

Ironstone Veterinary Hospital Newsletter

Spring 2010

Welcome to our newsletter. We hope to publish this newsletter on a regular basis to keep you, our clients, aware of happenings and new products & services at the animal hospital.

Our Staff

Veterinarians

Sherilyn Allen, VMD

Jacqueline Burke, VMD

Receptionists/Technicians

Barb Grimm

Theresa Eschbach

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Canine Flu

Canine flu has become an endemic problem in the states of Florida, New Jersey, New York, Colorado and Pennsylvania. This means that our canine patients are at risk of contracting the flu, especially if they have exposure to other dogs in situations such as boarding, dog shows or trials, grooming parlors, or dog parks.

Canine influenza is highly contagious between dogs. Dogs transmit secretions with virus into the air and onto people and objects. The virus can live outside the dog for 24 hours. All dogs that are exposed will develop infection.

The first sign of influenza is a soft cough. This usually occurs within 2-4 days of exposure, but may not happen until after that time. This means that the dog is infected and shedding virus for 2-4 days or more before the owner notices the cough.

The virus destroys the epithelial cells lining the airways, allowing bacterial pathogens to get into the lungs. The dead cells can not perform their duty to remove mucous and debris from the lungs, and the result is a severe and often fatal pneumonia. It is the resultant pneumonia, and not the flu that causes the death of the dog if not treated.

It is difficult to test for canine influenza because by the time the dog is presented to the veterinarian for coughing, the amount of virus left in its body is already declining, making it difficult to obtain a positive diagnosis. Testing is best performed within five days of exposure. If there is more than one dog in the household, and only one is coughing, it may be best to test the noncoughing dogs as they are likely to be in an early stage of their infection.

There is now a new vaccination for canine influenza on the market, produced by Shering-Plough. This is a killed injectable vaccine against the H3N8 equine flu virus. A series of two vaccines must be given 2-4 weeks apart. A fairly good antibody response is generated two weeks after the last dose. So, it takes 4-6 weeks for a vaccinated dog to develop an antibody response which will reduce virus shedding, viral load in the lungs, and severity of clinical signs. However, there will be no absolute sterilizing immunity conferred on vaccinated dogs.

Should we vaccinate our dogs? We are in an endemic area. Dogs that come from shelters, pet shops, boarding situations, show dogs, those that go to grooming parlours, and dogs in contact with a lot of other dogs are most at risk. Please feel free to ask during your appointment whether vaccinating your dog for flu may be right for him or her.

Meet our Staff...

Theresa Eschbach

Theresa is often the person behind the cheery voice that you hear on the phone when you call the hospital, as well as the smiling face at the front desk. Theresa has been a veterinary technician for the past twenty years and has been at Ironstone since the spring of 2004. Of all the aspects of her job, Theresa most likes the interaction with our patients and their owners. She is also a very capable dental technician and is the one responsible for getting your pet's teeth their pearly whitest during dental procedures.

Theresa lives in Boyertown with her husband Ted, Doberman Venus, and cat CB. In her spare time she enjoys dancing, motorcycle riding, outdoor activities, reading, and watching comedies.



Product Spotlight.... Adequan

About 20% of all adult dogs in the US suffer from arthritis. Of all the available therapies, only Adequan is an FDA approved disease modifying drug for osteoarthritis in dogs. Hence, Adequan treats the underlying causes of canine arthritis, rather than just the symptoms by supporting tissue repair and diminishing joint and fluid damage.

Adequan is an intramuscular injection that reaches the joint within two hours. The intramuscular injection allows delivery of high levels of glycosaminoglycans to the joints by avoiding the digestive enzymes of the gastrointestinal tract. The low molecular weight allows the product to move from the bloodstream through the synovial membrane and into the synovial fluid, where it helps keep joints lubricated, making movement easier and increasing comfort by indirectly reducing inflammation.

Adequan is given in our office by injection twice weekly for eight injections, followed by a monthly injection thereafter. Adequan is safe, generally well tolerated, and is unlikely to produce gastrointestinal upsets. Many of our patients have had excellent responses to Adequan, and we view Adequan as a chief weapon in our fight against canine osteoarthritis. If you believe your dog is suffering from osteoarthritis, ask whether Adequan may be right for him or her during your next visit to the office.

An Interesting Case...

On January 27 Dr. Burke saw Odie, a 1 year, 3 month old Shih Tzu for a complaint of chewing at his groin and scooting. On exam, the skin of the scrotum and thighs was inflamed. Dr. Burke prescribed hydroxyzine, an antihistamine which is often effective in mild cases of allergy and inflammation of the skin.

Odie returned to Dr. Burke on February 3. The hydroxyzine had not worked well and Odie was still chewing at himself. The skin of the area below the tail, the scrotum, and the groin was again inflamed. Suspecting that Odie may have food allergy, Dr. Burke prescribed that Odie's owner switch his food to one containing sources of protein and carbohydrate that Odie had never eaten before. Hill's Prescription Diet D/D salmon and potato was elected. On February 9, Odie's owner came into the hospital to buy more food and stated that Odie's skin was not red anymore, and that he was no longer chewing at himself. During Odie's annual physical exam on March 16, Odie's owner confirmed that Odie was still doing well. She stated that she had noticed a dramatic improvement in the scratching and redness of the skin two days after starting the new diet!

Food allergy is a common cause of nonseasonal itchy skin in both dogs and cats. The problem can occur in dogs aged anywhere from puppies to the elderly. 30% of dogs are less than a year of age at the time the diagnosis is made, however. Allergies to beef and dairy are the most common, followed by chicken, eggs, soy, corn and wheat. The distribution of the itchiness and the subsequent lesions can be localized to the ears, groin, armpit, face, neck, and perineum, or can be generalized. Diagnosis is made by placing the animal on foods of sources of protein and carbohydrate the pet has not eaten before. This is because the pet can not be sensitized to the allergens in the food if the pet has not experienced the food before. During the trial period which extends for up to eight to twelve weeks, the pet may not eat any flavored vitamins or heartworm preventative, any table scraps, other dog or cat food, rawhides, pill pockets, etc. Once the diagnosis is confirmed, the pet may either stay on the new diet, or the owner may add one homecooked ingredient back at a time to see which of the more common ingredients the pet can tolerate. The prognosis for pets with food allergy is good.

Animals in the News...

Swiss researchers studying wild monkeys in South Africa compared the animals' responses to box-opening task demonstrations and found that the animals learned the task better when it was demonstrated by a female monkey as opposed to a male monkey. The findings could aid understanding "the evolution of traditions and culture in species living in stable groups, including humans," one of the researchers said. [BBC](#)

A tin of cat food may be the solution to reducing the number of toxic cane toads in Australia, one of the country's major pests which environmentalists have tried for years to stop from killing off the native wildlife. Scientists from the University of Sydney said that putting cat food close to ponds inhabited by baby cane toads attracts carnivorous ants that are also immune to the toads' poisonous skin. The ants then attack the baby toads and eat them. The toads, which were

introduced from Hawaii in 1935 in a bid to control native cane beetles, have lead to dramatic declines in populations of native snakes, lizards, and quolis, a cat sized marsupial. [Reuters](#)

The attention deficit hyperactivity disorder drug Adderal has become a common and dangerous pharmaceutical threat for companion animals, especially cats, experts say. The drug seems to appeal to the finicky feline tastes, according to a board certified toxicologist who described 152 cases of feline intoxication with the drug that were called in to the national Animal Poison Control Center. [Science News](#)

After nine days of labor, an elephant at the Taronga Zoo in Sydney, Australia, gave birth to a healthy calf, surprising veterinarians and zookeepers who had declared the baby stillborn. "Despite no vital signs of life for several days, we now have obviously a healthy little calf on the ground." the zoo director said. [MSNBC](#), [The Associated Press](#)

The British government has retreated on its plan to require all dog owners to buy insurance for their pets in an effort to crack down on aggressive canines. Officials say the decision to withdraw the proposal was made in the interest of responsible canine owners. [Google](#), [The Associated Press](#)

The California National Guard's 40th Infantry Division Agribusiness Development Team is offering free veterinary services to local farmers in Afghanistan. Comprised of American soldiers and civilians, the team works with local veterinarians to provide animals with rabies and tetanus vaccinations, as well as parasite treatments, with eventual plans to turn over the program to local vets. [ABC News](#)

We sincerely hope that you have enjoyed this first edition of our newsletter. If you have, please email it or print it out and give it to any friends, relatives, or neighbors who might be interested in reading it. We welcome suggestions for future articles, and will also consider submissions from our readers. So, please email us your stories, suggestions, and photos to ironstonevet@yahoo.com. Please email us also if you would like to be added to our email list.



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