

VALLEY Animal Hospital

Pet Talk



Fall 2020

Down in the Mouth

7 Signs of Dental Disease

Dental disease is the most common health issue affecting dogs and cats. Most common is periodontal disease, which affects as many as 85 percent of dogs and cats over age three. Advanced dental disease can devastate your pets' health as they live with chronic pain and eventually suffer additional health problems linked to the disease.

Unfortunately, most pets show few symptoms of dental disease until it becomes serious. Although periodontal disease is most common, cracked teeth, tooth resorption, stomatitis, and root abscesses can also affect your pet.

The best defense against dental disease is regular cleanings and checkups. You can also help by brushing your pet's teeth regularly, giving treats that help remove tartar, and inspecting your dog's or cat's mouth for tartar buildup, loose teeth or abscesses. Other signs include:

- 🐾 Bad breath. Tooth decay and gum disease cause halitosis.
- 🐾 Drooling, especially with blood. Blood may also appear on toys or in their water bowl.
- 🐾 Difficulty eating. Pets may refuse to eat, chew on one side of their mouths, drop food, tilt their heads to one side while eating, or have difficulty swallowing.
- 🐾 Sensitivity around the mouth. Pain from diseased teeth or gums may cause them to turn their heads to avoid being touched in painful areas.
- 🐾 Pawing at the mouth, or rubbing the side of the mouth on the floor or furniture
- 🐾 Red or inflamed gums
- 🐾 Irritability or depression

The good news is, we can treat most dental disease and bring your pet relief. The earlier problems are discovered the more effective the treatment, so be sure to schedule a dental checkup soon!



Blackie's Blog

Feline Fright!

Hill! I'm Blackie! I live here at Valley Animal Hospital and I'm pretty chill most of the time. But some of my feline friends are prone to stress, which can lead to acute or chronic illnesses including skin, bladder and intestinal disorders. We cats are particularly susceptible because we don't deal well with change, and we sometimes perceive change as danger. Any change in our environment can lead to stress, including new pets or humans entering the household, moving or remodeling, severe weather, nearby construction, and any loud noises. Pain, separation anxiety, and dementia in older cats are also common causes. Signs of stress include:

- 🐾 Eating more or losing appetite
- 🐾 Trembling
- 🐾 Becoming less active
- 🐾 Destructive or aggressive behavior
- 🐾 Sucking or chewing on fabric
- 🐾 Sores and lesions resulting from over-grooming
- 🐾 New or different vocalizations
- 🐾 Withdrawal and hiding
- 🐾 Trying to escape
- 🐾 Diarrhea
- 🐾 Failure to use the litter box



Halloween and Thanksgiving activities and noises provide an ideal environment for stressing us out. Provide a quiet, peaceful environment as much as possible, and keep your own stress level down as we tend to pick up on your emotions. If you see symptoms, it's important that one of our doctors examine your kitty for signs of illness. They may recommend environmental changes, pheromone products that can calm cats, or anti-anxiety medications in extreme cases.

Bye for now!

Blackie

Feline Heart Disease

Understanding Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, the most commonly diagnosed cardiac disease in cats, is a disease of the heart muscle caused by a structural defect in one of the four chambers of the heart, often the left ventricle. This condition causes the walls of the heart to thicken, decreasing its ability to pump blood efficiently.



Maine Coon and Ragdoll breeds seem to be particularly susceptible, but the disease can occur in any breed. Cardiomyopathies may show up at any age and can be difficult to detect and to treat. In some cases, the disease is mild and progresses slowly with few or no symptoms.

In more severe cases, the condition can lead to congestive heart failure (CHF). Symptoms of CHF include increased respiratory rate, labored breathing, shortness of breath, coughing, lethargy, gray or purple gums, and appetite loss. Other signs are changes in daily behavior such as hiding or collapsing due to an irregular heart rhythm. Blood clots can also form, resulting in the sudden loss of function in one or more legs or stroke if clots travel to the brain.

A thorough exam and specific diagnostic procedures will help us determine if your kitty suffers from hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. Currently, there is no cure for the disease; however, cats with mild conditions can live several years. If a patient develops congestive heart failure, we use medication to prevent fluid buildup and improve heart function.

Possessive Aggression

Food Guarding Behavior in Dogs

Guarding food and other possessions from humans or other animals is a natural instinct for dogs. The behavior can range from hiding or running away with food, to growling, to biting an approaching human. Puppies who compete with littermates for food are prone to food guarding, so it's best to prevent a habit from forming as soon as you bring them home. Feeding them meals by hand in a relaxed setting can help. When they are eating from a food bowl, occasionally drop in something tasty so that an approaching human results in a positive.



If food guarding behavior is mild, sometimes ensuring that everyone in the household leaves them alone while eating is a good solution, possibly in a secluded room or crate. Making sure they always have food available is another tactic.

Never scold your dog for this unpleasant behavior as this will only add to their anxiety and exacerbate the issue. If your dog's behavior is threatening, it's best to consult a behavioral expert who can help to re-condition your dog. Children are especially susceptible to being bitten because they may not recognize signs of aggression. Please contact us if food guarding is becoming a problem so we can recommend a course of action or refer you to a behavioral specialist.

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

The Obesity Epidemic

Don't Let Your Pet Participate!

October 14 is National Pet Obesity Awareness Day. Even as pet obesity continues to rise in the U.S.—over 50 percent of dogs and cats are considered obese—studies say only 17 percent of pet owners believe that their pets are carrying too much weight. This is a sad fact since obesity shortens the lives of pets by two years on average.

Obesity is associated with serious health conditions, including osteoarthritis and joint disorders, diabetes, cranial cruciate ligament injuries, heart and respiratory diseases, kidney disease, and cancer. Not only do overweight pets have shorter lifespans, their quality of life is diminished as well.

As with humans, weight loss results from decreasing calories and increasing activity. Choosing the right food is important because some pet foods marketed as weight loss diets only replace meat with high-carb fillers to provide bulk. The right diet should be high in protein with lower fat and fewer calories, without making your fur-baby feel deprived.

Weight loss should happen gradually. A severe diet that results in rapid weight loss can cause metabolic changes that actually make it harder for your pet to lose weight. Increasing activity and slowly reducing calories by 5% - 10% weekly is the best way to ensure success. It's important to measure daily calorie intake accurately. Table scraps and treats should be included in the count.

Bring your pet in for an evaluation before starting them on a diet. Weight gain can indicate an underlying illness. A comprehensive checkup can help us determine if your pet is overweight, recommend an ideal weight, uncover existing health conditions, and recommend a weight-loss plan with the right foods.



Ask us about healthy treats for your pet!



**Valley
Animal Hospital**

902 W. State Avenue
Pharr, TX 78577

valleyanimal.net

**Dental Super
Savings
Save \$65
on all Routine
Dental Procedures.**

Includes anesthesia, scaling, polishing, fluoride application, dental x-rays, intravenous fluids, antibiotics if needed, post-surgical care, and complimentary nail trim.

One coupon per client.

**Spay/Neuter Savings
Save \$25**

on your pet's spay or neuter surgery when performed with pre-anesthetic blood testing and IV fluids.

One coupon per client.

Re-Fur-A Friend Savings

Refer a friend and you will both receive **\$10 off** your next invoice!

One coupon per client.
Good for first-time client and patient only.

**THE
WORKS!
Save \$20**

off your invoice when your pet receives his/her annual exam and vaccinations, heartworm test (canine only) and fecal exam.

One coupon per client.

Savings not valid with any other offers. One coupon per visit.
Must be presented at time of service. Limit one per client.
Savings expire 11/30/2020.



**Call (956) 787-2709
today to make your appointment!**



Got Treats?



**Valley
Animal Hospital**

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

