

## WINTER NEWSLETTER 2015



# Gorham Animal Hospital

Veterinary Services

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### We wish your family a safe, healthy and happy holiday season

#### Wellness pet packages now available

Pet wellness packages have been established to help you affordably follow preventative health care recommendations for your pets.

The plans spread the costing of the preventative health over a number of months. In addition the plans include FREE UNLIMITED EXAMINATIONS FOR YOUR PET FOR A YEAR.

Prevention and early detection of disease ensures that our pets can live healthier and longer lives. We usually benefit from lower veterinary costs.

We thank you for a wonderful year, and for entrusting us with your pets care. We have made many changes to help improve the services and facilities to better serve your family. A special thanks to staff who have helped facilitate some of those changes. Jaime and Kelsie who have quickly mastered the dental xrays and who always seem a few steps ahead of me. They have also become the 'go to guys' for the both the webstore and the new wellness plans available Jan 01, please call to register for more information.



**SANTA PHOTOS SAT. DEC. 12 9-12 am**

**please call for an apt.**

**Donations appreciated for "change for change"**

Occasionally life is unpredictable and unforeseen illness or injury can affect our pets. Here at Gorham Animal Hospital, we have a "Change For Change" program (previously called Pennies For Pets) where donations provided by our clients go towards veterinary services for animals who would otherwise go without treatment.

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#### Webstore makes it easier for Santa to shop! Thousands of items online.

Many Ontario Veterinarians purchase products through a central company to obtain competitive pricing on thousands of veterinary products, available online to your family through the webstore. Orders over 125\$ can be delivered right to your door, and any orders shipped to the clinic for pick up always benefit from free shipping. With Christmas just around the corner, take advantage of the many pet products available including treats, toys, collars and leashes. Email us or go to our website for a convenient link to register, or call us if you need help to register you.

[www.photolightscape.com](http://www.photolightscape.com) (thanks Robert)our photographer Sat.



## Seasonal Hazards

Did you know that most foreign bodies and toxins are ingested this time of year? Please ensure that human medications are safely stored, and no wrapped chocolates are left under the tree accessible to your pet!

Antifreeze poison remains one of the more common ingested poisons. The sweet taste attracts pets and can lead to kidney damage. **Did you know that snow globes can also contain antifreeze?**

The Christmas tree should always be attached to a wall to avoid the obvious calamity. Stringy objects like tinsel, ribbons, dental floss, yarn, and thread are often eaten by pets, especially cats. Barbed tongues make it difficult for them to spit out stringy things. Lastly, please ensure that any Christmas tree water additives are labeled as being pet safe.

Lights and electrical cords should be out of reach or grounded using a 3 pronged plug or extension cord. Discourage chewing cords with bitter apple sprays and/or with cord covers.

Poinsettias plants are irritating and can lead to vomiting and diarrhea whereas other plants including **Holly and mistletoe are considered toxic to pets.**

Holidays are times for family gatherings and of course we love to include our pets in family celebrations including meals. Pets are often given extra treats over the holiday too! Remember that abrupt dietary changes can often lead to vomiting or diarrhea. Please ensure that high fatty foods, like gravies and bacon, which can contribute to life threatening pancreatitis, are avoided. **Bones cooked or uncooked can be harmful to your pet and should NEVER be given.**

The changes in our routines, and extra houseguests during the holidays can lead to increased anxiety and stress in our pets too. Ensuring regular exercise, play and even new toys can provide the necessary distractions. Consider putting a pet into a quiet room away from the chaos of entertaining or reducing stress through the use of "happy pheromone" collars, sprays and diffusers during particularly busy events.

A great resource for cat behavior is on the **Ohio state university website and referred to as the indoor cat initiative project. The project offers suggestions on environmental enrichment to reduce anxiety, especially with cats, and improve their quality of life. Stress and anxiety have a strong association with illness, as with people.**

Look for the VOHC symbol on pet products to ensure that they have been recommended by Veterinary Dental Specialists. **Please avoid hard items including bones, and the recently marketed ANTLERS as these products can BREAK TEETH!!**



IN the event of an emergency, please call ahead with the nature of your pets' illness and with your estimated time of arrival. If we are working with a patient during regular office hours and unable to answer your call please leave a message and bring your pet promptly to the clinic. **Gorham Animal Hospital (905) 895-4552**

**After hours care is available at the 404 emergency/referral center. 905 953-1933**



Facility Upgrades are in progress. Our critical and post operative patients are now located on the upper level allowing for both better observation and treatment as well as for client visitation. Our basement has recently been renovated to add additional dog runs. Consequently we are now able to offer short term boarding for our clients animals, and with the completion of the dog runs, we will soon be able to accommodate larger pets. We are hoping to add a third exam/treatment room and update the reception area in the new year.

## Dental disease in pets and required care.

Just like us, pets suffer from the same periodontal disease that humans do. In fact 80% of pets over 3 years of age have signs of periodontal disease. Small breed dogs and cats are particularly prone to dental disease. Plaque forms, leading to gum inflammation, periodontal ligament and bone damage and eventually the loss of teeth. We are now seeing **more pets with broken and fractured teeth as hard bones and antlers are being fed** to them. Again, please ensure that **you provide VOHC approved diets, and treats.**

Animals have evolved to hide their discomfort and pets rarely complain even with painful dental disease. Smelly breath, drooling, pawing their face, facial swelling or reluctance to eat, or changes in diet preferences may be signs that your pets' mouth needs attention.

Dental care should be started at home. Daily brushing, recommended diets, rinses, and even water additives can help in controlling the accumulation of plaque. **Ultimately when a dental prophy is recommended, this can only be carried out effectively when a pet is under a general anesthetic to ensure that the exam, cleaning, xrays and treatments required are carried out. A new product healthy mouth gel is available as blueberry flavour and not only helps clean teeth, but softens tartar already present.**

Having a pet under a general anesthesia is always a worrisome prospect. We routinely ensure that a pet is examined, and that routine blood and urine screening are carried out to ensure that their overall health is evaluated prior to a pet undergoing surgery or a dental prophy. While under a general anesthesia our pets are on intravenous fluids to aid in maintaining their blood flow to all their organs.

We recognize both the need and the cost associated with carrying out the recommended dental prophylaxis. This is one procedure that undoubtedly improves a pet's quality of life when performed. Some of the wellness plans are structured to help you ensure that proper dental care is affordably available. The plans would not include any required extractions or dental xrays the need of which would widely vary amongst our patients.



### Dental Prophy

Despite regular brushing and flosses, we require regular dental visits and teeth cleaning. It should come as no surprise that our pets require the same.

Pets always require a general anesthetic to ensure proper dental examinations, dental xrays and appropriate treatment options are carried out. Examination can pick up growths, periodontal disease, tooth fractures or discolourations and even dental malformations. The digital dental xrays allow us to identify diseases below the gum line and to ensure appropriate treatment is carried out.



### THE INTERNET AS A TOOL

**It is important to know that the website that you are reading has both up to date and accurate information. Please contact us should you require information on a particular subject or concern. We try and provide email documents to aid in your family making informed health decisions.**

**Veterinary medicine has changed with the internet as well. As members of the veterinary information network, our veterinarian has access to over 180 online specialists and colleagues.**

## Immunizations for indoor cats do they really need them??



**The short answer is yes.**

Rabies virus is not treatable and it is potentially zoonotic. (people are potentially infected from animals) Animals have been exposed through other household pets, or while being outdoors. It has been my experience that many “indoor cats” are actually let out, often supervised for short periods of time or have become escape artists sneaking out on occasion. I have had patients exposed to bats in basements and one cat even bitten by a squirrel on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of a balcony, others brought outside during a fire. Life happens, and we should never take a chance with our family.

**Rabies vaccine is thought to be 100% effective. All cats and dogs should be kept up to date on the rabies vaccinations whether indoors or not.**

Due to the zoonotic potential of rabies, many believe that this is the only vaccine required and mistakenly bring them to rabies clinics and think that their pet is up to date on immunizations. Animals are not examined at a rabies clinic, and any underlying disease may worsen with the resultant immunosuppression from being vaccinated. **There are other common diseases that our pets are potentially exposed to on a regular basis and need to be immunized against. This includes the upper respiratory virus for cats, and the parvovirus for dogs.**

Feline leukemia virus is generally a non core vaccination, required or recommended to outdoor, multicat households or for cats that have been in high risk situations including coming from a shelter, rescue, stray or having previously been an outdoor cat. There is a blood test for feline leukemia should be performed on any new cat additions, especially if other cats are already in the home.

**Gorham animal hospital uses the purevax line of cat rabies vaccines for your cats safety. This year a vaccine has been created to prolong the duration of protection for your cat.**

**Vaccine protocols should continue to individualized to ensure both the safety and protection of your pets. Our**

**No time to juggle a vet visit? We offer a convenient weekday drop off service at no additional charge to ensure that your pet can acquire prompt veterinary care required.**

**Please call to arrange drop off times Monday -Thursday after 7:30, and Fridays after 8:00am.**



# Kennel Cough



Recently we have seen a few cases, even in vaccinated patients.

This is a highly contagious illness that can develop within days of exposure at a boarding facility, doggy daycare, grooming facility or wherever close or nose to nose contact between dogs can occur. These infections are caused by a combination of bacteria and viral infections which can damage the cilia or hair within the airway normally filtering out debris. This can allow for other infections to seed in the respiratory tract, secondary pneumonia being a potential risk. The young, old and immunosuppressed patients are in particular at risk to more severe disease.

Clinical signs will generally resolve within two weeks in a mild case. **The dogs should be isolated** and mild supportive care provided during this time. **They will shed infectious bacteria and viruses which become airborne and are inhaled not just while coughing but potentially for up to 2-3 months after infection.**

**Note as well that there are many causes of a cough, including heart failure so the nature of the cough does not always reflect the cause and not all coughing dogs should be concluded to have kennel cough.** If kennel cough is confirmed, it is usually self limiting. If no improvement is seen within a week, or the pet appears depressed or you have any concerns, ensure a recheck appointment to check for secondary infections or other underlying disease.

Vaccinations are NOT useful in a dog already exposed. **As different strains of the kennel cough cause disease, similar to the influenza vaccine, the vaccine may not prevent infection but lessen the severity of the disease.** There is now an oral kennel cough vaccination available for easier administrations and comfort of the dog (and vet).

*From our family to yours:*

*Have a safe and happy holidays!!*

