



# Limerick Veterinary Hospital

*"Trust Your Best Friends To Us"*

## ANIMAL EMERGENCIES

**610-489-2848**

Limerick Veterinary Hospital provides 24 hour emergency on call service to our community. Our answering service will contact the veterinarian on call. The veterinarian will call you back and arrange to see your pet. If you do not receive a call within 10 minutes, please call back. Our veterinarians are trained to deal with most emergencies that your dog or cat might experience. We do not provide emergency care to birds. Depending on the veterinarian on duty we may provide care for other exotic pets. If it is in your pet's best interest we will refer you to another emergency hospital. In the case of toxin ingestion we may request that you call animal poison control. The number is listed below.

Limerick Veterinary Hospital provides 24 hour care for our hospitalized patients. We have veterinary technicians working around the clock to care for your hospitalized pet and to assist the veterinarian should an emergency arise.

**ASPCA ANIMAL POISON CONTROL CENTER: 888-426-4435**

345 W. Ridge Pike Limerick, PA 19468 P- 610-489-2848 F- 610-489-0618

Paws@limerickvet.com

## SEASONAL PRECAUTIONS /SUMMER

It is great to enjoy summer with your pet. It is also the time when your pets have the greatest risk of injury and heat related problems. Here are some tips to keep your pet cool in the summer.

**Heat is** the number one problem for pets in the summer. Never leave your pet in a parked car. Even cars parked in shade with the windows cracked will quickly turn into an oven. Be careful not to over exert your pet by walking or exercising during the hottest part of the day. Sunburn can occur to those pets with short or no hair and pets with pink skin and white hair are especially vulnerable to sunburn. Limit their exposure to the sun and use a children's approved sun block if needed. All pets need adequate fresh water often. Dogs sweat through the pads of their feet and also by panting. Evaporation from wet surfaces of their mouth and nose helps lower body temperature. Be mindful of hot pavements and hot sand at their beach. Sensitive paws can burn easily. Inside pets should have circulating air by air conditioning or a pet proof fan.

Signs of heat stroke include rapid panting, hot skin, twitching and a dazed look. Wrap the pet in towels soaked in cool water, not cold water. In severe cases, place the pet in the bathtub. Heatstroke can be fatal, see your veterinarian as soon as possible.

Summertime is the time when your pet is more likely to come in contact with other pets and wild animals. Vaccinations must be kept current to prevent your pet from contacting a disease from these chance encounters. Ensure that your pet is also properly identified and carries proof of vaccinations as well as a county license.

Little Beasties are at their peak in the summertime. Fleas, ticks and worms may try to use your pet as a source of food. See your veterinary team for prevention topical's and medications.

Please read any precautions on any herbicides and pesticides you may use on your lawn. Any contact with any lawn chemicals should be dealt with by washing the pet and contacting the veterinarian.

Summer is allergy season. People sneeze and pets scratch. Common pet allergies include grass, pollen and weeds. If your pet scratches excessively and /or chews at his /paws, he/she may have an allergy .Inform your veterinarian for a treatment plan.

Limerick Veterinary Hospital

## **CO2 LASER**

Limerick Veterinary Hospital has new technology resulting in greater comfort and better healing for many of our patients. The standard metal scalpel has been the instrument for hundreds of years in medicine but it now has been outclassed by the carbon dioxide laser. Use of the laser insures an almost bloodless surgery field together with a great reduction in pain because the nerves to the tissue are actually sealed by the procedure.

Limerick Veterinary Hospital is one of the few hospitals in the area to offer this modern laser process.

We are offering all pet owners the use of the laser for their pet's neutering. Use of the laser for routine neutering can reduce bleeding and keep post surgical pain to a minimum.

We would be glad to discuss this surgical alternative with you when you are making plans to have your pet spayed or castrated. There is an additional fee for the use of this high tech instrument but we feel it is money well spent.

## **Pre Anesthetic Blood Work**

Limerick Veterinary Hospital recommends that all animals have blood work before anesthetic procedures. Blood work results give us insight about the health of the internal organs which cannot be determined on a physical exam. We require all animals over six years of age to have a complete blood count and chemistry panel before anesthesia. The complete blood count provides information about anemia, infection and parasitism. The chemistry panel helps to evaluate the liver, kidneys, pancreas and adrenal glands along with electrolyte, protein and glucose levels. These tests should be run a few days before the anesthetic procedure to allow time to address the problem. There is a small panel which can be run in-house the morning of the procedures on young animals, but provides much less information. Please ask your veterinarian about pre- anesthetic blood work before your pet's next anesthetic procedure.

## Dental Procedures

Dental procedures in dogs and cats are much more involved than the same procedure in people. The primary reason is the need for anesthesia. It might sound silly, but we cannot convince our canine and feline patients to lie back and hold their mouths open so we can examine and clean their teeth.

The first step is a complete physical examination. This gives us an idea of general, overall health. If we are able to do an oral exam we will, but a thorough oral exam can only be done under anesthesia. Depending on the age of the animal, pre-anesthetic blood work to check organ function and for signs of disease may be required. If all of these look good we can proceed to the dental.

The day of the procedure the pet is examined again to make sure nothing has changed. An intravenous catheter is placed and intravenous fluids are administered. An anesthetic protocol is selected which is most appropriate for your pet and its current health status. Once anesthetized with injectable anesthesia an endotracheal tube is placed to protect the respiratory system from the water used in the procedure. All dogs are placed on inhaled anesthesia. Cats may be placed on inhaled anesthesia depending on their health status.

Finally we can get to the teeth. They are cleaned both manually and with an ultrasonic cleaner just like at your own dentist. Once they are cleaned, each tooth is examined individually for fractures, wear, loss of gum, loss of bony support and cavity like holes. If there are any problems dental x-rays will be taken to further identify the extent of the damage. At this point a decision will need to be made if the tooth is healthy enough to be left in place. If teeth are surgically removed, pain relievers and antibiotics may be administered. Occasionally a root canal will be recommended which would require referral to a veterinary dentist. After any problems with the teeth are dealt with, the teeth are polished and the animal is removed from anesthesia. Your pet's recovery is monitored by a technician until it is awake. Once the animal is awake it can be sent home. It may go home with antibiotics and pain relievers for you to administer at home.

The pet may be groggy for a day after the procedure, but most will eat their regular food the following day no matter how extensive the procedure was. You may notice some drooling and even some bloody saliva. This is acceptable as long as it is not severe and your pet is responding well to you. If you have any concerns during the recovery period do not hesitate to call. A veterinarian is always available. In a few days your pet should feel much better than before the procedure. We offer a free re-evaluation two weeks after the procedure to check healing and to discuss your home dental care.

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## **ELECTIVE SURGERIES**

### **Spay/Castration**

Eliminates unwanted pregnancies

Decreases wandering instinct in males

Decrease the incidence of urine marking in cats

Decreases the threat of pyometra (infected uterus)

Decreases the incidence of mammary cancer in females

Reduces the threat of prostatic disease and testicular cancer

Eliminate female heat cycle which may occur every three to four weeks in cats

Control fighting of territorial males

Requires one day in the hospital

Suture removal is necessary for all canines and female felines 14 days after surgery

It is important to keep your pet on a leash when outdoors and keep as calm as possible while he/she heals

Discourage cleaning and licking of wound and no bathing until after the suture removal

These surgeries are usually performed 6 to 8 months of age

### **Dentals**

This procedure is important for the health of your pet's mouth. Dental problems include tartar build up, gingivitis, painful abscesses and bad breath. These are procedures that should be done every few years or more frequently if it is a reoccurring problem. The procedure involves scaling, polishing and fluoride treatment along with evaluation of the teeth to prevent loss of teeth later in life.

# INTERNAL PARASITES

A parasite is a living organism which feeds on/in other living organisms, the host. Parasites are responsible for significant disease and death in animals and humans. It is essential to treat and prevent parasitism in order to keep your pet healthy.

## **Roundworms – Intestinal**

Roundworms are white to cream colored, round bodied worms resembling spaghetti. Roundworms mature in the small intestine and the young cross the placenta and infect the prenatal puppy as well as migrate to the mammary glands, which are ingested by the nursing pups. Roundworm infestation will be signaled by the pets having a “pot-bellied” appearance, intermittent diarrhea, dull coat and mature worms may be visible in vomit or in stool.

## **Hookworms – Intestinal**

Hookworms are short, thick, hook-shaped worms. They mature in the small intestine and can be the result of a pet ingesting an infected rodent, through skin penetration and mother to offspring. Signs of hookworm infestation include dark colored diarrhea (blood), weakness and weight loss.

## **Whipworms – Intestinal**

Whipworms are slender whip-like worms with one thin end and the other thick end. Whipworms occur in pets by ingestion of the eggs through grooming or ingesting an infected animal. Worms mature in the cecum and large intestine. Signs of whipworms include profuse diarrhea and weight loss.

## **Tapeworms – Intestinal**

Tapeworms are white worms which appear as “rice” and can often be found on a pet’s stool or around the pet’s anus. Tapeworms occur in pets through the ingestion of a rodent, by grooming or by ingesting fleas. Signs of tapeworms include an increase in appetite without weight gain, dull coat and scooting/licking of the rectum.

## **Heartworms – Circulatory**

Heartworms mature to spaghetti-like worms in the pet’s heart and lungs. These worms will not be visible to the owner as in other worms such as intestinal worms. Heartworms are spread to pets by mosquito bites which carry the larval form of the parasite. Signs of heartworm include coughing, weakness after exercise and a lack of stamina. The parasite is identified through a blood sample.

## **Coccidia and Giardia – Intestinal**

These are single celled protozoa, not visible to the naked eye. Infection usually occurs due to overcrowding, where sanitation conditions are poor such as in puppy mills, kennels or animal shelters. Signs of infection include a very odorous diarrhea, watery or mucousy stools and poor overall health. These parasites are identified through a stool sample and sanitation is the best prevention.

## **Feline Hyperthyroidism**

Hyperthyroidism, or overactive thyroid gland, is a relatively common disease in older cats. The thyroid gland is located in the front of the neck, and is responsible for secreting a hormone, T3, throughout the body. This hormone is converted to its active form, T4, in the cells of the body. The amount of T3 and T4 in the body acts as a sort of metabolic “thermostat” and sets the metabolic rate. When the thyroid hormones are elevated a cat’s metabolic rate is elevated as well, and this can cause worrisome symptoms.

Elevated thyroid hormone in cats is most commonly due to a benign growth within the thyroid gland, called a goiter. This is not a true cancer – less than 5% of all hyperthyroid cats have thyroid cancer. Some symptoms that you may notice in your cat if hyperthyroidism is present are:

- Weight loss despite a good (or even increased) appetite
- Increased thirst and urination
- Urinating outside the litterbox
- Chronic intermittent vomiting or diarrhea
- Restlessness and agitation

Hyperthyroidism is diagnosed by a blood test to check for the level of T4 in the bloodstream. Most often we will also check for other common causes of disease in older cats, like chronic kidney disease or diabetes mellitus to make sure that the elevated thyroid hormone is really the cause of the issue. Hyperthyroidism can cause more serious silent diseases, such as heart disease and high blood pressure. Since this is the case treatment should always be pursued for cats with hyperthyroidism.

Cats with hyperthyroidism can go on to live relatively normal lives. Treatment for hyperthyroidism can vary depending on each individual cat’s needs. Possible treatment options include daily medication, dietary changes, surgical removal of the thyroid gland, or radioactive iodine used to inactivate the thyroid gland. If your cat is diagnosed with hyperthyroidism we will go over the treatment options and make the best plan for you and your pet.

# DENTISTRY

## Dental Health

Your pet's teeth are just as important to them as your teeth are to you. That is where, as part of their yearly physical exam, regular dental care begins.

Tartar is composed of various mineral salts, organic materials, bacteria and food particles. In the early stages of accumulation, the material is soft, called plaque, but later hardens and sticks to teeth... Continued accumulation causes red, inflamed gum tissue, known as gingivitis and can eventually lead to tooth loss.

## Prevention

Feed hard / coarse food

Provide hard rubber, chew toys or hard treat foods, remembering that the treat foods are a source of calories and may lead to obesity if too many are given.

Brush your pet's teeth regularly, i.e., 5-7 times per week. This is often easier said than done, but the effort is worth it. Dogs tend to be more tolerant than cats. It is especially good to start young animals on this preventative, as they will get used to having their mouths worked in and accept this approach much easier.

There are special enzymatic toothpastes available. Abrasive dental cleaning pads are also helpful in cleaning teeth. Any soft bristled toothbrush will work. Never use human toothpaste.

The most effective way to ensure good dental health is to have regular professional cleanings as needed.

## Notify your veterinarian

If your pet has bad breath

If your pet has bleeding gums

If your pet refuses to eat or has discomfort when chewing

It may be necessary to see your pet sooner than at its annual physical exam. But remember, the best way to ensure your pet's good dental health is to have regular yearly checkups by your veterinarian

## SEASONAL PRECAUTIONS/ WINTER

The winter months can be especially hard on pets both outside, as well as in the house.

Homes that are kept on the cool side in winter may have pets, particularly cats, seeking out warm spots near radiators, wood stoves, furnaces, baseboard heating and fireplaces. Make sure these areas are pet friendly and designate a spot for your pet by placing a pet bed in that area. Be sure that the pet is not getting too warm and that it's bedding is not slowly burning. **Be particularly careful of using the clothes dryer around heat seeking cats!**

The holidays are a busy time in most homes. Do not neglect the pet or their safety at these times. Electrical cords tinsel and pine trees present the pet with seasonal dangers. Tinsel should be avoided all together. Electrical cords should be taped together and placed up away from the pets reach. The Christmas tree should be off limits to pets with no one at home. The holidays also mean more people food in larger amounts and more chocolate. Remember, people food is for people and when you are not around, the food should be put away. Chocolate is very deadly to pets, keep it locked away.

Antifreeze has a sweet taste to it and in winter when many sources of water are frozen, a puddle of anti freeze can quench an outside pet's thirst. Antifreeze in the smallest amount such as a lick can be fatal. Avoid spills and if they occur, clean them up immediately.

Outside pets need adequate shelter from the rain, wind and snow. Any shelter should be off the ground and well insulated. A door is ideal to any pet shelter to keep out the wind. During severe weather your pet should be brought inside. If you suspect your pet has been frostbitten, remove any snow and ice and apply warm, moist towels frequently to the affected areas, call the veterinarian at once.

Some snow removal and ice melting products can be harmful to your pet Read the precautions before , applying to your walks and driveway .If your pets has any activity on public roads in winter, it may be best to wash his / her feet as they come into the house.

Water is extremely important to pets in winter. Outside pets must have an adequate supply of water to maintain their body heat and avoid dehydration. The neighbor's pool bath and creek in the woods are now frozen. Water bowls should be checked at least twice a day in the winter time.

Cats will seek out warm spots in the winter and a freshly parked car in your driveway is a constant target. If you are coming and going from your home, be sure to pound the hood of your car or honk before starting the engine. If your cat has a greasy, black smudges in winter, you can bet that he / she is an warm engine cuddler.

## **SIGNS OF A SICK ANIMAL**

Frequent or inappropriate urination can be signs of a urinary tract infection or diabetes. Frequent trips to the litter pan or straining to urinate can be a medical emergency.

Increase/Decrease in food intake

Increase/Decrease in water intake

Coughing or sneezing

Sleeping a lot or hiding

Inactivity

Bloated or distended abdomen can be a medical emergency

Crying or whining

Discharge from the eyes or eyes held closed

Warm/cold/ moist nose does not indicate if your animal is sick or isn't sick

Normal rectal temperature 100-102.5

Warmth of pet to the touch does not evaluate the pet's temperature, thermometer must be used rectally.

**Limerick Veterinary Hospital**  
**Vaccinations: Feline**

**FELV and FIV Testing**

We recommend every new kitten entering a household be tested for Feline Leukemia and Feline AIDS. Testing will identify those cats that are infected and not showing signs, and help avoid exposing existing cats in the household to these deadly diseases.

**Rabies**

Rabies is caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system of all animals, including humans. It is always fatal and there is no cure. Highly effective vaccines are readily available. Unvaccinated animals that have been exposed to the virus through fighting, etc., face a lengthy quarantine or must be humanely destroyed. Having your pet vaccinated for rabies is the law. Please note that your kitten's first rabies vaccination is only good for one year.

**FVRCP**

Feline FVRCP is a combined vaccine that protects against several diseases. These diseases are Panleukopenia (feline distemper), Rhinotracheitis, and Calicivirus. Panleukopenia is a highly contagious disease, and is usually fatal. Symptoms include depression, loss of appetite, fever, vomiting and diarrhea. The remaining diseases are viruses that attack the upper-respiratory system. They are also highly contagious and symptoms include sneezing, coughing, gagging, and salivating with discharges from the eyes and nose. Vaccination is your cat's only protection.

**Feline Leukemia (FELV)**

Feline Leukemia is a virus that attacks and weakens a cat's immune system. Feline leukemia virus causes leukemia (cancer of the white blood cells.) The virus also leaves the cat susceptible to a wide variety of infection disease such as respiratory infections, skin disorders, anemia, and mouth infections. The leukemia virus is passed through saliva, urine, feces and cat fights. Presently, there is no cure for this disease. The only protection is vaccination.

**Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)**

FIV or feline AIDS is a viral disease similar to human AIDS. The virus cannot be contracted by humans. It is spread from cat to cat by biting and scratching or rarely, from mother to her unborn fetus. It causes immune suppression and leads to death. There is no treatment or cure. Avoiding exposure to outdoor cats and vaccination are the best ways to prevent the disease.

# EXTERNAL PARASITES

A parasite is a living organism which lives and feeds on/in another living organism, the host. Parasites are responsible for significant disease and death in animals and humans. It is essential to treat and prevent parasitism in order to keep your pet healthy.

## Fleas

Fleas are small brown-black wingless insects 2-4 millimeters in length. They have flat bodies which aid them when running through animal hair. Adult fleas can be found anywhere on the animal. Eggs, larvae and pupae are found in bedding, carpets and floor crevices. Presently there are monthly topical insecticides you can apply to your pet to prevent flea infestation. Fleas are also an intermediate host for tapeworms.

## Ticks

Ticks are small, round, brown arachnids with eight legs. Ticks can be found anywhere on the pet, but are more frequently seen around the head and ears. Cats are less frequent to have ticks because of their cleaning and grooming habits are more thorough than in dogs. As in fleas, there is a topical insecticide to prevent your pet from getting ticks. It is important to remove any ticks you find on your pet as soon as possible. If you live in a heavily wooded area or in and around tall grass, you will be advised to have your dog receive a Lyme disease immunization. Deer ticks are the primary carrier of Lyme disease.

## Mites

Ear mites are extremely tiny creatures, about .44mm long with a flattened body and 8 legs. A pet with ear mites will shake and scratch its ears constantly. The pet's ears may be red and irritated, crusty and have a discharge. Your veterinarian will clean your pet's ears and prescribe a miticide as treatment.

Sarcoptes and Demodex are mange mites, which burrow into the skin around the head, ears, shoulders and neck. The presence of mange mites causes great irritation and itching, which produces lesions with crusting skin. Left untreated the skin can become thickened, wrinkled and hairless.

## Lice

Lice are 1.5 mm long with flattened bodies. They can occur anywhere on the pet. Severe cases can cause hair loss, severe itching and anemia from blood loss. Treatment is performed by applying insecticides to the pet.