

## Monroe Pet Press



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**Happy Holidays! Have your pet's picture taken with Santa!!! Sat, Dec. 6. Call or visit our website for more information.**

### Feline Dentistry

It is said that cat's are not small dogs. Never has this been truer than with regards to feline dentistry. Unlike there canine counterparts, cats tend to get dental diseases that are rarely seen in other species.

One often observed dental problem in cats is a fractured canine (fang) tooth. Cats are known as active and acrobatic animals. They are very skilled at jumping and leaping. Sometimes they may miscalculate there jump and hit there canine tooth. Unfortunately, this tooth in cats has a very long root canal. This makes it likely that any fracture will lead to root canal exposure. This can lead to ascending infections that result in chronic sinus infections, nasal discharge, or tooth loss. In addition, an exposed root canal is quite painful. To the cat's detriment, they often hide signs of discomfort. Often these fractures are noted as an unexpected finding on routine physical examination.

Once a fractured root canal is noted, there are two treatment options: root canal therapy or extraction. Of the two, referral to a boarded veterinary dental specialist for root canal therapy is preferred as it will make the tooth pain-free while preserving its function. If this can not be done, then the kindest thing for the cat is extraction. It should be noted that since is one of the cat's largest teeth, extraction is a major surgery.

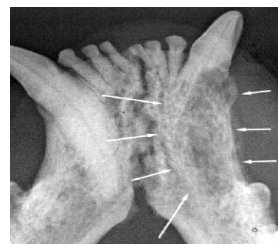


A common, and frustrating condition of cats are resorptive lesions. This condition, which affects more than fifty percent of cats over three years of age has also been called cavities, neck lesions, external or internal root FORLS, or cervical line erosions. For reasons that are not known teeth affected by these lesions will erode and finally disappear when they are absorbed back into the cat's body. First, the root structure breaks down; then the enamel and finally most of the tooth dissolves and is

replaced by bone.. This condition is commonly seen where the gum meets the tooth surface. Some molars are most commonly affected; however, resorptive lesions can be found on any tooth.

Cats affected with tooth resorption show excessive salivation, bleeding in the mouth, or have difficulty eating. They can be quite painful. A majority of affected cats do not show obvious clinical signs.

This condition is usually diagnosed by veterinarians during oral examination. Dental X-rays are necessary in order to make a definitive diagnosis and plan treatment, which usually involves extraction of affected teeth. If the root under the gumline is mostly resorbed and only the crown remains, then a less invasive surgical technique known as crown amputation can be performed. It is important to know that cat's that have previously had resorptive lesions are prone to getting more, therefore they should have routine dental cleanings and x-rays taken every six months.



### Breast Cancer in Dogs

Dogs, like humans, can be affected by breast cancer. The good news is that a female puppy spayed before her first heat cycle can expect never to develop a mammary tumor of any kind. The incidence of tumor development in this group is nearly zero.

If a female dog is allowed to experience one heat cycle before spaying, the incidence rises to 7% (still quite low). If she is allowed to experience two or more heat cycles, her risk developing breast cancer increases to 1 in 4.

Since most female dogs come into heat around 6 to 7 months of age and breeding of immature female dogs is not recommended, this means one must generally choose between a litter of puppies or mammary cancer prevention.

Because mammary tumors are promoted by female hormones, spaying at any age is helpful in tumor prevention. Just because a female dog is in the high-risk

group doesn't mean it is too late to reap benefit from spaying.

If your dog is not spayed, was known to have had puppies, or was spayed in adulthood, she would be considered as high risk for mammary cancer development. Mammary masses usually start out as small firm nodules. Unfortunately, it is impossible to tell by looking at or feeling a tumor if it is benign or malignant. 50% of mammary tumors are benign, the other 50% are malignant. The only way to know for sure is to remove the tumor and to send a piece of it off for biopsy. Usually bloodwork and chest x-rays are performed prior to surgery to verify that there has not been any spread of the tumor to the thorax.

#### **What Else Determines Prognosis?**

In general, tumors with a diameter larger than 1.5 inches have a worse prognosis than smaller tumors. Evidence of spread to the lymphatic system (such as the presence of tumor cells in a local lymph node or visible tumor cells within lymphatic vessels on the biopsy) carries a worse prognosis. Deeper tumors or an ulcerated tumor surface carries a worse prognosis. Finally, a history of especially rapid growth carries a worse prognosis.

Approximately 50% of malignant mammary tumors in the dog have receptors for either estrogen or progesterone. This means that the presence of these female hormones promotes the growth of these tumors. Benign tumors also have female hormone receptors and can also be stimulated by hormonal cycling of the female dog. This means that spaying is important even if a tumor has already developed; in one study, female dogs spayed at the time of mammary tumor removal lived 45% longer than those who were not spayed.

If a cancerous tumor is diagnosed, referral for consultation with a veterinary oncologist should be considered. In cases of incomplete tumor removal chemotherapy, radiation, or anti-hormone therapy may be recommended.

#### **Pain Control and your pet**

Just like people, animals can experience pain. In recent years, many advances have occurred that allow us to alleviate discomfort in our patients

Two key tenants of pain control are preemptive analgesia and multimodal analgesia. It has been shown that pain medications are more effective when started PRIOR to pain occurring, and that this will not only result in a more comfortable patient, but one who needs LESS pain medications later on. The other fact is that different classes of pain medications used together results in a far greater effect than if used individually.

Patients who are having surgery definitely benefit by a multi-modal approach. At the Monroe Animal Hospital we often use local anesthetics, non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, opioid analgesics, drugs that prevent nerve perception of pain, and often use anesthetic drugs that

have anti-pain properties as well. All of our surgical patients are discharged with appropriate pain medications.

Dogs, cats, rabbits, and other patients with arthritis greatly benefit and enjoy a greater quality of life because of pain management. Often, in the early stages of arthritis, patients can be managed with nutritional therapy alone. Omega 3 and 6 fatty acid supplements, either as a daily capsule or in a prescription food such as Hill's J/D have been proven to reduce discomfort in patients. Other nutritional therapies include antioxidants, S-adenyl methionine, and glucosamine/chondroitin supplementation. One important thing to remember about over-the counter nutritional supplements is that they are not drugs, and therefore are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. It was shown in a study done by the Human Arthritis Foundation that 80% of over the counter glucosamine and chondroitin products did not even meet their own label claims! For this reason, we recommend using veterinary products whose manufacturers have treated them as if they were medications and performed purity and absorption studies. One such manufacturer who makes both human and animal products is Nutramax laboratories. We recommend there chewable arthritis supplement Dasuquin, as it not only contains glucosamine, chondroitin, and MSM, but green tea and avocado/soybean extract, which enhance its ability to make patients more comfortable.



Another nutrition-like product that is valuable in the management of arthritis is Adequan. This injectable medication is an active form of joint lubricant and has greatly enhanced the comfort level of a number of our patients.

Medication options for arthritis are usually used on moderate to severe cases. These can include oral NSAIDS (Rimadyl, Metacam, etc.), opioid like-medications such as Tramadol, drugs that prevent perception of pain at the level of the spinal cord such as amantadine, and nerve pain medications such as gabapentin.

In severe cases of arthritis, the above therapies can be combined with rehabilitation therapy, acupuncture, or stem cell injections

#### **Rabies Alert!**

Eight rabies cases have been diagnosed in Middlesex County - including a positive skunk and raccoon in Monroe.

Both indoor and outdoor dogs and cats should be kept current on their Rabies vaccinations. At the Monroe Animal Hospital we use the Merial Purevax vaccination for cats and the Merial IMRAB vaccination for dogs. These vaccinations are approved for use at 8 and 12 weeks respectively.