

Pet Tales

Volume 1, Issue 1

December, 2007

Special points of interest:

- Teeth cleaning can add years to your pet's life.
- Our Rx store can save you money.
- Check a neck can save your pet's life.
- Fat cats are not healthy cats.
- What do you think of our 1st issue? Let us know.
- Check our web site www.ironbridgevet.com

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Welcome to Our New Newsletter

I would like to welcome you to our first on-line newsletter. This is a new venture to help spread pertinent information to you our clients in a timely fashion via the web.

We had a version of a newsletter years ago that seemed to go over well, but time got away from us and it fell by the wayside. It was a combination of production costs, postage and shear time involved. We feel with the new medium of the electronic word we can publish this more efficiently with a shorter

turn around time. As you will shortly realize I am a veterinarian not a publisher so you will need to give me a little leeway when some of these articles are not delivered with a lot of punch. I encourage feedback on all that appears here, and together we can make a better newsletter.

We will do timely articles, what's new at Iron Bridge Animal Hospital, new staff, animals for adoption, and questions to the Doctor. I hope this will be interesting and enlightening.



Iron Bridge Animal Hospital

New On-Line Drug Store at IBAH

Beginning in December 2007 we will offer a new feature to our web site at www.ironbridgevet.com. This will be an **on-line drug store**.

You will be able to order your pet's fre-

quently used prescription medications like *Interceptor* and *Frontline Plus* right from the comfort of your own home or office by way of the internet.

Some of you have used the various

out-of-state on-line pharmacies and have experienced the delays and lost scripts that beset them. With our **VetStoreRx** you will be in direct contact with our office for okay's of your pet's

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By Jan Bellows D.V.M.
DipAVDC

Dental Series

A Guide to Canine Tooth Brushing

What would happen if you stopped brushing your own teeth? Even if you only ate hard food as most dogs do, there still would be problems. You should be brushing your dog's teeth twice daily if you can manage it. It's not as difficult as you might imagine.

What are the benefits? Brushing removes the daily accumulation of plaque from the teeth. Even though dogs do not commonly

get cavities, they do suffer from periodontal disease. If untreated, the gum disease can lead to pain and tooth loss. How do you brush your dog's teeth?

Step one is to pick an appropriate pet toothbrush. Save yourself time by not buying a child's toothbrush, which is usually too hard for dogs. The ideal dog toothbrush will have a long handle, an angled head to better fit the mouth, and extra soft bristles. For dogs less than 30 pounds, the finger toothbrush that fits

over the tip of your finger works well.

Step two is to select an appropriate toothpaste. The best pet toothpastes contain enzymes that help control plaque. Try to avoid toothpastes with baking soda, detergents, or salt that are sometimes found in human pastes. Fluoride may be incorporated to help control bacteria. Rather than placing the paste on top of the brush, incorporate it between the bristles. This allows the paste to spend the most time next to the teeth and gums.

What would happen if you stopped brushing your own teeth?

Step three is to get the brush with paste into your dog's mouth to get all the teeth brushed.

Most dogs accept brushing if they are approached in a gentle manner. If you can start when they are young, it's quite easy, but even older pets will accept the process. Start slowly; you can use a washcloth or piece of gauze to wipe the teeth, front and back in the same manner

you will eventually be using the toothbrush. Do this twice daily for about two weeks and your dog should be familiar with the approach. Then take the pet toothbrush, soak it in warm water and start brushing daily for several days. When your dog accepts this brushing, add the pet toothpaste.

Most attention should be given to the outside of the upper

teeth. The toothbrush bristles should be placed at the gum margin where the teeth and gums meet at a 45 degree angle. The movement should be in an oval pattern. Be sure to gently place the bristle ends into the area around the base of the tooth as well as into the space between the teeth. Ten short back and forth motions should be completed, then the brush



Step one is to pick an appropriate pet toothbrush.

moved to a new location. Cover three to four teeth at a time.

In summary, dog home dental care should include daily brushing using an enzymatic pet toothpaste. Taking an active role in the care of your dog's dental care will help reduce dental disease, bad breath and potential life threatening heart

and kidney disease. Every one wins.

Dr. Jan Bellows is a board-certified veterinary dentist. His office, Hometown Animal Hospital and Dental Clinic, is located at 17100 Royal Palm Boulevard in Weston, Florida. He can be reached for consultations at 954-349-5800.

We will do another in this series each

publication to help you with dental care for your pet.

Questions for Doc

Q: I know you've said there's no reason for a fat pet, but I can't get any weight off our 17-pound cat. I don't think it's possible. Also, I'm not sure it would improve our cat's life to cut back on his food because he's such a happy eater. Any advice? -- S.W., via e-mail

A: Would it improve the quality of your cat's life -- or yours -- if he became diabetic? Because that's one risk of chronic obesity in cats. Overweight cats are also prone to joint, ligament and tendon problems, difficulty

breathing and even skin problems because they can't groom themselves properly.

Talk to your veterinarian about your cat's overall health and a plan for slowly trimming down your overweight pet. Quick-loss programs can make you cat ill or even kill him, which is why a vet-approved slow-reduction plan is best.

Pay attention to what you're doing to contribute in ways you may not even be fully aware of. For example: Do you share your meals with your cat, hand-

ing him the choicest tidbits off your plate? Do you love to give him cat treats several times a day? These things all add up! Remember: Food is not love. Instead of interacting with your cat over food, bond over grooming or play. Your cat will love you just as much for a loving session of gentle brushing and combing, or a playful half-hour spent being teased with a cat "fishing pole" or other toy. Time spent in either pursuit is better for an overweight cat than eating, and the exercise will help take the weight off.



New Year's Resolution

Time for annual collar, tag check

The New Year's neck check will take you less than a minute, but it could save your pet's life.

I've been suggesting the New Year's neck check for years as an easy-to-remember annual evaluation of the state of your pet's collar and ID. A properly fitted collar is important, but so is the right type. For dogs, a

buckled or snap-together collar made of leather or nylon webbing is the best choice. The proper fit for a collar should be comfortably close but not too snug. "Choke" collars should never, ever be the choice for everyday wear -- they can be deadly if they catch on something.

Cat collars should have a piece

of elastic to enable your pet to get free if the collar catches on something.

Next, look at the holes and the fasteners. The collar is weakest at these spots, so if you see signs of excessive wear or strain, you'll need to replace the collar soon.

Finally, check those tags. In addition to whatever license is

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The New Year's neck check can save your pet's life one day.

On-Line Drugstore (continued from front)

prescription so there will not be the back and forth that has existed with your other on-line ordering experiences.

There will also be a larger choice of prescription diets offered on-line. This will allow

us to serve you better with more product at a lower price. We will still carry all the medications you are used to getting at our hospital. So if you choose just drop in pick up your pet's medications as before.

We hope this new service will be of benefit to you and your pet. Let us know how it works for you.

Visit our web site, www.ironbridgevet.com,

and **VetStoreRx** and give it a try.

Iron Bridge Animal Hospital

7540 Iron Bridge Road
Richmond, Virginia 23237

Phone: 804-743-1704
Fax: 804-271-2108
E-mail: info@ironbridgevet.com
www.ironbridgevet.com

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Where pets are family, too.



Iron Bridge Animal Hospital

New Year's Resolution (continued from page 3)



required, your pet should have a legible ID tag. Instead of putting the pet's name on the tag, I prefer to put on the word "Reward!" And instead of a home address, I put as many phone numbers -- home, cell, friends, family -- as will fit.

Don't delay in fixing whatever problems you find. Sturdy collars and legible ID tags are the best insurance possible when it comes to getting your pet a ticket home should he ever become lost.

Let us know what you think

This is our first attempt at this so let her rip!

Tell us directly or go to our website - at www.ironbridgevet.com and go to the Contact Us page. There is a form you can fill out and e-mail in or just email us direct at info@ironbridgevet.com. What can we add? What would you like to see or hear about? We are all ears.

Iron Bridge Animal Hospital Hospital Hours

Mon.-Thurs—7 am—7 pm

Friday—7 am—6 pm

Sat. & Sun.—Closed

Doctor's hours by Appt.

W. S. Dunnavant, Jr., D.V.M.