



## Rutland Veterinary Clinic *and* Surgical Center

# Paws, Claws & Tales

SUMMER 2011

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### Zoe Nassau

Zoe is a true animal lover who has worked in the veterinary field her whole life. She joined us at the RVCSC in 1998, after working as a certified veterinary technician for ten years in Massachusetts.

Her day starts at 7 am Monday through Friday. She initiates "nursing care" for each of our patients, by taking early morning temperatures and evaluating each animal's status with a discerning and compassionate eye. Zoe can always be relied upon to be an animal's best friend—her goal in everything she does is to relieve pain and suffering. When the doctors arrive she assists them, assessing the current medical status and progress of their patients and updating and administering treatments. Zoe might find herself placing IV catheters and

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## Laser Therapy At RVCSC

Maybe you've heard that elite human athletes are currently using laser therapy to recover more quickly from injuries and to stay healthy and fit. The RVCSC has recently acquired a Class 4 Laser Unit for use on our patients. This state of the art technology is the only opportunity for such care in the Rutland area. Dr. Macpherson answers questions about this exciting new health care modality.

**What exactly is laser therapy and how does it work?** Laser therapy is the use of specific wave lengths of light to create therapeutic effects in the tissues of our patients. Laser energy increases circulation, drawing water, oxygen and nutrients to the damaged area. This creates an optimal healing environment.

**Why is it important to our pets?** Laser therapy will improve the quality of life and care we can give to pets by decreasing pain, speeding up the healing process, reducing scar formation and reducing swelling. Laser therapy can be used preemptively in surgery and dentistry for reduction of postoperative pain, inflammation and scar formation. It is also useful for acute conditions like ear infections or wounds. Finally, it is useful to speed healing for more chronic conditions like arthritis and back pain.

The laser can also be used for needleless acupuncture because the laser energy will stimulate the same response as needles do in traditional acupuncture. What is most exciting and unique about



Jack receives a laser therapy treatment

laser therapy is that it speeds recovery and therefore improves overall quality of life with a NON-MEDICINAL approach.

**How safe is it?** A great benefit of this technology is there are no side effects when used appropriately. Our technicians are thoroughly trained and certified in the use of the laser.

**Is it expensive?** The cost of the treatment will vary depending on the disease process we are treating as well as the number of treatments required.

**What can you do now for our pets that you were unable to do before you acquired the laser technology?** The laser allows us to offer an amazing non-medicinal technology that will positively impact the health of our patients. Pets of all ages will benefit from laser therapy. It will shorten the course of many geriatric and long-term diseases, therefore enabling pets with chronic problems to live happier and more comfortable lives.



# Thunder!

Noise phobias are common in dogs, and many pet owners feel completely helpless watching their pet turn into a cowering bundle of nerves during a thunderstorm or fireworks display. Signs of anxiety include shivering, panting, salivation, hiding, attention-seeking, inappropriate elimination and pacing. Phobias can be dangerous for a dog as well. Some dogs become destructive, others may injure themselves while trying to escape the perceived threat, and many run away. Phobias rarely get better without active treatment, so it's best to address the problem as soon as you notice early symptoms.

Be sure to keep pets indoors when you know of an impending storm. Having a "safe" spot is comforting for many pets during storms. Whether it's their crate, a closet or even a bathtub, the perception of safety can help relieve stress.

It is wise to discuss noise phobias with your veterinarian. Soothing music, pheromones, body wraps/capes and certain behavior modification techniques have all been shown to help relieve some noise phobias, and your veterinarian can provide guidance regarding the options. Ultimately, your veterinarian may also prescribe a tranquilizer or an anti-anxiety medication for your dog.

**“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.”**

– Mahatma Gandhi

# Anaplasmosis

Anaplasmosis is a tick-borne disease that is on the rise in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control. As with other tick-borne diseases, both humans and pets can get anaplasmosis, but it can't be passed directly from animals to humans or vice versa—transmission requires a tick as an intermediate vector.

Anaplasmosis is caused by a bacterium known as *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*, and is transmitted primarily from the black-legged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*), commonly known as the deer tick, and the western black-legged tick (*Ixodes pacificus*).

The symptoms are similar to Lyme disease, another tick-borne illness, and include painful joints and stiffness, fever, lethargy, loss of appetite, vomiting and diarrhea. Low blood platelets are a common laboratory finding in dogs with anaplasmosis. In severe cases, neurological problems may exist. Most dogs show signs within 14 days of infection, though in some instances, dogs who test positive for anaplasmosis show no symptoms at all. If you notice any symptoms in your pet, see your veterinarian promptly. Dogs treated in the early stages of this disease usually make a complete recovery.

A blood test is used to screen for several tick-borne diseases, including anaplasmosis. Additional tests for dogs displaying more advanced symptoms may be in order, including tick titers, complete chemistry profiles, complete blood count (CBC) and urinalysis.

Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent anaplasmosis. Pet owners should be diligent about tick prevention. Keep your yard clear of leaves and debris, and discourage deer from entering, as deer are the most common carriers of several types of ticks. As with many medications, adverse reactions can occur from tick preventives, so always read the product labels carefully, and be sure to never use products designed for dogs on your cats.

For more information about tick-borne diseases, visit the Companion Animal Parasite Council website at [www.capcvet.org](http://www.capcvet.org), and the Centers for Disease Control website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

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**“Howl at an ambulance or fire siren every chance you get.  
Run around the room in circles with a sock in your mouth.  
Eat a messy meal without using your hands or utensils.  
Ask a friend to scratch your belly...”**

# Understanding FIV

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus, or FIV, is a virus in the same family of viruses as HIV in humans. These viruses, called "lentiviruses," are species-specific, so FIV cannot be transmitted to humans from cats, nor can HIV be transmitted from humans to cats or other animals. FIV was first identified in 1986, and has been found worldwide. According to the Cornell Feline Health Center at Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, FIV is found in 1.5% to 3% of healthy cats in the United States.

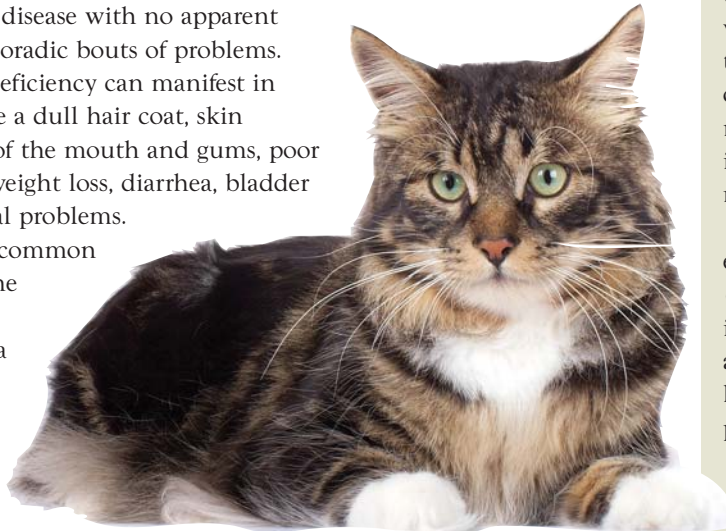
FIV is primarily transmitted through bites, so unneutered male cats that are allowed outdoors are most likely to contract this virus. Occasionally, an infected mother cat can spread the virus to her kittens, either during birth or from drinking her infected milk. Non-aggressive contact between cats is not typically a cause of transmission, so it is possible for infected cats to live with non-infected cats without spreading the virus.

When a cat is initially infected with FIV, the lymph nodes will become inflamed and there may be a fever. This stage may be mild and pass unnoticed, even by diligent owners. After the initial infection, cats may live for years carrying the disease with no apparent signs of illness, or with sporadic bouts of problems. Over time, the immune deficiency can manifest in many ways. Cats may have a dull hair coat, skin problems, inflammation of the mouth and gums, poor appetite and progressive weight loss, diarrhea, bladder problems and neurological problems. Certain cancers are more common in FIV+ cats, as is the feline leukemia virus.

FIV is diagnosed with a blood test that detects antibodies for the virus. It may take two to three months after infection for antibodies to appear, so false negatives

are possible in the early disease stages, and your veterinarian may suggest a cat be retested under certain circumstances.

The best way to prevent FIV is to keep cats indoors so they will not be exposed. A vaccine is available, but vaccinated cats will test positive for FIV. Your veterinarian can help you determine the pros and cons of the vaccine for your circumstances.



**TICK-BORNE DISEASES** are on the rise across the United States. A single tick bite may transmit multiple pathogens, therefore it is possible for you and your pets to contract multiple diseases from one bite. Talk to your veterinarian about the safe use of tick control products for your pets.



## Living With FIV

A positive test result for FIV can initially seem like a crushing blow for many cat owners, but the truth is, many FIV positive cats live very long, happy lives. There are a number of things you can do to help your cat live with this disease.

First, limit your cat's exposure to other cats. FIV+ cats should be kept indoors so they don't have the opportunity to infect others. Infected cats should be spayed or neutered to help reduce the likelihood of fighting, and the likelihood of transmitting the disease to kittens. If you have other cats, they should be tested as well. If possible, infected cats should be kept separate from non-infected cats, but it appears that if cats coexist peacefully, the virus might not be transmitted.

Regular wellness exams are especially important for infected cats. Cats frequently hide signs of illness until it is quite advanced, and comprehensive wellness exams help to ensure early detection of potential problems. Checkups every six months are strongly recommended for FIV+ cats.

FIV+ cats should be fed a complete and balanced diet, and they should not be allowed to hunt or eat raw meat or eggs. Because their immune systems are compromised, FIV+ cats are at greater risk of bacterial, viral, fungal and parasitic infections than healthy cats. Remain vigilant in observing your cat, and see your veterinarian if there is any sign of illness or change in behavior.

Be sure to keep identification on your FIV+ cat (a microchip is best) in case it escapes, as some shelters still immediately euthanize any lost cat that tests positive.



**SPOTLIGHT** continued from pg. 1

administering fluid therapy, giving injections or taking x-rays. After the morning treatments are completed, she assists the doctors in the exam rooms as they see and/or admit new patients. Zoe is also a neatnik, which is handy to have in a busy workplace. We will often find her organizing or reorganizing shelves and cabinets in her "spare time."

An inveterate "rescuer of needy pets," Zoe is always matching a deserving new owner with an orphan or stray in need of a good home. She says that this, along with the fact that every day in a veterinary clinic is different, is what she loves most about her job.

Zoe and her husband, Charlie, live in Proctor and have two teenage boys who keep her busy, along with four cats, three dogs and numerous koi fish. Besides her family and her pets, her passions are gardening and Cape Cod.

**Rutland Veterinary Clinic and Surgical Center**

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# Update on House Fire Victim

Jack, a two-year-old lab/hound mix, was rushed to our clinic in the middle of a cold February night after his Pittsford home had burned. Jack had sought refuge in his plastic kennel and suffered extensive burns on his legs and side when the kennel melted. During the first three to four weeks after the injuries, we treated Jack's burns by removing damaged tissue and preventing infection. Once the wounds were debrided, Jack underwent daily bandage changes, allowing new skin to grow. Jack is no longer in bandages, but he does wear his Elizabethan collar to ensure the wounds continue to heal properly. Best of all, Jack is healing so well that he may not skin grafts!



Jack is healing!

We call Jack "amazing" because he is truly a special patient. He receives every one of our ministrations, including his special high protein diet which is handmade for him daily, with kisses of appreciation. It will be both a happy and sad day when Jack goes home. A HUGE thank you must go out to the members of the Rutland community who have made this level of care available by contributing more than \$7,000 to date.

## Bad Breath?

Or not....please take a look and a sniff in your pet's mouth. Or better yet, make a FREE appointment with your RVCSC doctor and we'll look at the teeth for you. We will "grade" the condition of your pet's teeth and make recommendations based on the severity of dental disease, on a scale of 1 (early dental disease) to 4 (needs immediate veterinary attention). We offer "responsible pet owner" discounts for grades 1 and 2 care, to help you prevent the progression to more severe tooth problems.

## Pet Portals:

You now have the ability to access your individual pet's health information online, through your Pet Portal, which is a secure, private website that allows you to schedule an appointment, refill a prescription and check the due dates for your pet's next annual exam. Log on to our website ([www.rutlandvet.com](http://www.rutlandvet.com)) to find out more. Also, please help us reduce paperwork by sending your email address to [info@rutlandvet.com](mailto:info@rutlandvet.com). We'll use it for health alerts, future reminders and correspondence.

**Please help us help you:**  
If you must miss a scheduled appointment, please let us know as soon as possible so we can reschedule your visit, and give your missed slot to someone who may be waiting to see us.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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