



Cytauxzoonosis



American Dog Tick

Cytauxzoon felis is a protozoal organism that is found in the Eastern and Central United States. It causes a rapidly progressive, fatal syndrome in the domestic cat. As this disease has become more prevalent in recent years, pet owners need to be aware of this condition and take preventive measures. The *C. felis* parasite usually lives within the white and red blood cells of a bobcat. The bobcat does not typically become clinically ill, and as many as 60% of the population can be persistently infected. Domestic cats are exposed when an American Dog Tick transmits the parasite through saliva after having fed on the blood of an infected bobcat.

After transmission, there is a period of one to two weeks during which the infected cat does not show any signs of illness. In this stage the parasite reproduces within white blood cells. These cells will continue to enlarge with the growing number of parasites. Eventually, parasite reproduction leads to white blood cells so large they block capillaries and cause widespread tissue damage. The cells eventually burst and release the parasite into circulation to invade the red blood cells. Once the tissue damage begins and the red blood cells are infected the cat generally has a very high fever, lethargy, dehydration, and icterus (yellowing of skin).

Diagnosis usually consists of visualizing the parasite within the red blood cells, although in some cases tissue biopsy or other special laboratory tests will be used. Treatment involves supportive care with intravenous fluids, blood transfusion, and parasitocidal drugs. However, even with aggressive therapy, very few cats survive. The disease

has a rapid course and the time from diagnosis to death is measured in hours or days. As with all tick borne diseases, the cornerstone of prevention is limiting access to tick infested areas. Most cases are reported March through September and keeping cats indoors during this time should limit exposure. If that is not possible, a tick control product such as Frontline should be used.

Chewing Gum Toxicosis



A common cause of illness in companion animals is the inadvertent consumption of drugs or certain foods designed for humans. For dogs, consuming food products sweetened with xylitol can have serious consequences. Xylitol is a sweetener with 40% fewer calories than sugar and some reported health advantages not normally associated with sugar alternatives. Clinical studies have suggested xylitol can reduce the incidence of tooth decay, complement fluoride in dental health products and possibly reduce the occurrence of common ear infections in children. Xylitol is widely approved for use in foods, oral hygiene products, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals throughout the world. It is a popular sweetener and is most commonly found in sugar-free gum and other "diabetic" type foods - sugarless cookies, etc. Pure xylitol is a white crystalline substance that looks and tastes like sugar. It has been used as a sugar substitute since the 1960s. In humans, xylitol has little to no effect on insulin or glucose levels. However, in dogs xylitol strongly stimulates insulin release and can lead to a severe drop in blood sugar. Symptoms can include ataxia (incoordination), collapse, and seizures. Reports indicate as little as one to two pieces of sugar-free gum could be toxic to a five pound dog. At

higher doses, irreversible liver damage can occur in susceptible animals. While some dogs develop elevations in liver enzymes for a period of 8 to 12 hours after consuming xylitol and then fully recover, others develop acute liver failure, hemorrhage, internal coagulation abnormalities, and often die. Most of these dogs do not display obvious signs of low blood sugar after ingesting xylitol and do not become ill until almost 48 hours later. If your dietary requirements include the use of products that contain xylitol, be sure to keep these items well out of the reach of your canine companions. For more information on how to protect your pets against accidental poisonings, visit the ASPCA Poison Control Center web pages at <http://www.aspc.org>.

Recovering Rover



Some reports suggest that more pets' lives are lost each year to the dangers of becoming lost than to medical problems. Simple preventive measures will increase the likelihood of a lost companion's reunion with its family. All pets should wear collars with both a rabies tag and an identification tag at all times. Proper identification tags are the most immediate way for a companion to be returned home. Have you recently checked your pet's tags to ensure that they are current? In addition, microchips provide an effective second level of protection if a pet becomes separated from its collar and tags. Veterinary clinics, animal shelters, and humane societies scan lost animals using a handheld scanner. If a chip is detected, the appropriate database is contacted to reunite the pet with its owner. Providing your dog or cat with both tags and a microchip can help ensure a happy reunion if a beloved pet becomes lost.

Fun Facts

Most Popular Dog and Cat Names

(Reprinted with permission from the *GVMA E-News*)

According to Veterinary Pet Insurance (VPI), the nation's oldest and largest provider of pet health insurance, Max is the most popular dog and cat name for the fifth consecutive year.

Following are the 10 most common dog and cat names based on a recent analysis of VPI's 450,000 insured pets:

Dogs	Cats
1. Max	1. Max
2. Molly	2. Chloe
3. Buddy	3. Lucy
4. Bella	4. Tigger
5. Lucy	5. Tiger
6. Maggie	6. Smokey
7. Daisy	7. Oliver
8. Jake	8. Bella
9. Bailey	9. Sophie
10. Rocky	10. Princess

The continuing popularity of Max is largely due to the fact that it is monosyllabic and simple for people and pets to remember, yet easy to distinguish from common commands," said Dr. Carol McConnell, Vice President and Chief Veterinary Officer for VPI. "Plus, it's a fitting name for an active, energetic pet."

Few of the names on the top 10 dog and cat names list are solely traditional pet names. In fact, some of the top 10 names also appear on the Social Security Administration's list of most common baby names. Jacob (Jake) is the top name for boys, while Isabella (Bella) is no. 4 for girls, and Sophia ranks ninth on both the Social Security Administration's list and VPI's cat name list. Ironically, Max is far from the top at no. 160.

"When people consider their pet an integral part of the family, they are more inclined to choose a human name for it," said McConnell. "The prevalence of pets with human names clearly reflects the growing human-animal bond."

Each of this year's top 10 dog names also appeared on last year's list. Bella made the most impressive jump, going from no. 8 to no. 4, while Bailey fell from no. 2 to no. 9. For the cats, Simba, Angel, and Shadow dropped off this year's list, making way for Princess, Sophie, and Bella.

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Georgia Veterinary Medical Association



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Staff News

Welcome to our new staff...

Marsha Mitchell received her AS degree in Animal Technology from Santa Fe Community College in Gainesville, FL and joins our staff as a full-time veterinary assistant. **Amy Schwerzel** is a Biology major at the University of Georgia and volunteers with Bear Hollow, the Georgia Aquarium, and a local Girl Scout troop. **Desiree Taylor** is a Biological Science and Avian Biology major who devotes her spare time to the Big Brother Big Sister and Habitat for Humanity programs. Also an Avian Biology major, **Beth Anne Woodward's** interests include wild animal rescue and outdoor activities. **Ayn Remillard** is a senior student at Cedar Shoals High School and joins our staff as a participant in the School-to-Career Program. Ayn has already worked in veterinary clinics in Atlanta and New York and has even cared for elephants at the zoo in Syracuse. **Ember Epperson**, our newest member of the front office staff, is a native of Tennessee. Ember is a graduate of Georgia Institute of Technology and plans to attend veterinary medical school.

Dr. Steadman joins Merial!

After five years of devoted service to our clients and patients, Shoal Creek Animal Clinic must bid a very fond farewell to Dr.

Laura Steadman. As I have shared many times, Dr. Steadman is not only one of the most outstanding veterinarians with which I have had the privilege of working, but also she is among the most kind and caring people I know. Her knowledge and skills, ability to easily explain medical issues to pet owners, and her compassion for both animals and people are of the highest caliber. Dr. Steadman has always gone above and beyond the call of duty in meeting the health needs of our patients. Although this is a sad time for us, we are also very happy and excited for Dr. Steadman as she accepts a new challenge in life. Dr. Steadman is joining the veterinary staff of Merial, a world-leading animal health company. Merial produces pharmaceutical products and vaccines for livestock, pets and wildlife and is a leader in product development and innovation, working worldwide to keep livestock and pets healthy. Dr. Steadman's role with Merial will be focused in the areas of pharmacovigilance and customer care. I hope all will join us in wishing her the very best as she begins her work in this important area of animal health care. I am happy to share that we will continue to see Dr. Steadman from time to time as she will occasionally be working as a relief veterinarian at Shoal Creek Animal Clinic. *-Dr. Askren*