



merrick ANIMAL HOSPITAL

SPRING 2009

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Hours: M 8-7, Tu 8-6, W 8-6, Th 8-7, F 8-6, S 8-1

Update

Thank you for all the positive feedback on our newsletter. We have started sending out email versions with this edition. If you would like to sign up, please send your request to email@brookfieldvets.com. You will get the newsletter faster and help save some trees! If you did sign up and are getting this in the mail, please let us know. Copies of the newsletter will also be available in PDF format on our website at www.BrookfieldVets.com.

We are still in the process of updating reminders on all of our patients. If you have not gotten a reminder but think your pet is due, please call and we can look up the information for you. Also let us know if you received a reminder for a pet you no longer have so we can update our records.



We are excited to now offer a service to have Hill's Prescription Diets and Science Diet delivered to your home. VetSource is basically an online extension of our clinic. The cost for the food would be exactly the same as when you pick it up at the clinic. You only pay a \$4 to \$7 delivery charge no matter how much food you order. You can even set up automatic delivery so that you will never run out or have to worry that we are out of stock. We will also be offering some other products and medications through this service. VetSource works through our regular distributor so you can be assured of getting the same quality products we provide in the hospital. You can order food either online through our website or by calling 877-738-4443. Once you place your order it will be confirmed by your vet and the food shipped directly to you.

Heartworms and your Pets

Our goal is to make sure 100% of our canine patients are on heartworm preventive. Heartworm infestations are very easy to prevent, but very difficult and dangerous to treat.

The adult heartworms actually live in the heart and can get up to 14 inches long and the thickness of a thin strand of spaghetti. There can be from 2 to 200 parasites present and over time they cause damage to the heart and lungs eventually leading to heart failure. Treatment once an animal is infected involves injecting an arsenic compound that will kill the parasites slowly to prevent a fatal embolism.

Heartworms are transmitted by mosquitoes from dog to dog. Heartworm preventatives work by killing the parasites while they are still in their larval stage in the skin around the mosquito bite. It takes heartworm 7 months to reach the heart and their adult stage where they can be detected. This is why we recommend testing in the spring. This way we can find any new infestations they may have picked up the previous summer. In this area of the country heartworm transmission occurs for about six months from May through October. Since the heartworm preventative works by killing larva that pets have already contracted, you need to start the preventative no later than June 1 and continue through the middle of October or early November. In some cases you may want to extend the time your pet is on preventative.

Heartgard Plus, the preventative we recommend for most pets, also helps to treat and prevent intestinal parasite infestations as well. If your pet has had problems with these parasites, you may



want to start the medication sooner, in March or April. Also if you travel to other parts of the country you may need to extend the time your pet is on preventative. It is not uncommon for some dogs to be on the preventative year round. In these cases, they can have their heartworm test at anytime during the year.

The test we use to detect heartworms is called the 4DX. It also can detect infections with three tick-borne infections, Lyme Disease, Ehrlichiosis, and Anaplasmosis. It is also very important that we check a stool sample to look for

intestinal parasites. Many of these can cause problems without intestinal symptoms and can be transmitted to people or other pets. A small sample, the size of the tip of your thumb, is all we need to do a check for the microscopic eggs or cysts that these parasites produce.

If you have not received a reminder for Heartworm testing please call to set up an appointment for this spring. If your reminder does not include one for a Fecal Parasite Examination, please bring a sample in so we can do a complete evaluation of your pet's health.

Fleas and Ticks

Because we emphasize preventative health care at Merrick Animal Hospital, we may also recommend a Flea and Tick preventative for your pet. For dogs we usually recommend Frontline Plus, which when given monthly is effective against fleas and ticks. It also will continue to protect your pet after bathing and swimming. As mentioned before, ticks can carry some nasty diseases. It can take a 48 to 72 hours for a tick to transmit an infection so checking your pet frequently is important, especially if they are not on a preventative. Pets that travel to areas where Lyme disease is a known problem, such as Michigan and Wisconsin should be on Frontline Plus and we may also recommend the Lyme Disease vaccination for additional protection.

Flea and Tick prevention usually should start in the end of March or beginning of April and continue through a killing frost if not longer. If you buy 6 doses of Frontline Plus you get one free with a coupon we fill out for you. No rebate or other forms to



send in! Please beware of online vendors selling Frontline plus. Merial does not sell to them directly and in some cases, counterfeit product has been found that is not effective and can put your pet at risk. Merial also offers a guarantee of the product that is only available when you buy through a veterinarian.

New Staff

In order to continue providing excellent care and service, we have added to our staff.

Dr. Jim Murnighan started with us in the middle of February and has been in practice for 2 years and is a graduate of Washington State University. His wife is also a veterinarian who specializes in pathology, which means she only looks at thin slices of her patients under a microscope. Shari Stubler also started in February and is a Certified Veterinary Technician. She will be assisting with surgery, taking x-rays, blood samples and helping in the lab. She has one dog, three cats and enjoys cooking and bowling.

New Equipment

We have just acquired an ultrasound machine. Ultrasound can let us see things inside your pet that we can't with x-rays. Specifically it can be helpful in identifying abdominal tumors, urinary tract problems, and heart disease as well as evaluating the liver, spleen, prostate gland and intestinal tract.

If we think an ultrasound exam is indicated we can schedule it sooner and for about half the cost of having a consultant do it. In some cases, we will still recommend having a specialist do the exam. Particularly for pets who need cardiac workups or special procedures including ultrasound guided biopsies and for second opinions.

We look forward to seeing you soon.
The Staff of Merrick Animal Hospital