

Capitol Illini Newsletter

Inside this issue

Feline Heartworms, Page
a serious threat. 1-3

Leptospirosis, your Page 1-2
dog is at risk.

Staff Corner Page 3
Welcome Dr. Amy
Wade, DVM

New product: Page 2
Welactin

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Leptospirosis, your dog is at risk!



Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease that can be serious or even life threatening for you, your dog, and rarely, your cat. The risk of Leptospirosis is often overlooked but the bacteria has been isolated many times in the Springfield area.

All dogs can become infected with *Leptospira* bacteria. Wild and domestic animals that are infected shed the bacteria in their urine. Exposure to the urine of infected animals or contaminated water and soil can often be the source of infection for dogs and people. Often the bacteria can stay in the environment for weeks or months. Previously, it was thought that only pets and people in rural areas were at risk; however due to increased housing development in previously rural areas, wild animals are in closer contact with people and domestic pets. All dogs are at risk, even if they only go outside to go to the bathroom. Exposure to infected soil or water, even once, can cause infection.

The symptoms of Lepto (*Leptospirosis*) vary and time from exposure to development of disease can range from a few days to 30 days or more. Symptoms include: fever, joint pain, general lethargy-



Continued page 2



Feline heartworms: A serious threat



Heartworms are widely recognized as a serious threat to dogs but are often overlooked as a threat to cats. The feline is not a natural host for heartworms but they can still become infected. Heartworms are not able to complete their life cycle in cats but often a single worm can be a fatal infection.

Previously it was thought that feline heartworm infections were uncommon. It has been shown in recent studies that the incidence of heartworm infection can be as high as 2-14 percent of all cats. This is more frequent than the infection rate for both feline leukemia virus and feline immunodeficiency virus. These are 2 feline virus' widely recognized as a serious threat to the feline population.

Cats respond differently than dogs when infected with heartworms. In dogs, the biggest concern is obstruction of blood flow due to size of the worms in the heart and number of worms. In cats, the *inflammation* caused by the worm's presence causes mainly respiratory problems vs. heart disease. Symptoms include: respiratory distress, coughing, vomiting or sudden death. This can commonly be misdiagnosed as feline asthma. The worm causes widespread inflammation but can also affect the kidneys, gastrointestinal tract, and the nervous system.

Continued page 3



Leptospirosis- Continued from page 1

-vomiting, diarrhea, refusal to eat, jaundice (yellowed skin), and often sudden onset of kidney failure, other organs may also be severely affected. Other times pets may not show any symptoms at all, yet shed the leptospira bacteria and become a source of infection for others.

Testing is available for animals that are suspected to be infected. Antibiotics can be used to stop reproduction of the bacteria and eliminate it from the kidneys. Aggressive treatment, supportive therapy, and intravenous fluids are needed for recovery to be possible. Prognosis is guarded and depends on the extent of organ damage and the patient's overall health status. Careful handling of infected animals and their urine is important to prevent human infection.

Prevention of Lepto is key for all pets. Keeping rodent populations down can help to decrease possibility of contamination of the environment. A vaccine is also available; we at Capitol Illini Veterinary Services recommend a yearly Leptospirosis vaccination for all dogs. There are several common serovars of the bacteria that affect dogs. Vaccination against these disease may give your pet a better chance at fighting off a Leptosporosis infection.



The purity of a person's heart can quickly be measured by how they regard animals.
-Anonymous



A house is not a home without a pet.
-Anonymous



New product: Welactin

Welactin is a recent addition to the pharmacy here at Capitol Illini Veterinary Services. It is a highly palatable Omega 3 supplement made especially for cats and dogs. It has benefits for many pets, including pets with conditions such as: osteoarthritis, pancreatitis, allergies, kidney disease, heart disease and any condition which causes inflammation.



Is your pet microchipped?

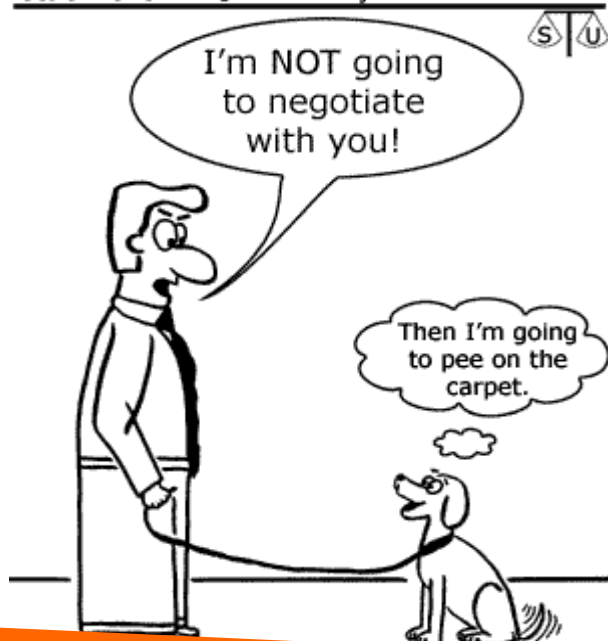
10 million pets get lost every year, and without ID, 90% never return home. The HomeAgain microchips and Pet Recovery system can help you reunite if your pet gets lost or stolen and acts as a permanent means of identification. One injection here at Capitol Illini and once yearly registration is all that is needed for your pet to become ID'd.



Does your pet need a senior wellness profile?

Everyone knows that pets age quickly. When our pets turn 7 years of age they are considered seniors and require more medical care and attention. We recommend twice yearly exams and yearly bloodwork to help keep a close eye on how your pet's body is functioning. To provide this care we offer a senior wellness profile that can evaluate how your pet is doing. This test requires a blood draw and urine sample to be evaluated. Our senior wellness profile includes: complete blood count, chemistry tests, heartworm test, thyroid function test, and full urinalysis. The chemistry tests help to evaluate how the liver, kidneys, pancreas, and other organs are functioning. The complete blood count tests for the overall health of the blood cells, and the thyroid function test checks for malfunctions of the thyroid gland. Lastly, the urinalysis helps to evaluate the urinary system and to detect early kidney disease. If your pet is a senior, check with your doctor to see if your pet requires this testing. Feel free to call our office, or ask to talk to a veterinary technician for the best recommendations for your aging pet.

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Feline Heartworms continued-



In the lungs there are 2 phases where heartworm infection can cause symptoms in cats; first, when immature worms reach the lungs and pulmonary arteries, and second, when the worm dies. The immature worms in the lungs interfere with the cat's ability to breathe. When the worm dies it causes a massive inflammatory immune system response. The cat's body then has to try to digest the dead pieces of worm inside the lungs and in the bloodstream. This syndrome has an acronym= H.A.R.D. "Heartworm Associated Respiratory Disease."

Testing in cats can be more difficult than it is in dogs due to the fact that adult worms can be present in very low numbers. Cats may require more than one type of test to determine if infection is present. Thoracic radiographs or Ultrasound can also be helpful. There is no test that is 100 percent accurate at detecting heartworms in cats.

Heartworms are 100% preventable and there are 4 products available for monthly use that are very reliable. Heartgard, Interceptor, Advantage Multi and Revolution. We at Capitol Illini Veterinary services recommend Revolution once monthly year round for prevention of heartworm infection in cats. Treatment is available for dogs, but unfortunately the drug is too unsafe for use in cats except as a last resort.

Every cat, including those that are predominantly indoors, in endemic high risk areas (this includes Illinois) for heartworm is at risk for exposure and infection. One mosquito bite is all that is necessary for infection to occur. Prevention is key. Protect your cat today!



(Source www.VeterinaryPartner.com)

"A cat isn't fussy— Just so long as you remember he likes his milk in the shallow, rose-patterned saucer and his fish on the blue plate. From which he will take it, and eat it off the floor." -Arthur Bridges

**Welcome our
NEW
Associate
Veterinarian!!!**

**Dr. Amy Wade
DVM**



Dr. Wade joined Capitol Illini in May 2010. She grew up in Rushville, IL, a small town located an hour northwest of Springfield. Growing up, Dr. Wade always knew she wanted to be a veterinarian. To gain experience, she began working in a veterinary clinic during high school and has assisted in a variety of veterinary practices since, including having worked for a board certified veterinary dentist. Through her experiences, Dr. Wade has developed a special interest in internal medicine, dermatology, and dentistry.

Dr. Wade received her bachelor's degree in biology from Millikin University in Decatur, IL and graduated with honors from the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine. During veterinary school, Dr. Wade enjoyed keeping busy with various organizations and clubs. She was particularly active in Omega Tau Sigma, an organization that raised money for local charities and promoted public awareness of veterinary medicine. Dr. Wade resides in Springfield with two cats, Starr and Haylee, and her leopard gecko Neeka.

