



# ANIMAL MEDICAL CLINIC



March/April 2009 Newsletter

[www.fremontanimalmedicalclinic.com](http://www.fremontanimalmedicalclinic.com)

## Hello all,

This is the time of year that we all begin to long for spring and the cabin fever begins to set in. Our bodies begin to sense that the hibernating tendency of winter is coming to a close and we are eager for warm walks with our dogs, going for bicycle rides, and some even long for sitting behind the wheel of their lawnmowers. Never fear spring will soon be sprung. We have some exciting things in store for everyone this spring like our open house in May to celebrate National Pet Health Week. Watch for details.

## Do You Have a Problem Child?

"Inappropriate behaviors" are behaviors that our pets exhibit such as destruction of furniture, aggression, anxiety, pulling on a leash – just to name a few. Many pet owners may consider the inappropriate behaviors demonstrated by their pet to be a normal part of owning a pet.

The good news is that most "inappropriate behaviors" can be overcome with the help of our staff that are specially trained in animal behavior. The first step towards eliminating "inappropriate behaviors" is to identify the problem behavior and then we can determine the pet's motivation for performing this behavior and then together we can devise a behavior modification plan.

Some behavior issues may be the result of an underlying medical problem, so it is often best to have one of our veterinarians examine your pet to make sure that this isn't the case.

The Humane Society of the United States reports that more dogs and cats are euthanized or surrendered to animal shelters each year because of behavior issues than any other reason. So in attempt to reduce this sad trend veterinarians and veterinary staff are gearing-up their efforts to help pet owners identify and correct behavior problems.

If you are concerned that your pet has behavior issues please give us a call or schedule a consultation today.



## Reminders

- Call now for boarding and grooming reservations during your vacation get-away!
- Get a \$5.00 mail-in rebate with 12 months Heartgard purchase!
- Have some old blankets, quilts, or comforters you don't want? We would be glad to take them off your hands for our surgery and boarding patients' kennels.
- Frontline applied each month keeps the Fleas and Ticks away!
- Check out our newly updated website at [www.fremontanimalmedicalclinic.com](http://www.fremontanimalmedicalclinic.com)
- Need an ID tag? We can make one for you in a matter of minutes!

## Do Dogs Get Colds?

Kennel Cough, also known as Infectious Tracheobronchitis, is a common and highly contagious respiratory disease in dogs, and sometimes cats, that affects pets very similar to our cold virus. Its spread easily when dogs are in close contact with other infected dogs, such as boarding kennels, grooming facilities, veterinary clinics, and other places where other dogs can be encountered (PetSmart, dog parks, etc.). Patients that have been exposed to affected dogs or cats can start showing signs of the infection within 5-10 days after exposure.

Dogs infected with kennel cough will usually be normal in regards to activity level, appetite, and general attitude. The main symptom of kennel cough is a dry, harsh cough that can be very loud and forceful; sometimes causing dry heaves or retching. The throat is often very sensitive to the touch, initiating a coughing spasm; thus, making a collar and leash more difficult for the dog to tolerate. If you do notice any nasal discharge, lethargy, anorexia or other signs of illness, something more serious than kennel cough could be the problem. If in doubt, a visit to the doctor is always best.

Treatment for kennel cough includes antibiotics and cough suppressants. Most of the time pets will recover in 5-20 days, depending on the severity and treatment. Your veterinarian will need to see your pet to determine which medication(s) will best suit the situation.

Prevention of kennel cough is primarily through vaccination and limiting exposure to infected animals. The vaccination can be given as an injection or by administering a few drops of the vaccination into the nose. It is recommended to be given on a yearly basis, although can be given every 6 months for those pets in high risk areas. High risk areas include but are not limited to grooming, boarding, veterinary clinics, and doggie daycare facilities. Your veterinarian will be able to help set up a vaccination schedule suitable for the age and lifestyle of your pet.

## Did you know?

- Potpourri can be very toxic to animals
- The normal rectal body temperature for dogs and cats is 101 to 102 degrees Fahrenheit
- Spaying/Neutering your pet at 6 months of age or earlier eliminates some major health issues in the future
- A cat can go into heat every 1-3 weeks until bred
- 16,438 to 21,917 pets are euthanized each DAY, because of overpopulation

# HEARTWORM DISEASE

## WHAT IS IT AND HOW CAN I PREVENT IT??



Heartworm disease is caused by a parasitic worm (up to 14 inches long), that lives in the heart and pulmonary arteries of infected dogs. Dogs acquire this infection through mosquito bites as mosquitoes readily pick up larval heartworms from infected dogs and carry them to new dogs. The adult heartworms survive up to five years and during this time, the female gives live birth to millions of young (microfilaria). These microfilaria live in the bloodstream, mainly in the small blood vessels. Cats can also be infected with heartworms.

### Who is at risk for Heartworm Disease?

- ✓ All dogs and cats, regardless if they are always indoors, can be bitten by mosquitoes carrying the heartworm larvae.
- ✓ Short and long-haired pets are all susceptible to mosquito bites.
- ✓ All dogs and cats in this area that are not on a heartworm preventative are at risk for developing heartworm disease.

In the pulmonary arteries of an infected dog, the worm's presence generates a strong immune response. If enough worms are present, the heart must work extra hard to pump blood through the plugged up arteries. A heavy worm infection (over 25 worms for a 40 lb dog), causes the worms to back up into the heart. The worms actually take up a significant amount of space within the heart, leading to less blood being pumped.

### Signs of Heartworm Infection

- **Coughing**
- **Shortness of breath**
- **Fainting episodes**
- **Weight loss**
- **Abdominal swelling**
- **Tiring easily during play**
- **Death**

It takes a number of years before dogs show outward signs of infection. Consequently, the disease is diagnosed mostly in four to eight year old dogs. The disease is seldom diagnosed in a dog less than one year of age because the young worms (larvae) take up to seven months to mature following establishment of infection in a dog. Canine heartworm disease occurs all

over the world. In the United States, it was once limited to the south and southeast regions. However, the disease is spreading and is now found in most regions of the United States and Canada, particularly where mosquitoes are prevalent.

Heartworm preventative medications are used to periodically kill larval heartworms that have managed to gain access to the dog's body. The products available are intended for monthly use, which means they kill all the heartworm larvae that the dogs or cats have been exposed to during the previous month. If the dog is over 1 year of age, has never been given a heartworm preventative, has missed a dose either because of being ill or owner negligence, and has never or is not regularly (on a yearly basis) been tested for heartworm disease, it is STRONGLY suggested to have the dog tested. If the dog was to test positive for heartworm disease, and was given the preventative medication, there is a considerable risk that the medication could cause a very serious reaction that may lead to death. Since the heartworm preventative medication is a prescription product, the dog will need to have a negative test on a yearly basis for the owner to be able to purchase the product.



A heartworm test is performed by drawing blood from the dog (a very small amount is needed), the result is normally ready within 10 min. If a dog does test positive for heartworm disease, there are treatment options. There are several other tests that will need to be performed once a positive test is acknowledged to further assess the damage and severity the heartworms have caused. The treatment is very extensive and costly, making the once a year test and monthly preventative the key to success in preventing the disease!

If you have further questions or are concerned your dog may have heartworm disease, please don't hesitate to call or stop by for more information or to have your dog checked by one of our veterinarians.

