

## Mountainview Animal Hospital

### SPRING NEWSLETTER

#### LEPTOSPIROSIS IN GEORGETOWN

##### **The Bottom Line**

*Leptospirosis is a serious and potentially fatal disease affecting the liver and kidneys of infected dogs.*

*Leptospirosis is a Zoonotic disease; meaning people can become infected too.*

*According to the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, the number of cases of Leptospirosis has risen dramatically in eastern Canada over the past 20 years. The association recommends animals be vaccinated against the most common strains of the disease*



*Vaccinating your dog will protect him/her from this serious disease.*

Last fall the CBC News reported about an increase in a disease in dogs called Leptospirosis. This increase had been seen all over Southern Ontario and parts of Quebec. It was particularly bad in areas that had been affected by flooding. Here in Georgetown, we also saw several cases of this potentially fatal disease. Fortunately, none of the dogs treated at our clinic died, however several fatalities had been reported at other clinics in the Mississauga and Hamilton area.

Dogs most commonly become infected by drinking from rivers, streams, puddles or ponds that have become contaminated by the urine of other infected animals (raccoons, possums, rats, skunks and other infected dogs). Since the disease causing agent prefers warm damp weather, dogs are only at risk during the spring, summer and fall months. Although there have been very few cases in the Georgetown area in the past, this changed last fall. It is thought the increase in infections were associated with the milder, damper weather last summer. Locally, there has also been an increase in the skunk population. Interestingly, none of the dogs we treated had been near open bodies of water; they are believed to have picked up the disease while on walks around the community.

Leptospirosis is caused by a spirochete type bacteria. Spirochetes can gain access to the body by penetrating the skin or by being ingested; and spread through the body by way of the bloodstream. They tend to attack the liver and the kidneys, causing a variety of symptoms including fever, nausea, anorexia, lethargy, abdominal pain, weight loss and increased urination. Many dog's afflicted with Leptospirosis will die from it. Since the symptoms are similar to those of many other illnesses, it can be difficult to diagnose. It is detected by finding the bacteria, or antibodies produced against the bacteria, in the patient's blood or urine.

Treatment involves early detection, hospitalization, fluid therapy and antibiotics. Dogs infected with Leptospirosis are hospitalized in isolation, since the disease is very contagious. Leptospirosis can also be spread to humans, so it is recommended that families of infected dogs consult their physician.

The good news is, there is a vaccine available for this disease. Dogs that have never had a Leptospirosis vaccine before, need two vaccines three to four week apart, then only one vaccine annually thereafter. Some dogs do not feel very well after being vaccinated for Leptospirosis. Reactions can vary from mild lethargy, to hives and facial swelling, to a more serious reaction of vomiting and collapse. While reactions are uncommon, especially the more serious ones, we do ask that dogs be monitored for several hours after receiving a vaccination for Leptospirosis.

In light of the recent increase in the prevalence of Leptospirosis, we recommend that every dog owner seriously assess their dog's risk of exposure to this potentially fatal disease. Of course, if you have any questions about this disease and how it may affect your dog, and would like to schedule an appointment for the vaccination, call us at 905-702-8822

## The Bottom Line

*Daylight Saving Time is the practice of advancing clocks during summer months so that evening daylight lasts longer, while sacrificing normal sunrise times. It was first proposed in 1895 and was implemented nationwide on April 30, 1916. And, there is no literature to support the idea that cats were consulted on the idea in 1895. Sorry Tux.*

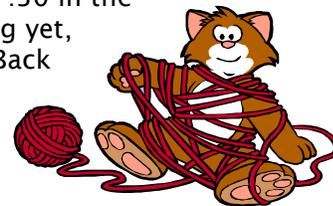
*Contrary to popular belief, Sarah's last name 'Ahola' is Finnish, not Hawaiian. Which is confusing, since Ahola spelt backwards is 'Aloha'.*

*Dr. Ahola, has a cat with seven toes on each front paw. This is called polydactyly. It is the genetic mutation that causes cats to be born with more than the usual number of toes.*

*While our receptionist are the first point of contact for our clients, our Client Care Representative is the person responsible for the liaison between our clients and the doctors after the office visit, procedure or surgery. The CCR follows-up with our clients to provide support and make sure our furry friends are healing well at home.*

## TIME WITH TUX

I love the spring. Around this time every year, I get to eat my breakfast, lunch and dinner an hour early, YEAH! I love my food. I hear the humans calling it the "Spring Forward Daylight Saving Time". I usually get fed at 7:30 in the morning, but when the clocks move forward by an hour, I get my whole breakfast just around the time I'm getting a bit peckish at 6:30; yum. Of course, there is a big downside to this spring time gift, the fall claw back. In the fall, when I'm starving at 7:30 in the morning, the humans around here are not even in the building yet, because they think it's 6:30. Ugh, I really don't like the "Fall Back part of Daylight Saving Time". Who comes up with these things anyway? Did they ever think how this affects us cats? I think not! Pst, in the fall, I think pets everywhere should revolt!



## NEWS AROUND THE CLINIC

This past year has brought a lot of changes at Mountainview Animal Hospital. While change is part of life, it is often difficult at first. I am very proud of how our team members have thrived under the pressure.

We have hired wonderful new people to help us keep up the demands of a growing practice. We are proud of how quickly they are catching on. Please watch for their profiles on our website.

Among the new faces, is Dr. Sarah Ahola. She graduated from the Ontario Veterinary College in 2016. She is wonderful. In addition to having great medical skills, she is warm, friendly, compassionate and has a great sense of humour.

We welcome back Dr. Wick from her maternity leave. We have missed her. Her son, Sebastian is adorable and is definitely going to be tall like his parents. At daycare, he is making fast friends with Lindsay's son Connor. Sebastian is preparing Connor to be a good big brother.....

That's right, Lindsay is pregnant with her second child! We are so happy for her, and sad for ourselves. This means we will lose her again for another year. She will be with us until later in the summer, so we have time to train her replacement. Of course, there is no replacing Lindsay, so we pray she will return to us after her maternity year is finished.



Sabrina has been working with me since she was a co-op student at the age of seventeen. She has been a receptionist, a Registered Veterinary Technician and a hospital manager for me. Several years ago she had triplets, two boys and a girl. This year she retired her position to spend more time with her busy kids. We miss Sabrina too.

Helena was our Client Care Representative. Until last year, she was the person who did the telephone follow-up calls to check on you and your pets after appointments and surgery. We had been expecting her back this month from her maternity leave. Helena and her husband have taken over the family business, so Helena will not be returning. While we congratulate her on her new business venture, we miss her.

For the past year, while Helena was on maternity leave, Sheila has been the voice on the phone following-up on our patients. Lucky for us, Sheila has agreed to continue to be our Client Care Representative. Sheila has worked with Dr. Ewing in the past as a Registered Veterinary Technician. She paused her career for a while to raise her daughter, and has been back with us for the last two years. She is very knowledgeable and supportive, we are lucky to have her.

## **The Bottom Line**

*It is a myth that once a young animal is handled its parents will reject it, but over handling should be avoided.*

*Young rabbits are independent at 4 weeks of age, when they are approximately only 4 inches long.*



*Nesting boxes should be small, have drainage and high sides to avoid the young bird from falling out again. Line the nesting box with dried grass. Avoid fabric with loose threads or green grass (it contains too much moisture). Small plastic strawberry cartons make the best nesting boxes. Wood or cardboard boxes hold water and dampness*



## **TIPS FOR YOUNG WILDLIFE CARE**

Every spring we receive and care for young wildlife brought in to us by well intentioned neighbours who believe the animal to be orphaned. Unfortunately many of these animals need not have been rescued and would have had a greater chance of survival if left where they were found. The natural instinct of young animals to freeze when discovered often make it difficult to distinguish an injured or sick animal from one just waiting for mommy to come back from gathering food. We hope that the following information, recreated from Wildcare, will help you to decide how to handle a found bird, rabbit or squirrel.

Leave the animal alone if:

- the parent is nearby. An immature animal's best chance for survival is with its parents. It is not unusual for some species to leave their young for several hours while foraging for food. Watch from a hiding place some distance away so the infant and parent are not frightened. Keep children and other animals from disturbing the area.
- the animal is bright-eyed, appears healthy and is in no apparent danger. Observe for a period of time to determine if the animal really needs to be rescued.

Rescue if:

- the parent is known to be dead and the baby is too young to care for itself. Keep in mind that baby rabbits are independent at 4 weeks of age or about 4 inches in size.
- the animal is weak, thin and cold or in any way appears to be sick or injured.
- there are flies or insects on or around the animal; this can be a sign of injury.
- the animal is in obvious danger, including problems with other animals.

If you decide that the animal needs to be rescued:

- use gloves or a towel to pick the animal up, being careful not to get bit. Remember some mammals can carry Rabies.
- handle the animal as little as possible, many orphaned or injured wildlife will die simply from stress or fear.
- place the animal in a secure and safe box with air holes.
- if you cannot take the animal to a rescue center immediately, place a hot water bottle wrapped in a cloth in the box for warmth and place the box in a dark, warm and quiet place.
- do not feed or offer water to the animal unless instructed to do so by a qualified person.
- never transport wild birds in a bird cage. They may damage their feathers on the bars while attempting to escape.

**Birds:** An immature bird's best chance for survival is with its parents. A chick fallen out of its nest should be placed back in quickly and quietly. If the nest cannot be located, a young bird that is warm, active and chirping will be found by the parents and they will continue to care for it. A weak and cold bird should be warmed and placed in a nesting box lined with dried grass, and placed back where it was found for the parents to find it. If it is near dark, keep the bird warm and dry overnight and place it back out again at dawn.

**Rabbits:** Often rabbits will build their nests in tall grass or under shrubs that become disturbed by other animals, children or lawn mowers. Stress can be fatal to rabbits, so handle them as little as possible. Unless the young rabbit appears to be injured, it should be left in its hiding place or put back in the nest, if it can be located. The mother rabbit will return at night to feed her young.

For more information, check out Toronto Wildlife Centre's website at [www.torontowildlifecentre.com](http://www.torontowildlifecentre.com) or call their Wildlife Emergency Hotline: **416-631-0662**

## IMPORTANT SUMMERTIME REMINDERS

### The Bottom Line

An infected dog can have over 200 heartworms in the heart and adjoining blood vessels.

The drug companies that produce the various heartworm preventative medications will guarantee your dog's protection only if you use the medication correctly and have your dog's blood tested every year.

Now the recommended annual Heartworm test has even more value, it can be combined with testing for Lyme disease, Ehrlichia and Anaplasma as a 4DX test. How efficient is that!

Most boarding facilities will require your dog to have had a Kennel Cough vaccine **at least five days before** admission.

Many puppy training facilities are also strongly recommending the Kennel Cough vaccine to their clients.

**Caution!** Some flea products marketed in the pet stores to dogs are extremely toxic to cats. Always read the label carefully; better yet, ask us about choosing the safest products for your pets.



### Heartworm Disease

Heartworm disease is caused by a large worm which can live in a dog's heart and adjoining blood vessels. Permanent and potentially fatal damage to the heart, lungs and liver can occur long before there are any visible signs.

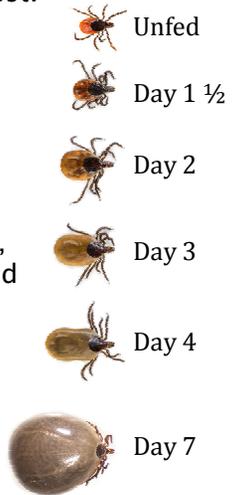
Fortunately, prevention is so easy. Simply give your dog the preventative medication once a month from June through November. Blood testing your dog prior to starting the medication is an important part of prevention and is strongly recommended.

### Ticks

Ticks are like little vampires, they bite to feed off the blood of their host. Their bite does not hurt, so the host is unaware that this ugly little creature is using them for dinner. As a result, a tick can remain attached and feeding for several days before it is engorged (full) and falls off into the environment. In large enough numbers, the tick can cause anemia. They also transmit a number of very devastating diseases, both to animals and people.

While there are dozens of diseases that can be transmitted by the tick, in Canada we are mainly concerned with Lyme Disease, Ehrlichiosis and Anaplasma. Lyme disease being the most common in Ontario. Lyme disease is spread by the Deer Tick.

There are a number of veterinary approved products available to prevent or kill ticks. They can be applied as a topical liquid or given as an oral chew. We would be happy to talk about which product will work best to avoid a tick infestation on your pet.



### Kennel Cough Vaccine

*Bordetella bronchiseptica*, better known as Kennel Cough, is a bacterial infection that causes tracheobronchitis. Affected dogs will exhibit a characteristic dry, harsh, hacking cough that can last up to 3 weeks. Some dogs can develop a serious pneumonia that may require them to be hospitalized. Dogs are most commonly infected in kennels, pet stores, exhibitions, grooming salons and off leash parks where they are in close

contact with other dogs. Vaccination is recommended for dogs going to boarding kennels, puppy classes, grooming facilities or off leash parks. If your dog is not vaccinated against Kennel Cough and is likely to be exposed, please call us to schedule an appointment for a vaccination against *Bordetella bronchiseptica*.

### Fleas



Both cats and dogs are at risk of becoming infested with fleas during our warm summer months. Fleas are extremely irritating to your pet. Flea bites can cause itchy skin rashes and even serious allergic reactions. Left untreated, just 10 adult fleas can multiply to over 250,000 fleas in only 30 days! Your pet can come into contact with fleas on walks, at the park, or even in your backyard. Those of you who have had fleas in the past know how difficult it is to get rid of them; prevention of flea infestations is much easier, cost effective and safe. Call us to start your pet on the safest and most effective flea prevention this spring.