euthanasia. During the examination the only abnormality was a bit of swelling in the cat's knee joints.

This older cat had not become dirty and was not pooping and peeing around the house out of spite, she was suffering from arthritic pain. The swelling in her knees was from arthritis.

To treat the problem we changed her food to Joint Mobility diet, we started her on an anti-inflammatory for her arthritis pain and we moved her litter box up from the basement to the main floor. We also lowered the sides of the litter box to make it easier for her to climb in. Within two days the house-soiling stopped and her family was thrilled. Now she is even playing with the new kitten in the house.

Unfortunately, this is not an uncommon story. Arthritis is a common disease in cats and often goes undiagnosed for years. This is no one's fault, it is very difficult to tell when a cat is in pain. Cats sleep a lot, so how can you tell if your cat has become lethargic? Cats often sneak up on us, so how can we tell if they are walking differently? And because a cat's arthritis is almost always in multiple legs, they don't limp. So how can we do a better job for our older cats? Well, if we are aware that arthritis is highly likely, we can watch for the subtle signs:

### SIGNS OF ARTHRITIS PAIN IN CATS

- Playing less and sleeping more, or restlessness.
- Reluctant to be touched, complains when being picked up, grumpy, avoiding contact with the family, hiding.
- Most cats do not limp with arthritis but they will take shorter more choppy steps. They look stiff, particularly after rest.
- Change in the position in how they sit or sleep.
- Avoid stairs, difficulty with jumping up on counters, furniture or the bed.
- Pooping or peeing outside the litter box. Constipation.
- Some cats will eat less and lose weight.
- Many cats will groom less.

Although we cannot cure arthritis, we can treat the inflammation and pain that this disease causes. After all, our pets have given us so much over the years, so we don't mind giving them a little extra tender loving care during their senior years; they have earned it. Here are some tips to help our old furry friends live a little easier, happier and pain free.

## The bottom Line

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Never give human medication to your pet without asking a veterinarian first. Many of the medications that are well tolerated by humans can have dangerous, even fatal, side effects in our pets.

Older pets with arthritis are often too stiff to bend and turn around to groom themselves as well as they used to. Gentle brushing and keeping their rear end clean will go a long way to make them feel better.

Older pets with a loss of senses and arthritic pain may be more sensitive to the fast and often unintentional roughness of children. Teach children to be gentle and respectful. Better yet, have them keep their distance from the very old and weak.

The colder weather is more likely to exacerbate arthritic pain. So will the dampness of a rainy day. Provide soft warm bedding for your cat to sleep on.

## TREATING ARTHRITIS PAIN IN CATS

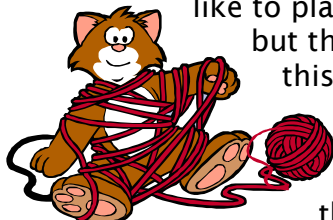
- Many of the treatment choices we will make will depend on the overall health of the cat. So first we must start with a thorough physical examination, as well as a blood and urine test.
- Early arthritis can often be treated with natural supplements. Rather than trying to give our finicky felines a bunch of pills, it is often easier to change their diet. Our Joint Mobility Diet contains a combination of supplements that reduce the inflammation of arthritis. It is also designed to protect against early stage kidney disease; also common in older cats.
- Anti-inflammatory medications used under the direction of a veterinarian can relieve the pain of arthritis.
- Move the litter box to an area more accessible to your older cats. Remember, it is often painful for them to go up and down the stairs.
- Use a boot tray for a litter box or cut out the front of the box you currently use, so your cat does not have to climb over a high rim to get in.
- Use less litter in the box. The deeper the litter, the harder it is for them to balance. Think about how much harder it is to walk on a sandy beach than the side walk.
- Clean the litter box more often; older cats often produce more urine and we all know how they hate a dirty litter box.
- Use ramps or steps to give your older cats access to the bed and sofa.
- For the obese cat, controlled weight loss becomes even more important.

## LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

We now have a Facebook page. There are contributions from the staff, Dr. Noyes and myself. Dr. Noyes has been writing the Friday Factoid, a fun and informative posting based on interesting cases, relevant topics in the news and fun animal facts. I will be adding monthly articles on pet health and of course Tux will be contributing the cuteness factor. Find us under Mountainview Animal Hospital.

## TIME WITH TUX

As some of you may have heard we recently had a flood here at the clinic. A sprinkler pipe burst and flooded Pat's Deli, The Water Store and us. Fortunately it happened during lunch time so no one got wet, especially me. I like to play with the water in the sinks (I'm a little weird that way) but this was a little much even for my taste. The humans in this place went crazy throwing towels on everything and trying to catch all that water with tiny mop buckets; what a joke. I just sat and watched; seriously, humans are way to neurotic sometimes. Humans need to learn that when life throws you a curve ball, go have a nap!



## The bottom Line

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An infected dog can have over 200 heartworms in the heart and adjoining blood vessels.

The drug companies that produce the various heartworm preventative medications will guarantee your dogs protection only if you use the medication correctly and have your dog's blood tested every year.

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Most boarding facilities will require your dog to have had a Kennel Cough vaccine at least five days before admission.

Many puppy training facilities are also strongly recommending the Kennel Cough vaccine to their clients.

Leptospirosis is a Zoonotic disease; meaning people can become infected too.

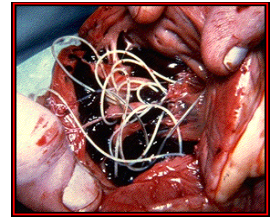
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**Caution!** Some flea products marketed in the pet stores to dogs are extremely toxic to cats. Always read the label carefully; better yet, ask us about choosing the safest products for your pets.

## \*\*\* IMPORTANT SUMMERTIME REMINDERS \*\*\*

### Heartworm Disease

Heartworm disease is caused by a large worm which can live in a dog's heart and adjoining blood vessels. Permanent and potentially fatal damage to the heart, lungs and liver can occur long before there are any visible signs. The heartworm is spread from one dog to another by the mosquito. Treatment is available but is often costly and difficult. A long recovery time can be expected and often irreparable damage to the heart, lungs and liver has already occurred.



Fortunately, prevention is so easy. Simply give your dog the preventative medication once a month from June through November. There are various types of heartworm medication available; some will also include prevention for intestinal worms and/or fleas. Blood testing your dog prior to starting the medication is an important part of prevention and is strongly recommended. Early detection of a heartworm infection before your dog gets sick will not only increase the success of the treatment and ensure a complete recovery, but will also help reduce the spread of the disease.

### Leptospirosis Vaccine

Leptospirosis is a serious and sometimes fatal disease that can afflict dogs of all ages. Dogs most commonly become infected by drinking from rivers, streams, puddles or ponds that have become contaminated by the urine of other infected animals (raccoons, rats and skunks). Leptospirosis tends to attack the liver and kidneys causing a variety of symptoms including fever, nausea, lethargy, abdominal pain and increased urination. Many dogs afflicted with Leptospirosis will die from it. If your dog has access to wildlife, roams free, or drinks from water sources that may have become contaminated, he or she should be vaccinated against Leptospirosis this spring. We would be happy to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of vaccinating your dog against this disease.

### Kennel Cough Vaccine

*Bordetella bronchiseptica*, better known as Kennel Cough, is a bacterial infection that causes tracheobronchitis. Affected dogs will exhibit a characteristic dry, harsh, hacking cough that can last up to 3 weeks. Some dogs will cough so hard that they gag afterward. Dogs are most commonly infected in kennels, pet stores, exhibitions, grooming salons and off leash parks where they are in close contact with other dogs. Although most dogs require only supportive care to recover, young, older or otherwise weaker dogs can develop a serious pneumonia that may require them to be hospitalized. Vaccination is recommended for dogs going to boarding kennels, puppy classes, grooming facilities or off leash parks. If your dog is not vaccinated against Kennel Cough and is likely to be exposed, please call us to schedule an appointment for a vaccination against *Bordetella bronchiseptica*.

### Fleas



Both cats and dogs are at risk of becoming infested with fleas during our warm summer months. Fleas are extremely irritating to your pet. Flea bites can cause itchy skin rashes and even serious allergic reactions. Left untreated, just 10 adult fleas can multiply to over 250,000 fleas in only 30 days! Your pet can come into contact with fleas on walks, at the park, or even in your backyard. Those of you who have had fleas in the past know how difficult it is to get rid of them; prevention of flea infestations is much easier, cost effective and safe. Call us to start your pet on the safest and most effective flea prevention this spring.

# Mountainview Animal Hospital

Dr. Stephanie Ewing BSc., DVM and Associate

## INVITES YOU TO OUR **OPEN HOUSE!**

### SUNDAY MAY 5<sup>TH</sup>, 2013

FROM

### 1 PM TO 4 PM

To show our appreciation to our wonderful community, we are having an Open House.  
*Everyone is welcome to attend, including your furry friends.*

### Why should you come to our open house?

- Meet our doctors and staff on a more personal level
- Tour the new hospital
- Learn more about our various services and equipment
- Play some games, learn more about important topics in pet health care and test your knowledge about pet trivia
- Bring the kids
- Watch a surgery at our hospital; we have recorded a surgery and will play the video at the open house
- Enjoy food & refreshments, weather permitting we will have a barbeque

### Have questions about Medical / Royal Canin Diets?

Mandy Emery will be at the open house to answer any questions you have about this wonderful diet.

333 Mountainview Road South, unit # 12

We are located in the South Georgetown Center, on the North East corner of Mountainview and Argyll roads.

Next to the 7 /11 Gas Station.

905-702-8822

**\* \* \* MARK YOUR CALENDARS \* \* \***