

Peace River Veterinary Clinic

Small Animal Newsletter, Spring & Summer

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Vaccination Advice

Vaccines play an important role in the control of certain infectious diseases. Younger animals are especially susceptible to infection. It is very important to vaccinate puppies and kittens with a series of vaccines, 4 weeks apart, to ensure they are properly protected. Adults are usually vaccinated once yearly in our area. There are various viruses that cats and dogs are vaccinated for:

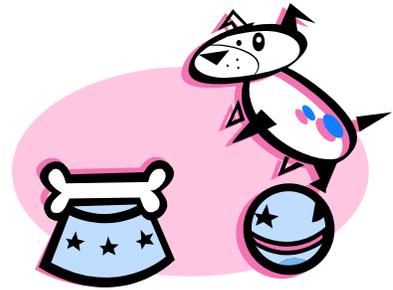
Core vaccines (vaccines highly recommended) for dogs include parvovirus, distemper virus, adenovirus 1 and 2, and rabies. Parvovirus is a very serious disease that results in severe vomiting and diarrhea. This disease is very prevalent in the Peace River area. Young puppies can become very dehydrated and may die without treatment. This virus is shed in feces of infected animals, and can live in the soil for months.

Distemper virus is transmitted via droplets in the air from coughing and secretions from the nasal cavity. This disease is often fatal, and results in a fever, discharge from the eyes and nose, depression, vomiting and diarrhea. Dogs may also develop seizures, muscle tremors and paralysis.

Core vaccines for cats include panleukopenia, herpesvirus, calicivirus, and rabies. Clinical signs seen with panleukopenia (*feline distemper*) include sudden onset of depression, vomiting, diarrhea, severe dehydration and death. Kittens 2 to 6 months of age are most susceptible. Herpesvirus and calicivirus causes upper respiratory tract signs (coughing, sneezing, runny eyes and runny nose), and are very contagious among cats.

Both dogs and cats need to be vaccinated for Rabies. This is a zoonotic disease, which means it can be transmitted between animals and humans. Rabies is transmitted when the virus is introduced into bite wounds, open cuts in the skin, or onto mucous membranes from saliva or blood of an infected animal. There is no treatment for this disease, so it is very important to ensure animals are vaccinated. Even if your cat never goes outside, a bat can enter the house and expose the cat to the virus. If you are ever bitten by an animal, please contact the Medical Officer of Health to report the bite. On April 9, 2010, there was a positive rabies case confirmed in a young cat from southern Alberta, so the virus is present in Alberta.

If you have any questions about which vaccine protocol is right for your pet, please feel free to contact us. A little precaution now can prevent severe illnesses in the future.



Welcome to the Spring and Summer edition of our small animal newsletter. Change is in the air during this time of year and there are plenty of new and exciting changes occurring at the practice. As many of you have noticed the clinic has been under major renovations this winter and the staff is all looking forward to having them completed by the summer. Dr Cory and her husband welcomed a new baby boy to their family this April, congratulations! We welcome first year AHT student Tina Weenink to the clinic. Tina will be working with us for the spring and summer.

Worm Control

There are several types of worms which can live in your pet's stomach and intestine. The most common are roundworms and tapeworms. Worms can cause real health problems if left untreated; vomiting, diarrhea, and even anemia are common. Less commonly, worms can infect the lungs.

Roundworms

Roundworms look like pieces of string and measure up to 18cm in dogs and 10cm in cats. Adult dogs and cats rarely show symptoms but are still likely to pick up roundworms and should be regularly wormed. Puppies and kittens with heavy infestations of roundworms will develop pot bellies, they may vomit or get diarrhea.

Puppies and kittens are likely to get parasites from their mothers via her bloodstream or her milk. The larval stage of the worm can lie dormant and migrate to the mammary glands when the host becomes pregnant, travelling through the mother's milk and causing the puppy or kitten to become infected.

Roundworms in humans

The dog roundworm, *Toxocara canis*, does not cause any problems in adults but can cause illness and blindness in small children.

To reduce the risk:

- Deworm dogs and cats, particularly puppies and pregnant bitches, regularly.
- Ensure that children wash their hands after handling their pet.
- Never let a dog lick a child's face.
- Never feed pets from your eating plates.
- Ensure there are no feces in your child's sandpit.

Tapeworms

Tapeworms are long, flat, segmented worms and appear like small grains of rice in your pets feces. They are commonly found in the small intestine of adult dogs and cats but can often go unnoticed. If present in large amounts, they may cause vomiting or diarrhea, or irritation around the anus, when the segments are shed.

Tapeworms are never transmitted directly from pet to pet but must first go through an intermediate host such as a flea, mouse, or bird. Tapeworms are common in cats who hunt, and in dogs that eat wild or raw meat. If you're animal is a valid hunter it needs to be treated for worms every 2 to 3 months, until the colder months when your pet is mainly inside and not hunting.

If you have any questions about a deworming protocol for your pet, please feel free to contact us. A little precaution now can prevent severe illnesses in the future.

MOSQUITOES, FLEAS, TICKS

ACTIVE 3

Inhibits flea egg development for 3 months

Controls fleas for 3 weeks

Controls ticks for 3 weeks

This drug is sold at our clinic.

Common dangers to your pet during the summer season!

Heat stress/heat stroke

Pets trapped in vehicles or other overheated spaces are especially at risk during warm and/or humid weather. Occasionally dogs will be too busy playing on a hot day to notice they are becoming too hot. Other risk factors include age extremes (very young or very old), a thick hair coat, giant breeds or breeds with short noses, and restricted access to water.

Pets don't sweat. Panting, drinking cold water and seeking cooler, shady environments are their cooling mechanisms.

Symptoms of heat stress can include rapid panting, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, and excessive drooling. Covering your pet with cool (not cold) wet towels, offering cold water to drink, and blowing cool air over the body to encourage evaporation should result in a rapid return to normal.

In more severe situations, animals will go on to develop heat stroke, which can result in shock, multi-organ failure and death. Panting may become shallow and then very slow, weakness, loss of balance, confusion and collapse can occur, drooling can be replaced by dry gums and seizures may develop. Your pet urgently needs emergency veterinary care if you see any of these signs.

Prevention is easier than cure. Remember to take cold water along for your animal during warm weather. Leave windows slightly open if leaving pets in a vehicle, and park in the shade.

Fish hooks

Dogs and cats are curious, and the smell of fish can be irresistible. This combination can add up to fish hooks in the mouth, nose or paws. The barbed variety is particularly difficult to remove and often requires veterinary assistance. Remember to keep tackle boxes closed, use barbless hooks, and keep rambunctious critters away from fishing equipment.

Porcupine quills

Quills should be removed as soon as possible, the longer they are embedded, the further they migrate into tissues, which can make it very difficult to remove them (or find them, for that matter). Also, quills soften over time, making it easier to break them off in tissue when attempting to pull them out. DO NOT cut the ends off of quills contrary to popular belief, this does not make them easier to remove, it actually makes it more difficult!

Removing quills is painful; your veterinarian will sedate your animal before removing the quills so the procedure doesn't hurt.

Mouse poison

Cats rarely find mouse poison attractive, but often dogs are not nearly as discriminating. Most of these poisons contain anticoagulants which are chemicals that prevent blood from clotting. Animals that ingest a significant amount of poison (which varies by the size of dog and the brand/strength of poison) can experience life-threatening internal bleeding. Bleeding can occur several hours to several days after the poison has been eaten. If you suspect your animal has eaten mouse poison, call your veterinarian right away.

This isn't a complete list of summer hazards, but it helps to be aware of the more common things we see every year. In addition, you can pick up a copy of "A First Aid Kit for Your Dog" at the veterinary clinic. Our emergency number is the same as our main phone number: 780- 624-1606