Making News

For the 5th year in a row College Station Cat Clinic received the highest marks for quality and was the highest rated feline exclusive practice in Chicago Consumers’ Checkbook” magazine. The magazine along with “Consumer Reports” compared 194 Chicago area veterinary hospitals based on 10 specific criteria. We want to thank our amazing clients, staff members and feline patients for helping us achieve this rating!

We Love Our Feline Patients!

The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) created The Cat Friendly Practice program to improve the handling, treatment and overall healthcare of cats within veterinary hospitals. There are 2 levels that practices may obtain: Silver Status which meets the standard of care and Gold Status that incorporate the optimum level of Cat Friendly Criteria. We are happy to share that we achieved Gold Standard status again!

Can You Help?

Calling all towels! We are in need of used or new towels once again. Towels are used throughout our hospital as soft padding for our feline patients. We use them in the exam rooms, ICU, surgery and boarding and our rigorous cleaning wears them out quickly. If you have any extra towels or even small blankets that you could donate, we would appreciate it!

Case of the Month: Pancreatitis

Tickles is a 13 year old tabby cat who was presented to Dr. Watson in February with sudden vomiting that began a few days prior. A month earlier, Tickles had her routine senior wellness exam and lab work and was diagnosed with hyperthyroidism and started on medication to control her thyroid level and was doing well.

On exam, Tickles was down 10 ounces in weight, had a poor unkempt hair coat and general muscle atrophy. Dr. Watson performed follow up lab work to recheck Tickles’ thyroid level as well as any possible side effects from her medication or other metabolic problems. The results showed her thyroid level was now normal so Dr. Watson kept her at the same dose and switched her to a different route of administration. Despite the change, Tickles continued to vomit and showed signs of dehydration on her recheck exam.

Suspecting that Tickles may have pancreatitis, Dr. Watson began supportive care with fluids and medication to control her vomiting and performed additional diagnostic testing including abdominal x-rays and a test called fPLI. The fPLI confirmed that Tickles had pancreatitis so she was admitted to the hospital and treated with pain medication,

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anti-inflammatories and fluids. She quickly began eating and was able to continue her treatments at home. With some adjustments to her medications, Tickles began improving at home and still continues treatment for her hyperthyroidism and pancreatitis to this day.

The pancreas is a small pink organ in the upper abdomen that produces and secretes digestive enzymes that assist in the digestion of fats, proteins and carbohydrates. One such enzyme is lipase.

Just like other organs in the body, the pancreas can become inflamed causing a syndrome called pancreatitis. When this occurs, the harsh digestive enzymes that normally leave the pancreas to enter the small intestine instead stay inside and attack the pancreas itself.

The exact causes of pancreatitis are not known, but the effects can be devastating to cats. Most cats will become very lethargic, stop eating and drinking well, and some will vomit and have a painful abdomen.

Cats with suspected pancreatitis should have a thorough physical exam, bloodwork and X-rays and/or ultrasound to aid in diagnosis. A reliable diagnostic test for pancreatitis is the feline pancreatic lipase immunoreactive test (fPLI) which measures the amount of lipase present. In the past, cats with suspected pancreatitis had to have bloodwork sent out of state for fPLI testing and results took weeks to return. Now we have a rapid fPLI test that is performed with just a few drops of blood in the office and results are back in just 10 minutes. This can be life saving for cats that need intensive treatment.

To date, there is no treatment for pancreatitis other than intense supportive care. Most cats require hospitalization with IV fluid therapy, pain relievers and medications to control nausea and improve appetite. Nutritional support is extremely important in preventing further damage and improving the cat’s ability to heal. Therefore some cats need feeding tubes or other forms of support. Treatment continues until the cat feels well enough to eat and drink on its own and can receive medications at home.

Farewell to Our Beloved Sassy

In February our beloved Sassy passed away at age 22. Sassy was loved by everyone in our College Station Cat Clinic community and we dearly miss her.

Sassy came to live at the original hospital when she was a kitten and was later given to Drs. Watson and Winterowd when they purchased the hospital in 2003. Sassy lived her life in the hospital and had many jobs, but her most important was greeting people at the front desk.

In 2010 Sassy moved from her home in the original hospital to our new building. Despite our concerns, she adapted beautifully and resumed her station as the front desk greeter. Over time her arthritis prevented her from sleeping at the front desk and she retired to a comfortable bed in the back treatment area where she could come and go as she pleased.

We were lucky to have Sassy as a part of our daily lives for so many years and we appreciate the love our clients always showed to her. We loved her and she will be missed by all.
Inappropriate Urination
By Carolyn Johnson

Inappropriate Urination (urinating somewhere other than the litter box) is one of the main reasons cats are relinquished to shelters. It is best when dealing with litter box issues to remember to keep it simple and try to see it from your cat’s point of view.

First of all, cats do not urinate outside the litter box out of spite. This is a medical and/or behavioral issue. Secondly, a cat’s sense of smell is much better than ours so keeping the litter box as clean as possible is extremely important. Finally, it’s very important to have an appropriately sized litter box, preferably one that is large enough for the cat to turn around while inside.

A study was done by Emma Grigg, MS, PHD on the preference of uncovered litter boxes in cats. The study found that larger cats prefer an uncovered litter box, but some of the cats in multi-cat households preferred the covered litter box. Daily cleaning was the most determining factor in the prevention of inappropriate urination and defecation. Daily scooping of the litter box should become a habit.

It’s important to realize that all cats are different. You may need to experiment with size and location until you find the right fit. A good rule of thumb is to have one more litter box than the number of cats. The litter boxes should be on both levels of the house and be in a quiet location.

Ruling out a medical problem first is extremely important. Infections, certain medical conditions and even arthritis can lead to inappropriate urination and must be addressed to have success at home. Once medical causes are ruled out, a behavioral consultation can be done to analyze your cat’s home environment. Call us to schedule a consultation today.

Heartworm Season Has Begun!

15-20% of cats tested for antibodies to heartworm in Illinois are positive. Since not all cats are tested, the actual number of cats infected with heartworm is actually higher!

Research has shown that signs such as coughing and difficulty breathing, which are often diagnosed as feline asthma or allergic bronchitis, can be caused by the presence of heartworms in either larval or adult stages. Heartworm associated respiratory disease, or HARD, is the term for this condition.

Heartworm infection occurs when a mosquito carrying microscopic heartworm larvae takes a blood meal from a cat. The larvae enter through the bite wound and develop in the cat’s tissues. The immature worms then enter a blood vessel and are carried to the arteries in the lung where they cause an inflammatory reaction. Most worms die at this stage, causing even more inflammation. The worms that progress to the adult stage can live undetected for a couple of years, but when the adult worms die the inflammation can be severe enough to cause death.

The best defense against heartworm is preventing your cat from infection in the first place. This means putting all cats, both indoor and outdoor on a monthly heartworm preventative.

If your cat isn’t on a monthly heartworm preventative, ask us about monthly Revolution or Heartgard. We can discuss which preventative is best for your cat.
In November, Bridget, Certified Veterinary Technician, attended an ISVMA (Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association) conference covering many topics including acupuncture. Acupuncture is a Chinese medicine used to help alter energy flow in the body by using small, thin needles placed at certain points. The World Health Organization recognizes acupuncture as a complimentary treatment for such problems as allergies, respiratory issues, gastrointestinal disease, reproductive issues, neurological and inflammatory conditions, stress, pain and more.

In February Ericka, Certified Veterinary Technician, attended the Western Veterinary Conference in Las Vegas where she attended classes focused on feline medicine including feline emergency and critical care, anesthesia and surgical monitoring and the management of some of the more commonly diagnosed feline diseases: hyperthyroidism, diabetes, liver disease, chronic vomiting, kidney disease and heart disease. There was also several classes devoted to pain management and the impact on quality of life. Ericka also participated in a hands on laboratory on small animal ultrasound including scanning techniques and image capturing.

Earlier this year Mary, Certified Veterinary Technician, attended lectures presented by the Veterinary Specialty Center, a large referral hospital in the Chicagoland area. Talks included treatments of shock and urinary blockages. Other topics included were massage for patients and seizures. In May Mary will be attending the 2015 Feline Symposium in Chicago.

Carolyn attended The Applied Animal Behavior Conference at the University of Wisconsin’s School of Veterinary Medicine. While at the conference she attended lectures centered on feline and canine behavior topics including a seminar by Dr. Temple Grandin, a professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University, about animal welfare issues, stressors, and how animals think and feel.

Rebekah attended the Joliet Junior College’s Veterinary Technician Annual Open House in March and was very impressed. The open house presented a typical day in the life of a veterinary technician student including microbiology, anatomy, physiology, radiology, exotic animals and surgery. Interactive displays allowed visitors to identify organisms under microscopes, view surgical preparations for various procedures and meet a variety of different animals. The graduation photos of our very own technicians are proudly displayed on those walls!