



# VALLEY Animal Hospital



Pet Talk



Spring 2020

## Cat Stats

### 6 Life Stages of Our Feline Friends



**H**ow old is your cat in human years? Understanding your fur-baby's stage of life can help you provide a proper lifestyle and better overall care.

**Kittens:** From birth to 6 months, your fuzzy bundle of joy grows quickly from a newborn to the equivalent of a 10-year-old child. This is the best stage for your cat to get them comfortable with tooth and coat brushing, nail trims, traveling in cars, interacting with other pets, and being in a carrier.

**Junior:** At 6 months to 2 years, kitty will mature to adulthood. At one year, he is a teenager and is roughly 24 in human years by age 2.

**Prime:** Your cat's prime years of 3 to 6 are equivalent to a human age of 28 to 40. Watch for symptoms of urinary tract or kidney issues as well as dental problems, which can begin to develop at this age.

**Mature:** Age 7 to 10 years can be compared with ages 44 to 56 in humans. Your middle-aged cat will become less physically active, so be sure to keep them at a healthy weight.

**Senior:** An 11- to 14-year-old kitty is now between 60 and 72 in human years. We may recommend changing to a senior diet and will keep a close watch for diseases associated with aging.

**Geriatric:** At 15 and beyond (late 70s to over 100 in human years!) you can expect some geriatric conditions such as cognitive dysfunction, joint-related diseases, kidney problems and tooth decay. We will need to see your cat more frequently to be sure his or her golden years are as happy and as comfortable as possible.

We love to care for your furry family members at any stage of life!

## Emergency Procedure

### What to Do in Case of Snakebite



**W**armer weather always brings an increase in snake bites to dogs and cats. The venom can cause severe pain, inflammation, numbness, clotting, tissue destruction, loss of a limb, or paralysis. In addition to the bite mark, symptoms may include rapid breathing, seizures, drooling, dilated pupils, pale gums, ataxia, swelling, weakness, collapse, vomiting, diarrhea, and disorientation.

If a snake bites your pet:

- 🐾 Keep them as calm as possible.
- 🐾 Identify the type of snake if you can.
- 🐾 Give Benadryl to reduce the reaction.
- 🐾 Apply an ice pack to the wound.
- 🐾 Take them to our hospital or the nearest animal emergency clinic immediately.

Keep them as still as possible because movement can speed up the spread of the poison through the blood system. Two puncture wounds at the bite site signify a poisonous snake; however, any snake bite can become infected. Snake bites are always an emergency and require prompt medical attention!

To help prevent encounters, keep your dog on a leash and supervise closely. Keep nighttime walks to a minimum, and don't allow pets to explore in tall grass or holes or dig under logs, rocks, woodpiles or brush.

## Canine Epilepsy

### Recognizing Seizures in Dogs



**F**ew things are scarier than watching your furry best friend have a seizure. Epilepsy, a brain abnormality characterized by seizures, is the most common neurological disorder seen in dogs. Epileptic seizures can be mild, with muscle twitching or shaking that lasts for only a few seconds. Major seizures can include collapsing, jerking, loss of consciousness, drooling, chomping, tongue chewing, or foaming at the mouth. A dog may fall over and make running motions with their legs or may lose bowel and bladder control.

Before a seizure, your dog may look dazed, seem unsteady or confused. Afterward, they may be disoriented, wobbly, or even temporarily blind. Although any dog can have epilepsy, it is more common in border collies, Australian shepherds, Labrador retrievers, beagles, collies and German shepherds.

If your dog is having a seizure, speak calmly and avoid touching him as he may bite. Note the length of the seizure and call us afterward. Seizures lasting five minutes or more are especially dangerous, but we should know about any seizures as they can indicate other possible diseases or poisoning. We will do a thorough exam and lab work to look for the cause of your dog's seizures.

There is no cure or prevention for epilepsy, but it can be largely controlled with medication. Dogs that only suffer mild or infrequent epileptic seizures may not require medication, but for dogs who suffer more frequent episodes your veterinarian can prescribe an oral anticonvulsant medication.

## Worm Warning

### Protect Your Pets from Harmful Parasites



**W**orms can cause diarrhea, vomiting, weight loss, increased heart rate and anemia. Infestations left untreated can even be fatal. Several types of worms can infect your pets:

**Roundworms:** Kittens and puppies are often born with roundworms if the mother was infected. Symptoms include a pot-bellied appearance and slow growth.

**Tapeworms:** These segmented worms are carried by fleas and can grow to six inches long. The best way to prevent tapeworms is through flea prevention.

**Whipworms:** Tiny whipworms are difficult to detect because they are seldom seen. Common symptoms are chronic weight loss, diarrhea, and mucous in stool.

**Hookworms:** Hookworms can be transferred in soil where infected dogs have passed eggs in their stool. A severe infestation can kill puppies from blood loss. Symptoms include weight loss, bloody diarrhea and progressive weakness.



**Heartworms:** This potentially fatal disease is transferred through mosquito bites. These worms can grow a foot long and can infest the heart, lungs and blood vessels. Heartworm disease is difficult to cure, and we recommend keeping your dog on a preventative year-round.

Have your pets checked regularly for worms even if they show no symptoms. We are happy to talk with you about parasite prevention.

Call us at (956) 787-2709 today to make an appointment!





# An Ounce of Prevention

## 5 Ways to Protect your Pet

**The good news** is that cats and dogs today are living longer due to advances in veterinary medicine and better care from their human parents. You can help them live a long, healthy life by protecting them from preventable accidents and diseases.

**Pet-proof your home.** Keep poisons out of reach, such as human foods and medicines that are toxic to pets as well as cleaning supplies and common plants that may be toxic. Be sure pets don't have access to open flames, electrical devices, batteries or anything that might cause choking.

**Stay current on vaccines and preventatives.** The most common viruses that steal our pets' health can be prevented with annual vaccines. Shield them also from heartworm by giving them heartworm protection consistently. Pets should also be protected with flea and tick preventatives to avoid the diseases carried by these parasites.

**Microchip your pet.** A study of stray animals in shelters showed that dogs without microchips were returned to their owners 21.9% of the time, whereas microchipped dogs were returned to their owners 52.2% of the time. Cats without microchips were reunited with their owners only 1.8% of the time, and microchipped cats returned home 38.5% of the time.

**Spay or neuter.** A spayed female will live a longer, healthier life. Spaying helps prevent uterine infections and breast tumors. Neutering male pets prevents testicular cancer and some prostate problems. A neutered male is also much less likely to roam or fight with other dogs.

**Avoid exposure to extreme heat or cold.** Unfortunately, many cats and dogs are lost to hyperthermia each summer, especially from being left in cars. Keep them in shade and well-hydrated, and don't walk them on hot pavement. Hypothermia in winter is also a threat that can lead to frostbite or death. In extreme cold, limit outdoor potty breaks to only a few minutes.



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**Savings expire 5/31/2020.**



**Valley  
Animal Hospital**

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today to make an appointment!



## Your Pets. Our Passion.



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