February is Dental Month!

February is the month that we, as veterinary professionals, have dedicated extra time to educate folks on the need for dental care for our pets.

Did you know:

- 80% of dogs and 70% of cats have some form of periodontal disease by age 3.
- Left untreated, dental disease affects the heart, liver, and kidneys, in addition to causing oral pain and gastrointestinal issues from not chewing properly.
- Brushing your pet's teeth is the most effective way to maintain dental health between cleanings!
  * You don't have to use toothpaste.
  * You don't have to get the inside of the teeth-the tongue does a good job removing the biofilm there.
  * A pediatric toothbrush, finger toothbrush, or a washcloth can be used to remove plaque on the teeth.
- Within 2-3 days, plaque begins turning to calculus, and calculus requires a dental cleaning to remove.

Signs of Dental Pain in Your Pet:

- Weight loss
- Dropping food while eating
- Tossing food to the back of the mouth, rather than chewing
- Hypersalivating
- Vomiting whole kibble
- Improved appetite with moistened kibble/wet food
- Chattering when teeth touched/chewing
- Guarding of mouth/teeth (doesn't let you look in mouth)
- Bad breath
- Loose teeth
- Chewing on one side of the mouth only

WHAT GOES INTO A DENTAL CLEANING?

At Viking Veterinary Care, each patient is an individual. We DO NOT perform “assembly line” dental cleanings.

We want anesthesia to be as SAFE as possible. Our dental cleanings include:

* A pre-anesthetic evaluation, including bloodwork and an ECG
* Two technicians/technician assistants dedicated to each patient: 1 to monitor anesthesia and 1 to perform the dental cleaning/evaluation
* Full mouth radiographs to evaluate issues under the gumline (just like your dentist!)
* Oravet application to prevent plaque buildup for two weeks post-op

To see step-by-step what goes into a dental cleaning, check out the “Behind the Scenes” section of our website at www.vikingveterinarycare.com to see Winston's dental from start to finish!
NEW RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANESTHETIC PROCEDURES!

Dr. Gilbert and Dr. Brock want to offer you the safest possible anesthesia for your pets. The following recommendations are now being made for every anesthetic procedure and you will see them on the estimate.

(Please note: these are optional, but we wanted to explain how important they are!)

- **Chest radiographs:** available to all, but especially recommended for those over 6 years or age.

  Just in the last month, we have seen enlarged hearts, lung tumors, and a herniation into the heart sac that an animal was born with. These conditions were undetectable with an exam and labwork alone.

- **Anxiety medications** (trazodone or gabapentin)

  Pets know something is up if they miss breakfast and are going for a ride in the car! Once their adrenaline is pumping, it takes much more medication to get them under anesthesia.

  If the pet receives an anti-anxiety medication the morning of (and sometimes the night before too), it can significantly decrease your pet’s stress level for the day, thus improving the safety of their anesthesia and decreasing their fear of the hospital.

- **Anti-nausea medication**

  Just like people, some pets are incredibly sensitive to anesthesia and may be nauseated for up to 24 hours afterwards. Additionally, the shorter faced breeds (bulldogs, Cavalier King Charles spaniels, Japanese chin, etc.) are at an increased risk for aspiration pneumonia.

  Injectable anti-nausea medication can be given the day of surgery. For large breed dogs or an oral medication can be given the night before. Both last 24 hours.
The Risk of Essential Oils to Cats

The essential oil business is booming. They are popularly used as insecticides, aromatherapies, antimicrobials, herbal remedies, and liquid potpourri. They can be evaporated into the air using passive diffusers (reeds, candle burners, fans, and heated plug-ins) or by active diffusers (nebulizers, ultrasonic) that actually put microdroplets or oil particles into the air.

The problem is that cats are aliens. They are not adapted to the atmosphere of our planet and frequently will have undiagnosed asthma, airborne allergies, or can have a compromised respiratory system from second-hand smoke. Inhalation of essential oils can cause watering of the eyes, nasal discharge, a burning sensation in the nose/throat, nausea leading to drooling and/or vomiting, and difficulty breathing.

Cats also react badly to essential oils that are absorbed orally or through the skin. They lack a critical enzyme required by the liver to metabolize them, making it difficult for them to eliminate the oils from their bodies. Oils with higher concentrations of phenols and phenolic compounds can especially be an issue. Cats most frequently have exposure to these oils by licking a diffuser, having them applied topically by the owner, or by grooming themselves after exposure to an active diffuser.

Essential oils known to cause toxicity in cats include:

- Wintergreen
- Pine
- Cinnamon
- Eucalyptus
- Sweet birch
- Ylang Ylang
- Pennyroyal
- Tea tree
- Citrus (d-limonene)
- Peppermint
- Clove

Symptoms depend on the type of oil involved and can include drooling, vomiting, tremors, wobbliness, respiratory distress, low heart rate, low body temperature, and liver failure.

Respiratory distress can include labored breathing, faster breathing, coughing, panting, and wheezing. It can be differentiated from a hairball in that there is little to no abdominal movement and no hairball is produced. Cats will usually be crouched on all fours when they have respiratory distress, not lying on their sides, so they can utilize lungs on both side of their chest easily.

If these signs are seen, immediately remove your cat to fresh air and seek medical attention! Do not attempt to induce vomiting.

Cat owners utilizing essential oils should use caution and protect their cats from poisoning. Please DO NOT apply essential oils directly to your cat!

For information on particular oils, a consultation with the following Poison Control Numbers may help (for a fee):

Pet Poison Helpline: 1-855-764-7661
ASPCA Animal Poison Control: 1-888-426-4435

~R. Gilbert, DVM
Important Websites You Should Know

As veterinarians, we try to give you all the tools you need to take care of your pet, which can sometimes become overwhelming during an appointment. Below, we've put together what we consider the most helpful websites for when you are ready for more information!

Pets & Parasites: Trying to determine the risk of Lyme disease in your area? Want to know how many heartworm cases were in Washington County last year? Check out http://www.petsandparasites.org/ Records are compiled from the largest veterinary diagnostic laboratories to show the prevalence or parasitic diseases by county or state and are updated regularly. Additionally, this website contains the guidelines from the Companion Animal Parasite Council that our veterinarians follow when establishing our parasite prevention protocols.

Fear Free Happy Homes: The same program that has certified our staff members as Fear Free Professionals has become a valuable resource for pet owners too! You can now sign up for a free membership at https://fearfreehappyhomes.com/ for tips and tricks to providing environmental enrichment, veterinary visit resources, and deals on cutting edge products.

Indoor Cat Initiative: How do you keep your indoor cat's life rich and fulfilling? How do you begin to trouble shoot litter box issues or cats not getting along in the household? The Ohio State College of Veterinary Medicine has done an excellent job putting together the Indoor Cat Initiative to help with these questions! https://indoorpet.osu.edu/cats can help keep the peace in the house and decrease your cat's stress level!

Ultimate Puppy: Adding a new puppy to the home can be so exciting...and then so overwhelming! When do you start training? How do you socialize puppies safely? How do you raise a well-adjusted dog? http://ultimatepuppy.com/ used to be a training kit available for $50, but the amazing trainers that put it together decided everyone could benefit from the information, which is now FREE online. This valuable resource will put you on the right path to raising your pup right!

ASPCA Animal Poison Control: It's after hours and your dog just ate the medication you dropped, or the cat just stuck its face in the lilies. How do you know if your pet needs medical attention? The website has a phone number for an immediate consultation with a toxicologist and can help direct the emergency veterinarian in appropriate care. When determining what to plant in your yard this year, consider checking out their poisonous plant guide! https://www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control

The Cat Community: Put together by feline-only veterinarians, this website has the most up-to-date information regarding health issues, behavioral recommendations, and how to introduce your pet to the carrier, etc. https://catfriendly.com/ is run by the American Association of Feline Practitioners, who has certified our hospital as a Gold-Standard Cat-friendly Practice. Both Dr. Gilbert and Dr. Brock are members of this organization.
Canine Influenza Virus Surveillance Network: What is the latest news on the two strains of Canine Influenza Virus? Do I need to vaccinate? At [https://ahdc.vet.cornell.edu/news/civchicago.cfm](https://ahdc.vet.cornell.edu/news/civchicago.cfm) outbreaks are mapped out and updated every 45 days. Key facts about the canine flu and the vaccinations are provided.

Veterinary Partner: When our doctors want to make sure you have additional information on your pet’s condition, [http://www.veterinariaipartner.com/](http://www.veterinariaipartner.com/) usually contains the links we’ll be emailing to you. This website is put together by veterinarians to answer your questions! Just enter the topic in the search box, such as “cruciate ligament” or “blocked cat” and it will link you to fact-filled articles with all your options available.

If you have come across a website that have been particularly helpful to you as a pet owner, please let us know!

~Rosie Gilbert, DVM

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**Cherry Eye Repair in a Bulldog Puppy**

Hope came to us from Lily’s Pad Rescue for a spay and cherry eye repair. “Cherry eye” is a condition where the gland that helps with tear production has prolapsed out of the eye socket and won’t go back in. It most commonly affects English bulldogs, cocker spaniels, Boston terriers, mastiffs, and French bulldogs.

Cherry eye is usually a cosmetic condition, but sometimes it is so irritating to the dog, they can cause an eye ulcer from rubbing it, which was our concern with Hope.

To fix the cherry eye, Dr. Gilbert made a little pocket to tuck the glad into, then secured it to the membrane of the third eyelid. For those of you who are surgery buffs and want to see the actual technique, check out the video from Dr. Ken Abrams from Eye Care for Animals: [https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=pGLyFi2YAA](https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=pGLyFi2YAA)

Lily’s Pad Rescue helps special needs bulldogs from across the country. For more information on Hope or other bulldogs up for adoption, check out their Facebook page!