

# THE N.O.A.H. NEWS

Issue 2, Volume 1

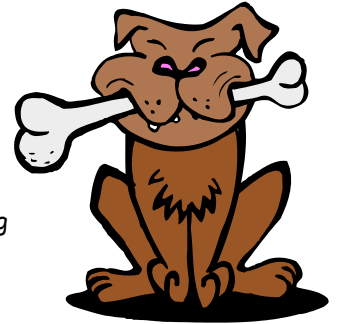
January - March 2006

## Is The Doctor in?

We often receive phone calls from pet owners asking for advice on a pet's behavior or a concerning change they have noticed in their pet recently. Frequently, these calls begin with an apology from the pet owner for "bothering us" with something they are not sure is a concern or not. Please do not feel the need to apologize to us, as we understand that most pet owners are not trained as veterinarians! The focus of this article is an attempt to provide you, your pet's primary caregiver; with some common signs or symptoms that would indicate a trip to the veterinarian in is order. However, please don't ever hesitate to call the hospital and ask, if our receptionists are not sure, they will either check directly with one of our doctor's, or advise based on the nature of the complaint that an appointment be scheduled with a doctor. Below is a short list of items that may be helpful in guiding you in monitoring your pet's health. Also listed are some of the more common misconceptions we find people harbor regarding pet health!

### Part 1 - Things that should prompt you to call:

- Gait: any limping, non-weight bearing on a leg or stiffness when rising
- Posture: standing with a hunched back
- Body weight: noticeable gain or loss over a short period of time
- Hair coat: sudden changes in texture or excessive hair loss
- Skin: excessive itchiness, scabbing or balding of fur
- Appetite: any sudden changes, either increase or decrease
- Bowel function: diarrhea or constipation
- Personality: unusual vocalization, excessive laziness or hyperactivity
- Eyes: discharge, cloudiness or irritation
- Ears: change in odour, external appearance of ear or excessive head shaking
- Urine output: abrupt cessation, dramatic increase or bloody urine
- Respiratory: coughing, nasal discharge or excessive panting



### Part 2 - Common Misconceptions about pet health:

- *A wet nose means a healthy pet* - Although often-healthy pets do have a warm moist nose, this is an unreliable indicator of your pet's health
- *Lots of water consumption is healthy* - Many healthy pets, dogs particularly, do drink lots water however, a noticeable increase in your pets' water intake over their average is often an early indicator of many health problems. So don't presume this is necessarily a normal change.
- *Hairballs are normal for cats* - This is one of the most common misconceptions among cat owners. Sure, many cats may vomit some hair once or twice a year, but all too often, pet owners inadvertently attribute abnormal or excessive vomition in cats to the need to "bring up" ingested hair. Vomiting, including bringing up fur that is occurring more frequently than 3-4 times per year is almost always due to some other underlying medical problem and should be discussed with the veterinarian.
- *Chewing bones helps to keep teeth clean and healthy* - One of the most common causes for painful, expensive dental and intestinal accidents is the ingestion of bones by pets. This is one of the most common misconceptions that we see in our dog owner's repertoire. Bones are a dangerous treat; they will not keep your pet's necessary dental work at bay and may, in fact, expedite the need for emergency dental work due to their common ability to break molars!

1

---

North Oakville Animal Hospital Professional Corporation, 2530 Sixth Line, Oakville, ON  
Ph (905) 257-3700 Fax (905) 257-8115 E-mail [noah@on.aibn.com](mailto:noah@on.aibn.com)

YOUR FAMILY PET WELLNESS CENTRE

# FELINE LOWER URINARY TRACT DISEASE (FLUTD)

Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD) is a multi-factorial disease of cats involving the lower urinary tract. The organs involved in the lower urinary tract include the bladder and the urethra (the structure that carries urine from the bladder to the outside world).

Common signs exhibited by cats with FLUTD may include one or all of the following; increased frequency of urination, pain with urination, straining to urinate, inappropriate urination outside the litter box, excessive grooming of the penis/vagina area and/or the presence of blood in the urine.

These symptoms of FLUTD are attributable to inflammation and swelling within the bladder and urethra. Unfortunately, a common, complication of unattended FLUTD can be complete urinary tract obstruction. In these incidences cats are no longer able to urinate. This complication is almost exclusively seen in male cats. It is vital to seek emergency treatment, as the inability to urinate is life threatening if left untreated.

There are a number of potential causes of FLUTD such as the presence of crystals or stones in the bladder and urinary tract, bacterial infections, anatomical abnormalities or environmental stresses. However, in many cats the cause of FLUTD cannot be determined. This is referred to as "idiopathic" or "unknown" FLUTD.

Diagnosing FLUTD is based on the common historical symptoms as mentioned above and laboratory testing to confirm the exact underlying cause. These tests include a urinalysis, bacterial culture of the urine sample, blood tests, and radiographs (x-rays) of the bladder.

Treatment varies depending on the underlying cause and is tailored to each individual cat. Almost always included in the treatment plan is a diet change to a special prescription diet and educating you on ways to improve your cat's water consumption. The doctor will recommend a very specific diet that is right for your cat. It is important to remember that commercially available foods from pet stores may claim to be appropriate for FLUTD are NOT formulated strongly enough to effectively treat and prevent recurrences.

Although there is undeniably a genetic predisposition to the development of FLUTD it is more commonly seen in cats that are overweight, inactive and drink less water (i.e. those who eat exclusively dry food). Encouraging exercise, healthy water consumption and maintaining a proper body weight for your cat are therefore, an essential "ounce of prevention"!



## DENTAL RADIOLOGY (X-RAY)

A complete visual examination of your pet's mouth is the first part of any dental procedure once your pet is placed under general anesthetic. During this exam we often discover teeth that are broken, missing, discoloured or loose or evidence of severe gum recession that we were not previously able to see while your pet was awake. We perform dental x-rays of these affected teeth and surrounding tissues to tell us if the tooth can be saved or if it requires extraction. X-ray reveals to us the presence of bone or root loss or even remaining parts of a lost tooth that are hidden under the gum that we would not normally see.

Every one of our dental procedure levels include in their pricing, the required number of dental films for that pet. Our dental x-ray machine and dental films are the same as what your dentist uses.

All dental x-rays that are taken will be shown and explained to you.



Normal x-ray of the lower incisors of a dog.

## DO DOGS & CATS GET CAVITIES?

Dental caries (cavities) are not common in dogs, but diets high in carbohydrates, and lack of brushing can sometimes contribute to their formation. In cats however they are a common problem and are given a special name called feline resorptive lesions or FORL's. Exactly why and how cats develop these FORL's is not completely understood. They are painful holes through the enamel of the tooth into the sensitive dentin and pulp. Unfortunately, the only available treatment for these problems is extraction of the affected tooth, filling them does not tend to stop the progression of the lesion once it begins. Left untreated, they lead to very painful mouths, tooth loss and an unhappy cat.



## + Cold Weather Hazards +

**Antifreeze** has a pleasant taste to humans and pets. Unfortunately, very small amounts can be lethal. As little as one teaspoon of antifreeze can be deadly to a cat and less than four teaspoons can be lethal to a 10-pound dog. Thoroughly clean up any spills, store antifreeze in tightly closed containers in a secured cabinet. Automotive products such as gasoline, oil and antifreeze should be stored in areas that are inaccessible to your pets. Propylene glycol is a safer form of antifreeze. You should seek emergency care immediately if you suspect that your pet has ingested antifreeze.

**Ice melting products** can be irritating to skin and mouth. Depending on the actual ingredient of the ice melt and the quantity, signs of ingestion may include excessive drooling, depression, vomiting or even electrolyte imbalances. Always wipe your dog's feet after coming in from outside. Think twice about where you spread ice melting products outside!



## FEBRUARY IS NATIONAL PET DENTAL HEALTH MONTH!!!

We are pleased to announce that we are once again celebrating Dental Health Month this year by offering the following "specials" during the month of February;

- i. Complimentary pet dental health examination.
- ii. Reduced fee for pre-anesthetic blood testing.
- iii. 10% discount on any dental procedures.
- iv. Complimentary bag of Dental formula diet.

Please call us to schedule your pet's complimentary dental exam appointment!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS!

The NOAH family is "expanding" again. Dr. Sarah Machell and Dr. Lesley Ralston are both expecting babies in May 2006. We all wish them and their families' healthy and happy times. Also on a happy note, Dr. Shari Wiseman will be returning to work from her maternity leave in the New Year!