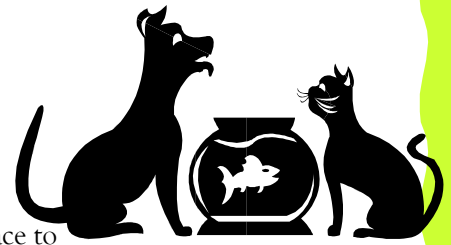


Capitol Illini Vet Clinic

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Tick-Tock its time for Ticks! Is your pet protected?



Spring is coming and so are the ticks. No one likes ticks, they are a menace to both ourselves and our pets. However, they are more than just a menace and are a real medical threat to both people and pets. A few common tick-borne disease that affect dogs are Rocky Mountain Spotted fever, Lyme disease, and Ehrlichia. Symptoms vary and treatment is readily available once a diagnosis is reached.

Rocky Mountain Spotted fever is often conceived as a disease that your pet can only be affected by if you live in the mountains; but this is not the case. It can occur right here in central Illinois. Symptoms of this disease include: fever, inappetance, vomiting, diarrhea, depression, cough, weight loss, and bleeding in the eyes or mucus membranes. The infection can range from mild to severe; with some cases resulting in death if untreated. This disease is difficult to diagnose because the symptoms are so vague.

Ehrlichia is a rickettsial tick-borne disease. Symptoms include: fever, enlarged lymph nodes, bleeding, arthritis in multiple joints, low platelet numbers, and anemia on blood testing. This disease has several phases. Acute phase has mild symptoms and occurs 1-3 weeks post-bite. Sub-clinical phase is when the dog appears better or normal but will have mild reduction in platelets. This phase can go on un-noticed and continue for months or years. Finally there is the chronic phase; he dog shows symptoms again. These can include abnormal bleeding, deep eye inflammation, and neurological symptoms can also occur.

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Feline hypertrophic cardiomyopathy

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (often abbreviated HCM) is the most common type of heart disease in the cat, but is very rare in dogs. It can be described as a disease where the heart wall, which is made of muscle, becomes abnormally thick. Any cat can have it and the symptoms range from easily overlooked inappetance to sudden paralysis or death. The disease varies in severity and treatment can be difficult.

HCM appears to be inherited. Many purebred breeds are affected by a genetic mutation that causes this disease; the Maine Coon seems to be especially affected. Though purebreds are often predisposed, the cat most affected is the Domestic Shorthair ; our most common cat. Diagnosis can come at any age but generally diagnosed at middle age.

The severity of HCM depends on the amount of thickening of the muscle wall. The less thickening the milder the disease; the greater the thickening the more severe. HCM is a progressive disease, meaning it worsens over time. The ability of the heart to pump blood normally is impaired. The heart is unable to relax its muscle walls fully; this impedes blood flow. The back up of blood flow decreases circulation throughout the body and especially affects circulation through the lungs. This can lead to a fluid accumulation in the lungs and congestive heart failure. This thickened wall can also lead to your cat developing arrhythmias (abnormal rhythm of the heart), or blood clots in the heart, which can lodge in a large artery that can lead to sudden death or painful paralysis. It cannot be predicted as to what course the disease will take in any given cat.

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Toxic beauties, lilies are toxic!

As Easter and Spring come many people love to enjoy fresh flowers such as Easter lilies in their homes. Although these beautiful plants appear fragile and delicate, they can cause life threatening problems for your pets, especially your cat.

Many species of plants are highly toxic to your pets, among these are many species of lilies. According to the ASPCA poison control center; Easter lilies, tiger lilies, rubrum, Japanese show lilies, and some species of day lilies are highly toxic to your cat. Consuming even a very small amount of these lilies can cause kidney failure in your cat.

To keep your cat safe it is important to educate yourself on what plants are toxic to your cat. The ASPCA poison control center and the Cat fanciers' Associate put together a website that contains pictures of commonly toxic lilies and a list of pet safe plants that you could use instead. The web address is <http://www.cfainc.org/articles/lilies.html>. I encourage everyone to be sure that the plants around their pets are safe.

(source: www.Veterinarypartner.com)



Cats always know whether people like or dislike them. They do not always care enough to do anything about it.

-Winifred Carriere



Tick-Tock Ticks...cont. from page 1

Lyme disease is likely the best known tick borne disease. In dogs, Lyme disease can have delayed symptoms which do not occur for weeks or months after infection occurs. The most common sign of Lyme disease is signs of arthritis. Over time this infection can also cause kidney damage from long term immune system stimulation. Rarely fever, heart or neurological symptoms occur.

Testing is available for all of these diseases, and when combined with clinical symptoms and a thorough patient history, a diagnosis can be reached. Once the diagnosis is reached, treatment is fairly simple. A lengthy course of appropriate antibiotics will usually take care of this. Though treatment is available, there can be lingering problems from these diseases that cannot be fixed, such as joint problems and kidney damage.

Prevention of these diseases are even easier than treatment. Prevention is always the best medicine. All of these tick borne diseases require a tick to be attached to your dog for at least 48 hours to transmit the disease. Keeping your pet free of ticks and knowing when your dog is at an increased risk of exposure is the most important. Dogs that go hunting or hiking in wooded areas are most at risk but even dogs that live in the city can encounter ticks in the back yard or at the park.

Many preventive measures are available. Looking your dog over for ticks after possible exposure is very important. Topical products such as Frontline Plus(registered Merial product) or Advantix (Bayer) kill ticks before the 48 hour mark is reached thus the diseases cannot be transmitted. There is also a vaccine available for Lyme disease if your pet is really at an increased risk of exposure. Please ask us here at Capitol Illini for the best preventative measures to take for your dog's specific needs.

(source www.Veterinarypartner.com)

Feline hypertrophic cardiomyopathy

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Symptoms of HCM are variable and often depend on severity of disease. Cats are also very good at hiding pain and disease so often signs can be overlooked until severe. Mild symptoms of HCM include mildly increased respiratory rate or non-descript problems such as inappetance. Severe signs include sudden limb paralysis and severe respiratory distress secondary to fluid accumulation in the lungs from congestive heart failure. On physical exam your veterinarian may be able to find symptoms you cannot. Often as HCM progresses a heart murmur, increased heart rate, and gallop rhythm may develop, and these can be detected while your veterinarian is listening to your pets' heart in a quiet room.

Diagnosis of the disease requires some testing to be sure it is HCM. Diseases that can cause similar symptoms, such as hyperthyroidism or systemic high blood pressure must be ruled out. Ultrasound of heart and/or referral to a veterinary cardiologist is often necessary to reach a definite diagnosis and to decide on further treatment.

Treatment is available but there is no cure for HCM. The muscle wall thickening is irreversible. Medications to try and help the heart muscle relax, other medications to treat the congestive heart failure, treat fluid congestion in the lungs, and other medications that may decrease the risk of clot formation are available. Though treatment may help extend life and quality of life for your cat, it is still difficult to determine how your cat will respond to this treatment .

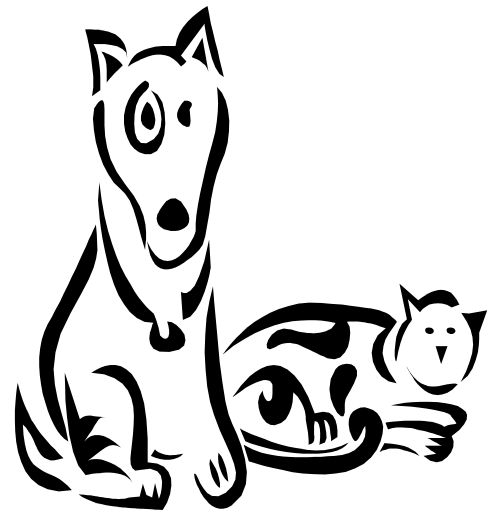
Prognosis varies from grave to fair. Some cats live an essentially normal life for several years while others may have very little time post-diagnosis. Sometimes when cats die very abruptly HCM can be the cause. It can progress slowly or rapidly. In any case, it is important to diagnose this disease as early as possible to provide the best possible outcome. Careful observation of your cats habits and daily routine are important and regular veterinary visits serve an especially important role. Every cat should be examined at least yearly and twice yearly as they reach their older years (8 years plus) to provide your cat the best probability of living to see its golden years.

(source; www.Veterinarypartner.com)

Staff corner: Megan– Veterinary assistant

We would like to introduce you to a new assistant here at Capitol Illini!

Megan joined the Capitol Illini team in July 2010. Megan is a 2008 graduate of Southern Illinois University Carbondale with a BS in Animal Science. Megan spent two years at Nestle Purina Product Technology Center running nutritional trials on the cattery side. She recently returned back home to Illinois, sharing her home with her dog Sophie and cat Sammy. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, reading, hiking with her dog, and other outdoor activities. Currently Megan is pursuing a degree in Veterinary Technology while continuing to learn and work here at Capitol Illini.



Animals are such agreeable friends– they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms.

-George Eliot

