



Autumn 2011

Pet Care News



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Autumn Season Pet Issues

There are some great advantages to the cooler weather in the autumn. The abundant sunshine, decreased precipitation, and cooler temperatures make exercising with your pet more comfortable for both of you.

Make sure that you and your pet are highly visible on the roads and even on sidewalks since the amount of daylight is markedly decreasing during this season.

Consider wearing reflective clothing and providing a reflective collar or jacket for your pet so that motorists will be able to see you clearly at dusk and at night. Carrying a flashlight will help motorists see you and provide a way to check the safety of the walking surfaces at night.

The onset of cooler weather brings a higher pollen count and resulting allergy problems, the return of ticks, and exposure to poison ivy on the hair coat of your pet. Summer concerns continue such as flea infestation, exposure to mosquitoes, and increased incidence of scabies, the burrowing skin mite which may be carried to your yard from infested fox or coyote.

Continue to administer heartworm prevention throughout the year, apply flea and tick products, and protect your pet from mosquito bites with a pyrethrin spray when spending time outdoors.

Pets need regular grooming such as brushing, combing, and periodic baths if soiled to maintain a healthy hair coat and skin. Clip nails regularly to



Play it safe at Halloween. Costumes should not fit too tightly or make it difficult for your pet to move. Keep all Halloween candy away from your pet, especially chocolate!

prevent torn or broken nails. As home heating is turned on your pet may have drier skin, hair coats and nails.

Vehicle interiors still can reach high temperatures inside. You may still want to leave your pet safe at home when you may not be able to find shaded parking spots. Be sure to provide good ventilation if your pet does accompany you in your vehicle.

Enjoy the beautiful autumn weather with your pet while you can – winter is on the way!

Diuretics – What are They and What Will They Do?

Furosemide (Lasix) is a loop diuretic (works in the kidneys at the loop of Henle) aimed at getting extra fluid out of the body by increasing renal (kidney) excretion of water, sodium, potassium, chloride, calcium, magnesium, hydrogen, ammonium, and bicarbonate. It is used in dogs and cats to treat conditions in which extra fluid is retained in the body. Congestive cardiomyopathy, pulmonary edema, uremia, hyperkalemia, and sometimes, hypertension are several conditions with which may be treated with furosemide.

A second type of diuretic called Spironolactone (Aldactone) can be added if a patient is not adequately responding to furosemide or who has developed hypokalemia (low potassium). Spironolactone works on the kidneys in a different way from furosemide. It is not usually the only antidiuretic used but most frequently is added as a second diuretic along with furosemide.

Furosemide and Spironolactone can lead to fluid or electrolyte abnormalities. Therefore, patient monitoring is needed if the patient is on higher dosages of these medications or needs to be on diuretics for long periods of time.

Typical side effects from diuretics are increased urine output and increased thirst. Benefits are decreased fluid in body compartments that have built up excess fluid retention.

Environmental Enrichment for Your Cat

Certain clinical signs of illness or unwanted behaviors have been linked to increased psychological stressors. Your pet may react to adverse environmental conditions by immune activation and Inflammatory cytokine release causing clinical signs of disease such as vomiting, diarrhea, decreased appetite, vocalizations, decreased interaction with other household pets or human family members, and decreased grooming activities. Conditions such as feline idiopathic cystitis, in which cats experience inflammatory changes of the bladder and exhibit painful urination, sometimes also having lethargy, fever, and elimination outside the litter box have been linked to environmental events in the household.



Experts have identified certain categories of environmental enrichment which have helped decrease some of the stressors which develop especially in totally indoor cat households.

These are listed as follows:

Basic resources, defined as food, water, and a place to eliminate — provide the pet with food preference (dry or canned), a safe place to eat and to eliminate. Details such as how water is provided, which litter is used for the litter pan, and the placement of these items can be experimented with to test your cat's preference.

Structural items for scratching, playing, hiding, climbing or resting — provide items that allow your pet to do these activities whenever it wants.

Cats need to rest or hide in a safe, sheltered place. Cats need to burn off excess energy with climbing, scratching, and chasing and need structures to do these things and space for these activities.

Social interaction — Cats have particular needs for socializing with other family members or other household pets. Frequently, cats may prefer not to interact with other household cats. Stress and aggression can develop when the stressed cat has no way to avoid these contacts. Humans can prevent separation anxiety behaviors by having structured interactions with the pet in a developed routine. Your pet cat will learn to anticipate better what is happening in his environment which will help decrease anxiety for your pet.

Audio or visual stimulation — provide your cat with the TV tuned to a nature show, a talk show, or provide a radio with music or people talking. Window perches allowing good views of bird feeders, animals moving about in the yard, or people passing by on the street provide some intellectual stimulation. Recordings of human voices or other enriching activities can decrease boredom and reduce stress.

Olfactory (smell) enrichment — provide some safe non-toxic herbs in an easily accessible place. Feline pheromones can also help reduce anxiety.

This information was referenced from journal article: What Cat Owners Can Learn About Captivity by C.A. Tony Buffington, DVM, PhD, Diplomate ACVN Ohio State University Veterinary Medical Center, Applied Behavior: September, 2011, Pages 55-58.

Reminders!

- Call ahead to refill any prescription medications for your pet.
- Call ahead to reorder any prescription pet foods before your pet runs out. Hills Food is ordered every Monday, and Royal Canin, Purina, and Iams on the 1st and 15th of every month.
- Remember to schedule a physical exam yearly for your pet even if all vaccinations are up-to-date.
- Important: A rabies certificate is required for treatment at Animal Emergency Care. Keep it in a handy place so you can "grab and go."

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Do you have topics or questions you would like to be answered in "Pet Care News"? Email your question to actonanimalhospital@comcast.net.