



Lifestyle matters: tailoring vaccinations



During the past thirty years the veterinary profession has seen reduced illness and death from infectious diseases. Two primary reasons for this change are the significant benefit provided by vaccines as well as a growing commitment on the part of pet owners to preventive health care measures. Vaccination against infectious diseases will always be a very

important part of a total wellness program. Infectious disease experts have developed revised vaccine guidelines based upon new evidence about canine and feline immune systems. In keeping with current veterinary care standards, Shoal Creek Animal Clinic has embraced the significance of the recent findings and understands that all pets do not have the same lifestyle and risk factors. Vaccines are now categorized into "core" which are needed for all pets and "non-core" which are needed for some but not all. Does your pet go outside? Take walks? Have contact



with wildlife? These are just some of the questions you will be asked as we tailor our vaccine recommendations to your pet. We will establish individualized vaccine recommendations based on specific information about your pet's lifestyle and risk factors. For example, there is a significant difference in the health care needs of an eighteen year old cat who never goes outside vs. the younger animal who frequently visits the clinic with infected wounds from fighting with neigh-

boring cats. The Miniature Poodle who goes outdoors a few time daily has different needs from the Labrador Retriever who visits his friends at the dog park or goes jogging with his owner through the woods at Sandy Creek Nature Center. To aid our doctors in providing the best veterinary care possible, we are asking our clients to complete a lifestyle survey for each of their pets. These surveys may be filled out upon your next visit to the clinic or can be downloaded in PDF format from our web site (<http://www.shoalcreek.com/lifestyle>) to be returned by e-mail or post. Upon reviewing your pets' lifestyle survey we will be able to make the best recommendations for each individual's preventive health care needs.

Achieving Wellness



The past few years have witnessed growing expectations among pet owners for more than just protection against infectious disease. Those who choose to share their lives

with animals wish to be able to detect and treat chronic disease early and discover and correct health issues before they become problems. For this reason, animal internal medicine specialists and preventive health care experts have followed the lead from human health and have developed recommendations for wellness screening. We are convinced of the importance of regular, comprehensive physical examinations. The optimum frequency for examinations in pets is every six months. This is equivalent to a person visiting their doctor every three to five years. Research has shown that 52% of animals brought into clinics for vaccination have disease. The earlier these conditions are detected, the more effective any treatment will be. Critical to early detection is performing routine laboratory screening. In addition to the parasite screening and prevention recommendations with which clients are familiar, a screening for metabolic disease is also recommended. Such evaluations will aid in diagnosing disease conditions early and also provide an individualized health

reference or baseline with which to compare future labwork in the event of illness.

In summary, the tenets of our wellness philosophy and recommendations include:

- Regular comprehensive physical examinations
- Routine laboratory screening
- Parasite prevention
- Individualized vaccination schedules

Virulent Systemic Calicivirus: a new deadly threat to cats



Virulent Systemic Feline Calicivirus (VS-FCV) is a relatively new, more deadly strain of the traditional feline calicivirus, one of the major respiratory viruses found in cats. Although VS-FCV appears to be less common than the traditional virus, it has gained

the attention of feline experts because it is much more severe. Within just a few days of exposure, VS-FCV can affect multiple organs and cause painful and devastating signs in infected cats. Clinical signs of traditional FCV include runny nose, sneezing, conjunctivitis, ulcers on the tongue and loss of appetite. VS-FCV is manifested with any of these symptoms as well as high fever, swelling of the face and/or legs, severe oral and nasal ulcers, loss of organ function, skin lesions and hair loss. Signs of illness typically appear from one to five days after exposure. In some cases, it has taken as long as twelve days. VS-FCV can kill healthy cats within 24 to 48 hours - even those previously vaccinated with a traditional FCV vaccine. Since its identification in Northern California in 1998, VS-FCV has been reported in clinics and shelters from coast to coast. VS-FCV is easily transmitted from cat to cat through anything shed by the cat, including hair, dander, blood, urine, feces and secretions from the eyes and nose. VS-FCV does not affect humans but the virus can be carried on items such as shoes, clothing and hands which may put other cats at risk.

There is a vaccine available for protection against this new form of Calicivirus. Although there is ongoing study about its efficacy, the vaccine may play an important role in dealing with this emerging problem.

Fun Facts

Top 10 Reasons Pets Are Taken to the Veterinarian

Veterinary Pet Insurance (VPI), the nation's oldest and largest provider of pet health insurance, recently reviewed all medical claims to identify the top 10 reasons dogs and cats were taken to the veterinarian.

Compared with earlier data, the usual suspects — skin allergies, urinary tract infections and upset stomachs — remain near the top for both pets. Some conditions not seen as frequently in the past were pyoderma (or hot spots) for dogs and tooth extractions for cats.

“Almost all pets will have one of these conditions throughout their life,” said Dr. Carol McConnell, Director of Veterinary Relations for VPI. “In general, younger pets have a tendency to eat things they are not supposed to eat, which may result in stomach problems. Older pets are prone to tumors and arthritis.”

Top 10 Pet Insurance Claims

Dogs

1. Skin allergies
2. Ear infections
3. Stomach upsets
4. Urinary tract infections
5. Benign tumors
6. Pyoderma
7. Sprains
8. Osteoarthritis
9. Enteritis
10. Eye infections

Cats

1. Urinary tract infections
2. Stomach upsets
3. Kidney failure
4. Skin allergies
5. Diabetes
6. Respiratory infections
7. Ear infections
8. Tooth extractions
9. Colitis
10. Hyperthyroidism

The addition of pyoderma to the list reflects the prevalence of skin allergies among dogs. Like humans, dogs can have allergic reactions to food or pollen. Many dogs are allergic to contact with grass or carpet. The most common allergy is a reaction to flea bites. On the feline side, cats are susceptible to urinary tract infections caused by viruses, urinary crystals, or even stress. Due to differences in the size and position of the urethra, male cats are more likely to get urinary tract infections than female cats. Always monitor a cat's visits to the litter box, as frequency of urination may increase with an infection.



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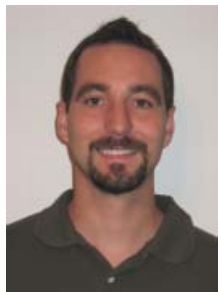
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In This Issue: Lifestyle, Wellness, Virulent Systemic Calicivirus, Fun Facts, Staff News

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Staff News

Dr. Elder joins SCAC



On May 12, Christopher M. Elder, DVM will join the veterinary staff at Shoal Creek Animal Clinic.

Dr. Elder was born in Daytona Beach, Florida but has called Georgia home for the past 27 years.

He received an undergraduate degree in Biology from the University of Georgia and a Masters in Biology from Georgia State University before earning his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine. Before deciding to pursue veterinary medicine, Dr. Elder worked at Emory University, the Georgia Institute of Technology, and Georgia State University in both research and teaching. He was involved in advanced

research into the mechanisms and treatments for Parkinson's disease in both humans and primates. While at Georgia State he was responsible for the care of four chimpanzees and two orangutans.

Dr. Elder brings to Shoal Creek Animal Clinic significant experience in the practice of small animal medicine as he has worked at a number of small animal clinics in Georgia including Peachtree City, Athens, and the University of Georgia Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Dr. Elder is the recipient of numerous awards and honors. He graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Georgia School of Veterinary Medicine and is a member of the Phi Zeta Veterinary Honor Society. He is also the recipient of the Lawrenceville Kennel Club Scholarship, the William L. Hanson Award and the Merck Veterinary Student Award.

Dr. Elder enjoys all aspects of the practice of veterinary medicine but has special interests in internal medicine, nutrition, neurology, behavior and dermatology.

Dr. Elder has been married to Ms. Amy Tobias, an Athens real estate attorney, for 9 years and they are the happy parents of 3 dogs, 2 cats and many fish.

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Dr. Elder!

-Dr. Askren