



## Rutland Veterinary Clinic *and* Surgical Center

# Paws, Claws & Tales

WINTER 2011

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

### SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF



**Vickey Barney** joined the RVCSC staff in 1980, after graduating from Proctor High School. She grew up working on her grandfather, Charlton Capen's, dairy farm, so she knew the meaning of hard work. In those days, our practice was "mixed," meaning we treated both large and small animals. Vickey started by working in our large animal office and cleaning kennels, which she did around her dairy farm chores, milking cows at midnight, catching a few hours of sleep before working in our office all morning, milking cows at noon, back to our office till evening. Not much sleeping in those days. She worked her way through every area of our hospital, and

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## Brush My Cat's Teeth? Really?

Yes, really. One out of every four cats has dental calculus, which means they have moderate to severe dental disease that requires veterinary attention. Very few of these cats get the attention they require, for several reasons. First, cats are good at adapting and may not act uncomfortable. Or, if they do have problems with eating or changes in behavior, owners may attribute it to "old age." But old age isn't a disease. Dental calculus is.

What are the signs of feline dental disease?

- Bad breath
- Pain, which may be expressed as chewing "funny" or reluctance to eat
- Irritability or less social interaction
- Poor body condition

How serious is feline dental disease, really? If calculus is left untreated, it may progress to periodontal disease, which can cause bone infection and tooth root abscesses. At the RVCSC, we see cats every week with swellings or draining sores on their faces, caused by abscesses or fistulous tracts from infected teeth. At this point, surgery and tooth extraction is required. We also suspect that, as has been documented in humans, periodontal disease in cats (and dogs, for that matter!) can lead to cardiovascular disease, pneumonia and diabetes.

So what can you do? Pay attention to your cat's mouth. Ask for our professional assessment—at the RVCSC



we include a dental exam with every physical. We can help by recommending the proper dentifrice and "toothbrush," and showing you how to get started brushing. We'll tell you about "greenies" and other abrasive and tasty dental chews and special dental diets. We'll also make recommendations about dental cleaning, x-rays or other procedures if brushing alone will not do the trick.

**Rutland Veterinary Clinic  
and Surgical Center**

# 10% OFF

Dental procedures performed  
in January and February,  
15% off second pet in family

MUST PRESENT COUPON. *Limit one per family.  
Cannot be combined with any other offers.*

EXPIRATION 2/28/11

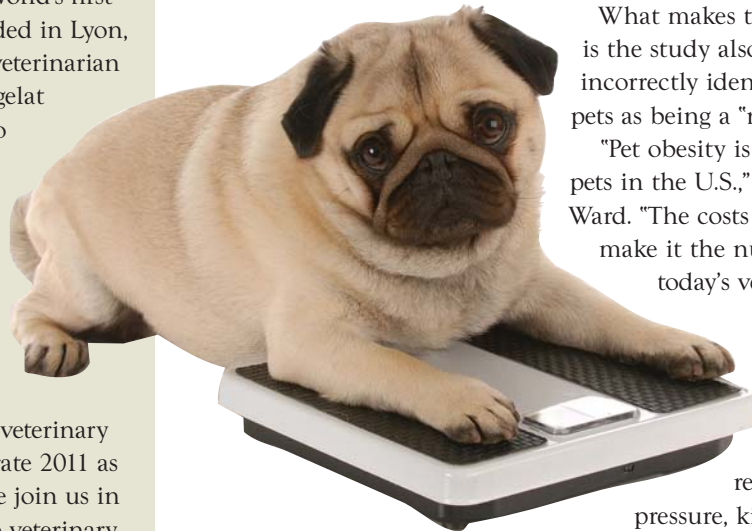


# World Veterinary Year

2011 is the 250th anniversary of veterinary education. The world's first veterinary school was founded in Lyon, France, in 1761, by French veterinarian Claude Bourgelat. Dr. Bourgelat was also the first scientist to suggest that studying animal biology and pathology would help our understanding of human biology. In recognition of this anniversary, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) is partnering with veterinary leaders worldwide to celebrate 2011 as *World Veterinary Year*. Please join us in celebrating 250 years of the veterinary profession working to improve both animal and human health.

# Resolve!

It's easy to let a few extra pounds creep on, especially during the holidays, but then it seems awfully hard to get them off. The same is true for our pets. In fact, according to a 2009 study by the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention, 45 percent of dogs and 58 percent of cats in the United States are overweight or obese. That's about 89 million overweight or obese dogs and cats!



What makes these numbers even more alarming is the study also found that many pet owners incorrectly identified their overweight or obese pets as being a "normal weight."

"Pet obesity is now the biggest health threat to pets in the U.S.," states lead researcher Dr. Ernie Ward. "The costs of obesity in illness and injury make it the number one medical issue seen in today's veterinary hospitals."

Obesity is truly a life-threatening condition. The implications for pets are the same as for people—excess weight increases the risk of diabetes, heart and respiratory disease, high blood pressure, kidney disease, osteoarthritis, ligament injuries, and many forms of cancer. Excess weight compromises the immune system, and may even put a pet at higher risk for surgical or anesthesia complications. In addition to those risks, overweight cats are also at increased risk for hepatic lipidosis (fatty liver disease), skin conditions and feline lower urinary tract disease.

How can you tell if your pet is a healthy weight?

- Ribs are easily felt
- The abdomen appears "tucked"—no sagging stomach
- The waist is defined when viewed from above

A "body condition score" (BCS) and a "body fat index" (BFI) are both evaluations of your pet's overall condition. If you suspect your pet may be overweight, ask your veterinarian for a BCS or BFI, along with recommendations to get your best friend started on a weight loss program. Now is the time to make a resolution to help your pet live a longer, healthier life!



**ANTIFREEZE IS DEADLY TO PETS,** and unfortunately it has an appealing taste and smell. Be sure to clean up any spills in your garage and driveway, and consider using products that contain propylene glycol rather than ethylene glycol. Antifreeze poisoning is a true medical emergency, so if you suspect your pet may have ingested even a small amount, seek veterinary attention immediately.



**"I don't understand how I got so fat! Doesn't tail wagging count as cardio?"**



# Fat Cats

Cats are curious, intelligent, athletic creatures. To thrive in the wild, they develop finely tuned skills to hunt and avoid predators, and usually remain quite fit. Today, most of us have indoor cats that don't have to worry about predators or finding food, and studies have shown that indoor cats tend to live longer than outdoor cats. Without appropriate stimulation, however, indoor cats can become bored and sedentary, which can lead to obesity and behavior problems. Sadly, both obesity and behavior problems can significantly shorten a cat's expected lifespan.

Weight loss can be achieved in cats in the same manner as dogs and people: diet and exercise. Start with a wellness exam by your veterinarian to determine your cat's health status, including bloodwork to rule out hypothyroidism or other metabolic disorders. Rapid weight loss is not safe for cats, so your plan should be for gradual and consistent weight reduction.

"Free choice" feeding is not appropriate for an overweight cat, and it may be the leading cause of the feline obesity epidemic. Most cats do well on two meals per day of a measured amount of food. Recommended portions are only guidelines, and the ideal portion for your cat depends on factors including age and activity level.

Is it possible to exercise your indoor cat? Absolutely! Here are some tips to keep your indoor cat fit, amused and alert:

- 1. Consider another cat.** Some cats prefer living alone, but many are more likely to be active and play with a feline friend.
- 2. Set aside time for a "daily workout."** Ten minutes a day chasing a toy, such as a feather, flashlight or catnip mouse, can help your cat stay fit, and two 10-minute sessions is even better. Consider bringing out a toy and playing while you watch TV. The interaction will help increase the bond you share as well.
- 3. Train your cat!** They can learn tricks, such as sit up, roll over, jump up, or to walk on a leash.
- 4. Cat TV** – DVDs are available that have been designed just for felines.
- 5. Provide a scratching post** that allows your cat a full stretch.
- 6. Cat condos and towers** can provide climbing pleasure for your indoor cat.
- 7. If you feed kibble,** have your cat "chase" its dinner by rolling the first few pieces across the kitchen floor.

For more information on enriching the life of your indoor pets, check out [www.indoorpet.osu.edu](http://www.indoorpet.osu.edu). You can help your cat live a longer, healthier, happier life by keeping it active and slim.



**"Time spent with cats is never wasted."**

– Sigmund Freud

# Go For a Walk!

Have you resolved to make 2011 the year you get yourself in shape? Your dog may be able to help you do just that! (If you currently don't own a dog, you might consider volunteering to walk dogs at your local shelter.) Read on!

- A study of 916 participants showed that those who regularly walk their four-legged best friends reported fewer hours of sitting per day, lower body mass index (BMI), lower tobacco use, fewer chronic conditions and fewer depressive symptoms.
- Another study compared seniors who volunteered to walk shelter dogs with a control group of seniors assigned to walk the same number of days per week with a friend. The seniors who walked the shelter dogs showed significant increases in speed, balance and confidence over those who simply walked with a friend.
- A study in Japan concluded that "Walking a dog has potentially greater health benefits as a buffer against stress in senior citizens than walking without a dog."
- A study published in 2010 showed that shelter dogs participating in a daily dog walking program had better behavior, higher adoption rates and decreased euthanasia rates than dogs in a control group not in the walking program.

So, there you have it! Scientific studies have shown us that our health improves when we walk dogs, and dogs' health and behavior improves as well. So, grab a leash, and take a dog for a walk!

**SPOTLIGHT** continued from pg. 1

is currently everybody's "right hand man," and she is particularly adept at our specialized computer system because she has been our computer administrator since 1986.

Vickey's hobby is riding dressage, and she takes lessons at several area barns. She also enjoys travel and lunch-time walks with her Boston Terrier, Minnie. Her favorite part of her job? Ordering new products, stocking the shelves, and feeding animals in the early mornings. It gives her a great overview of what is going on in every area of the hospital.



# Communication is Key at the RVCSC!

As part of our ongoing efforts to keep you informed about your pet's care, we have several new opportunities available. We hope you enjoy this quarterly newsletter, *Paws, Claws and Tales*, which is our effort to provide seasonal veterinary information, clinic anecdotes, and news about services and coupons. We have also instituted an online newsletter, which sends out health alerts and provides information and discounts on products and services.

We continue to enhance our website. Pet Portals is an exciting new tool that allows you to view personalized, up-to-date pet records, including vaccination and health status, and to access our new online store, which allows you to purchase prescription medications and foods at competitive prices while being assured that you have a manufacturer's guarantee for quality and satisfaction. Purina products and most of our prescription products can be delivered to your doorstep with no shipping fees.

Does this sound complicated? It's not! But in order to get this information to you, we need your email address, which you can send to us at [info@rutlandvet.com](mailto:info@rutlandvet.com), or request a Pet Portal through our website, [www.rutlandvet.com](http://www.rutlandvet.com). We will send you your password and include you in all our Internet specials, health alerts and mailings. Get connected with RVCSC and help us "go green."

## Rutland Veterinary Clinic and Surgical Center

# SPECIAL

Buy two bags of Purina Pro Plan pet food, get the third bag for free (via refund check from Purina)

See one of our receptionists for more information.



## The RVCSC Hotel and Spa

We take pride in our boarding and grooming services for your cats and dogs. Our cages and runs are large and comfortable, and we have staff dedicated to cleaning, feeding and exercising them around the clock.

Grooming helps maintain your pet's healthy coat and skin and imparts a general feeling of well being. Our groomers can provide nail trims, ear cleaning, medicated bathing and, of

course, coat trimming.

Our staff is trained to detect possible medical problems and our doctors are available to examine your pet if requested, or if an emergency occurs.

A courtesy bath is provided any dog who boards for at least three days, and we guarantee that NO PET will leave our care dirty or smelly. Please ask for a guided tour if you'd like to check us out!

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

90 E. Pittsford Road, Rutland, Vermont 05701

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