



Rutland Veterinary Clinic *and* Surgical Center

Paws, Claws & Tales

SPRING 2011

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You've probably seen or talked to **Joann Greene** if your pet has had surgery in our hospital, because Joann has been our head surgical technician for 20 years. She started at the Rutland Veterinary Clinic in 1979, while still in high school, working in the kennels. Then she moved to outpatient, where she helped the doctors examine and treat sick patients, then to the lab where she learned how to perform in-house diagnostics.

She now spends her days assisting our surgeons. This job often starts early and ends late. Joann starts by preparing the surgical suite before surgery, assisting the surgeon with preanesthetic exams and then carefully monitoring anesthesia and recovery of each patient. Cleanup comes afterwards—washing and sterilizing
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Is it dangerous out there?

MYTHS AND TRUTHS....

At least once a week, our veterinarians treat dogs or cats that have been injured while outdoors. You may remember last summer's frightening but ultimately heartwarming story about "Belle," the Sheltie who escaped from her penned yard and was found six weeks later, brutalized and near death. We treated her for multiple bite wounds and slashes, dehydration and malnutrition. Conjecture had it that she was attacked by coyotes, but we don't know for sure.

What ARE the real threats out there? And how can we keep our pets safe? Rumors abound, and since our pets can't tell us their stories, we talked to Kim Royar, a wildlife biologist at the Vermont Department of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Which wild animals will attack our outdoor pets? Cats are certainly at risk outdoors. Since they are about the size of rabbits, a ubiquitous prey species, they are vulnerable to predation by lots of different animals. Although cats are not usually a significant component of any wild animal's diet, if they are left to roam outside, coyotes, foxes, fisher, hawks and owls will attack if given the chance.

What about dogs? Dogs are less vulnerable to predation for several reasons. One is their size, although small dogs in similar circumstances would run the same risks as cats. Any dog that is alone and weakened by illness or injury could be considered prey. Typically, most dog owners maintain close contact with



Photo courtesy of Cory Blodgett

their dogs when they are outside, and they are rarely outdoors all night. Although predation can happen at any time, pets are most vulnerable during dawn, dusk and night time hours.

What about wolves, mountain lions and coy-dogs? The mountain lion, or eastern cougar, has officially been declared extinct by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and we have had only one documented Eastern Canadian wolf in Vermont in recent years. The wild dog-like creature that presently resides in Vermont is not a coy-dog but an Eastern coyote, an animal that bred with wolves as they moved east through Canada and is genetically less diverse than its "cousin," the Western coyote. While we are debunking myths, the fisher, often called a "fisher cat," is not related to cats but is in the weasel family. They are native to Vermont but were extirpated by the late 1800s, then reintroduced in the 1950s and 1960s to control porcupine populations. They are vicious

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surgical packs so that the suite is ready for the next day. Joann or one of our other surgical technicians is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to assist with emergencies.

Joann's 20-year-old daughter, Hannah, is a junior at Castleton State College, where she plays softball. Her 16-year-old son, Casey, is a junior at RHS, where he is a goalie for the hockey team. She currently has four dogs and five cats, all but one either strays or puppies or kittens that she has fostered then adopted.

She is our resident wildlife rehabilitation expert, and frequently has an orphaned squirrel that she is bottle-feeding by her side, later to be released into the wild. In addition to attending her kids' athletic events and fostering baby creatures, Joann enjoys reading and going to the gym.

Rutland Veterinary Clinic and Surgical Center

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DANGEROUS continued from pg. 1

fighters, and could indeed cause harm to a domestic animal.

What can we do to keep our pets safe? The only real protection is to keep them indoors, at least from dusk until after dawn. All attractants such as garbage, dog and cat food should be kept in a secure location, not outside where the availability might increase the habituation of wild animals. Even bird

feeders can attract small mammals such as mice and squirrels, and subsequently coyotes, foxes and bobcats. If wild animals are seen close to homes, they should be discouraged from hanging around by banging pots and pans, yelling and/or spraying with water. If the animals appear ill or don't leave, call your local warden. Rabies is endemic in Vermont, and is one more risk to consider when our pets intersect with their wild counterparts.

New Parasite Protection Protocols

April showers bring May flowers, as the saying goes. The warmth and humidity of spring also heralds the parasite season for our pets. New advances in parasite control products allow us to better protect pets against fleas, ticks and intestinal parasites or "worms." Worms can live in your pet throughout the year, with the body providing a nice warm "home" for these intestinal parasites. When you schedule an appointment for spring vaccines and parasite testing, we will tell you about our current recommendations for dogs, including year-round protection:

Scalibor – This is a collar that kills and protects against all stages of the tick, and any adult fleas, for 6 months.

Sentinel or Interceptor – This is a monthly pill with many benefits, which completes the job begun by Scalibor. It is known as a "purge dewormer," meaning it kills any adult whipworm, hookworm or roundworm present in the animal. It also prevents heartworm disease. Additionally, Sentinel contains an "insect growth regulator" (IGR), which prevents any flea eggs that may be in your home from hatching. No more worries about flea bombing your house to prevent reinfestation as those eggs or larvae hatch into adults.

Vectra3D – In some cases, we may recommend this alternate product, which is a monthly topical that is very effective against ticks and fleas. It also repels mosquitoes. This product CANNOT BE USED ON CATS!

We continue to recommend **Revolution** exclusively for parasite control in cats, because it is safe and effective against ticks, heartworm disease, roundworms, hookworms, ear mites and all life stages of the flea.

See inside for savings on parasite protection!

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