



OAK FOREST Veterinary Hospital



Pet Talk

Summer 2023



Canine Heartworm

This Deadly Disease Can Steal Your Dog's Health

Hearthworm is a painful disease that occurs when your dog is bitten by a mosquito infected with the larval form of *dirofilaria immitis*—a thread-like roundworm. These parasites infest the heart, lungs and blood vessels of dogs, cats and other mammals, causing severe lung disease, heart failure, and damage to other organs. The disease is most common in areas with heavy mosquito populations.

Symptoms, Diagnosis and Treatment

The first signs of a heartworm infestation may simply be poor appetite, fatigue, weight loss or lethargy. As the disease progresses, your dog may develop a persistent cough. If left untreated, the worms can cause congestive heart failure or a sudden blockage of blood flow within the heart, which can be fatal if the blockage is not immediately repaired through surgery.

There's a simple blood test to check for the presence of microfilariae; however, it can be prone to a false negative result. A more accurate test is the heartworm antigen test that looks for a protein the parasite releases, indicating a heartworm infection. The treatment protocol for heartworm can be hard on pets, but survival rates have improved due to advances in veterinary medicine.

Prevention

Year-round prevention is critical, so if your pet is not on a preventative or hasn't been tested in the last year, please call us right away. We will test for heartworm disease prior to putting your dog on a preventative as these medications can cause complications if a dog is already infected. We have various options for prevention and will be happy to discuss which one is right for your pet.



Playing It Safe

Dos and Dont's for Feline Fun



Playing with your cat offers numerous benefits and should be an everyday activity. It provides much needed exercise for indoor cats, keeps them mentally stimulated, and helps them bond with you. It's important, however, to play safely to avoid injury or mental distress.

- 🐾 Talk to your kitty in a happy voice while you play. Never make a loud noise that could scare them.
- 🐾 Cats love to hide in paper bags and cardboard boxes on the floor. Leave them out and watch the fun! However, never offer plastic bags or anything that once contained a toxic substance.
- 🐾 Drag a string or any object behind you and let them chase! Make sure they can catch the object intermittently. No one wants to play a game they can't win.
- 🐾 Toys with bells and squeakers are feline favorites!
- 🐾 Be cautious about cat toys. They shouldn't contain small pieces that can be chewed off and cause choking. Also be wary of toys made in countries that don't have the same pet safety standards as we do in the U.S., especially when it comes to toxins. Also avoid laser pointers, which can permanently damage the eyes.
- 🐾 Your kitty may enjoy catnip toys, interactive toys, or motorized toys that allow them to chase and "catch" objects. Periodically invest in a fun and safe new toy. Motorized toys should only be used with supervision.
- 🐾 Make playtime with your cat part of your daily routine. What they really love is your attention!

Feline Dental Disease

What Your Cat's Bad Breath Could Be Hiding



If your cat has bad breath, dental disease is likely the culprit—studies show that as many as 90% of cats four years and older are affected. Dental disease can not only cause severe pain, it can lead to more serious health problems.

Plaque deposits on your cat's teeth can cause an immune response to the bacteria in plaque, resulting in inflammation known as gingivitis. You may notice redness or swelling around the gums as well as a reluctance to eat, turning the head while chewing, pawing at the mouth, drooling, or halitosis. Left untreated, gingivitis can progress to periodontitis, a condition that weakens the gums and underlying bones and is usually irreversible. Tooth resorption is another common dental condition and is the most common cause of tooth loss. This is a condition in which a tooth begins to deteriorate from the inside.

Unfortunately, the bacteria and infection that causes most forms of dental disease can spread to other organs. In severe cases, infection can damage the kidneys, heart and liver. To diagnose dental disease, we examine your cat's mouth and take x-rays under anesthetic. During a dental cleaning, we remove the plaque and tartar that can cause gingivitis. We may also treat other dental issues, such as tooth resorption, while your kitty is anesthetized. For some infections, we may prescribe antibiotics.

Fortunately, we can prevent these common types of feline dental disease. Bring your cat to see us so we can create a dental care plan that will help your kitty avoid the pain and potential complications of dental disease.

Goose Honks

Welcome Our New Vets!

H! It's me again. Summer is here and I just got a summer cut. I don't really like getting haircuts, but my mom (Dr. Moore) says it makes me look handsome.

Mom is excited about two new other doctors that started recently. One is from Louisiana, but my mom says she actually went to vet school "over the pond" in somewhere called Glasgow, Scotland, and graduated in 2015. Then she worked in the United Kingdom up until this winter. She talks a little weird and spells lots of things differently, but she makes everyone laugh. She really loves surgery and is a member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, which sounds pretty royal to me. Her name is Dr. Stephanie Harmon.

There is another new vet starting in June too! Her name is Dr. Codi Cass and she just graduated from Texas A&M Vet School. She was hanging out here for a few weeks earlier this year, so some of you may have met her. She grew up in Odem, Texas, where she raised farm animals including goats, cows, pigs, and rabbits. Thankfully, during vet school, Dr. Cass realized how much cooler dogs and cats are and now works with my mom!

There are lots of new faces around my mom's work to help out all vets now. But the good news is that it means we are able to take care of more dogs and cats (and their moms and dads too). Gotta go! I smell too good and need to go find something stinky to roll in (my version of doggie perfume).



Goose



Call us at (713) 682-6351 today to make an appointment!



Heat Alert

Keep Them Safe this Summer!



Like you, your pets are excited about all of the fun that summer brings. Unfortunately, the season can also bring special hazards for our four-legged friends. Keep these summer dangers in mind:

Keep it cool. If it's too hot outside for your comfort, it's too hot for your pet. Don't leave them outside for more than a few minutes on hot days, and make sure they have shade.

Avoid dehydration. Keep water bowls full of fresh, cool water. Carry water when you take your dog for a walk or long car ride.

Never leave your pet in a hot car! Even with the windows cracked, the interior can quickly become like a furnace. When it's only 70 degrees outside, temperatures can reach 100 degrees inside your car in 20 minutes! Sadly, many dogs are lost this way every year.

Water Hazards

Don't assume your dog likes or is able to swim. Bring a suitable flotation device and don't force your dog into water. In fact, the chlorine in pools, salt in the ocean, and algae and bacteria in lakes and ponds can all be harmful. Rinse them off well after a swim and be sure they drink only fresh, safe water.

Asphalt and Pavement

If the asphalt or pavement is too hot or rough for your bare feet, it's too hot for your pets. To avoid scorched pads, walk your dog early in the morning or later in the evening when streets and sidewalks are cooler.

Watch for signs of heat stress and dehydration, which include dry gums, excessive lethargy, decreased urination and lack of appetite. Dogs with short noses and pets that are older, overweight, or have thick coats are more prone to heat stress. Be sure to contact us immediately if you suspect your pet is suffering from any heat-related illness.



Refer a Friend and Save!

Refer a new client and save \$10 on your next doctor's visit.

Be sure to mention the refer-a-friend savings when you make your appointment.

Microchip Savings

\$10 Savings

on Microchipping
(includes registration in the national database)

Increase the likelihood that your pet will be returned to you!

Not valid with any other offer.
Expires 8/31/2023

Senior Wellness Savings

\$20 Savings

for Canine and Feline

Senior Wellness Profile includes bloodwork, urinalysis and thyroid check

Not valid with any other offer.
Expires 8/31/2023

Drop-off Savings

Save 5%

on morning drop-offs for "routine" veterinary services.

Expires 8/31/2023.

Call (713) 682-6351

today to make an appointment!



When you're here, you're family.

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