

pawprints

GREAT NEWS ABOUT PETS SNIFFED OUT FOR YOU 🐾



CHECK IT OUT: CATEGORICAL CARE

AN OWNER'S GUIDE TO AMERICA'S #1 COMPANION

"If you've lived your entire life without a cat, you've missed out," says Dr. Jane Brunt, executive director of the CATalyst Council.

While cats are America's most popular companions with more pet cats than dogs, animal shelters are still teeming with cats, particularly beginning in June. That's why the American Humane Association designated the entire month of June as their Adopt-A-Cat month back in the early 1970's. The program has continued each year since then.

"Well, the problem hasn't improved," says Debrah Schnackenberg, vice president animal programs at American Humane.

Seeking to move the needle on cat adoptions, American Humane partnered with the CATalyst Council on this year's program – which kicked off in June, but continues year-round.

"We sought partners and CATalyst is an organization of partners," Schnackenberg says. "Our tent instantly grows by teaming up with CATalyst."

The CATalyst Council, which was formed in 2008, is a coalition of veterinary medicine, animal welfare, non-profit, academia and industry, all devoted to the mission of elevating the status of cats.

While lots of people have cats (there are 82 million pet cats, and 72 million dogs, according to the AVMA), cats clearly don't receive equal veterinary care compared to dogs. Cats visit the veterinarian

less than half as often as canines, and people aren't willing to invest as much in cat care as they will for medical care for dogs. Clearly, more cats are just let out on the street – sometimes because people can no longer afford them as their homes may be foreclosed on, and sometimes, well, just because. People don't usually just let dogs go to fend for themselves.

More cats are relinquished to shelters than dogs. When cats are found, families are rarely able to recover them because sadly they typically don't wear an ID, and they're rarely microchipped.

"There are too many cats who are in shelters by no fault of their own," Schnackenberg says.

CATalyst has teamed with American Humane on two publications. *Connecting with Cats* is a kids 'cativity book,' conveying cat care information to children. "It's important because children actually do a very good job of teaching parents," Schnackenberg adds.

CATegorical Care is a comprehensive booklet filled with information for both novice and experienced cat owners. "So, your cat isn't acting sick," says Brunt. "How can you tell? There are actually some pretty subtle signs, and knowing them might save your cat's life." Aside from general cat health information, you'll learn why you don't need to declaw, why parasite protection is important even for



BY STEVE DALE



Photo Courtesy of Beth Adelman

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indoor cats, and what to do if your cat has an accident outside the litter box.

Connecting with Cats and CATegorical Care are free to download (and available at some shelters in hard copy form) from www.catalystcouncil.org or www.americanhumane.org. 🐾



WIN THE WAR, BEAT THE FLEAS
BY STEVE DALE

You can win the war on fleas, but you need the right artillery and might need a lesson on how to use the weaponry correctly.

Dr. Michael Dryden, professor of Veterinary Parasitology, Department of Diagnostic Medicine and Pathobiology at Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine – Manhattan says flea and tick products haven't substantially changed in the past few years. However, he is concerned about the way which consumers are increasingly purchasing those products, via the Internet or over-the-counter without the benefit of the recommendation of a veterinarian who has actually examined their pet. As a result, Dryden says "There's a laundry list of what potentially may go wrong – from using a product meant for dogs only on cats, using (a product) on a nursing animal which isn't labeled for that use, to using a product meant for a very large dog on a small dog, and the list goes on and on. If there's no input from a veterinary professional, mistakes are more likely to happen, and ultimately the pets are going to suffer."

Dryden makes a strong point of saying that it's important all pets in the home receive protection for effectiveness – even indoor cats.

Dryden says that human nature being what it is, sometimes people do everything right. They eradicate the fleas and then they figure the war is over. Actually, they've only won the battle. To win the war, you need to be consistent, never letting your guard down. 🐾



PREVENTING HEARTWORM SAVES LIVES BY STEVE DALE

Squashing heartworm disease has been quite the challenge. For starters a surprising number of dog owners (over half, according to one survey), and the vast majority of cat owners fail to purchase a preventive in the first place. At the same time, the mosquitoes responsible for transmitting heartworm are thriving, even on the rise in many places across the country.

Mosquitoes become infected with microfilaria, and subsequently infect pets like dogs, cats, or ferrets with L3 larvae. In unprotected animals, larvae may eventually grow into six to 12-inch adult spaghetti-shaped worms which ultimately settle in the lungs and the chambers of the heart of affected pets. Heartworm can be deadly. In cats, sometimes the only clinical sign is sudden death.

"Of course, we're very concerned that so many

dogs are unprotected, either because their owners don't purchase a preventive or because their people forget to use the product," says Dr. Wallace Graham, of Corpus Christi, TX, president of the American Heartworm Society.

Graham concedes that the economy also plays a role, since heartworm preventives do cost money – and people may not understand the investment they're making.

"Not treating (for heartworm) may potentially create a financial burden," says Dr. Sheldon Rubin, of Chicago, immediate past president of the American Heartworm Society. He explains that treatment is far more expensive than many years of using a preventive. In cats, heartworm likely occurs more often than previously suspected, and there currently is no treatment for heartworm in cats. 🐾

MISCHIEVOUS AFRICAN MONKEYS BY LEIGH YOUNG

"Just look straight ahead and don't you dare make eye contact," said Leah, my frantic yet unruffled fellow Kenyan teammate, who was walking faster than me. I could feel their big brown eyes glaring at the two of us as we attempted to stroll along their dirt path headquarters. Our location was in a village about three hours outside of Nairobi, Kenya as ten of us were sent from the U.S. to Kenya for a ten-day mission trip.

"Keep walking fast and hide everything you're carrying underneath your shirt," she whispered as we passed a troop of what seemed to be innocent and sweet looking vervet monkeys. "They'll steal it if you don't," she said.

Leah was blowing this out of proportion. My heart melted for the little monkeys. Confused, I gripped tighter onto the plastic bag containing my only sucker and juice box. Ignoring their presence made sense, because we were on their turf after all. Still, I could at least be courteous enough to give a quick glance of acknowledgement, right?

As I lifted my head to give a nervous smile and nod, a tiny little monkey jumped toward my plastic bag. (Note: don't ever try to fight a monkey for your belongings because they will win every

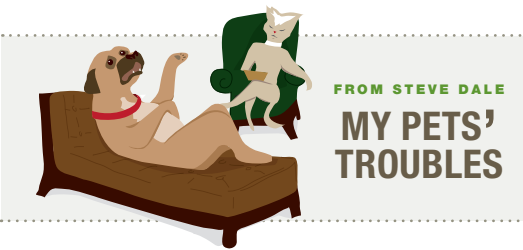
time.) When I felt the tug, I instantly tugged back without making eye contact. "No, no, no!" I hit an awkward octave at the top of my lungs that I haven't heard since my junior high choir days.

The seven-second tug of war ended as I let go and the monkey ran off with my plastic bag of goodies. When he scampered up the tree, I think he was laughing, "Silly American!" More than anything, I was shook up and walked faster to catch up with Leah who, even though she heard the commotion, decided that she wanted nothing to do with it. Earlier that day she found a monkey in her room trying on her clothes. Within minutes, I saw my little friend in a tree casually unwrapping my stolen sucker. Leah smiled and shrugged, "I told you."

While in Kenya, I took away many life changing lessons and experiences, such as appreciating clean water and creating bonds and friendships with people different than me. And I'll never forget the small but important lesson about leaving the monkeys alone! Like many other beautiful animals, they may look seemingly adorable, but don't mess with their stomping grounds. Kenya was amazingly breathtaking in so many ways, especially the people; the monkeys definitely added a bit of character. 🐾



Photo Courtesy of Leigh Young



Q: About a year ago, I adopted a shelter cat. She's very loving and loves being petted. But then sometimes her ears go back and she gets a mean look and bites. Then, she's really friendly again. Why does this happen?
M. B., Stacy, MN

A: If you can, videotape the event, and show your veterinarian. Based on your description it doesn't sound like Feline hyperesthesia syndrome – however, your veterinarian can tell for sure. This is extreme skin sensitivity, muscles twitch and it appears as if your cat's skin is actually rolling. Yowling and a fast twitching tail are often associated as well. Fairly new research indicates this condition is often created by an allergy. No matter, veterinary intervention is required.

However, lots of cats – without any such condition – simply want to be petted only so much, and then enough is enough. Typically, they tell us but we don't notice the yield signs of a twitching tail, dilated eyes, ears going back, and a general uneasiness. So we keep petting. Sooner than later, the cat offers a stop sign – and bites.

Your job is to stop petting even before the yield signs. If your cat generally allows five minutes of petting, give her three minutes – leaving her wanting more. You might literally even count the strokes. Then, very gradually – stroke by stroke – build the tolerance. With some cats, this method works. Also adjust your expectations as all cats aren't as snuggly as some of us want. But it doesn't mean your cat doesn't love you.

Email questions about your pets' behavior troubles to info@pawprintsnewsletter.com.



DON'T LET TICKS TICK YOU OFF

There's an infestation of ticks. The next thing we know, panic in the streets will ensue. "I'm not sure that response is necessary, but by using appropriate products recommended by a veterinarian, we can protect our pets," says Dr. Michael Paul, executive director of the Companion Animal Parasite Council.

It's true, if ticks could fill out the U.S. Census Form, there would be definitive evidence that there are many more ticks today than a decade ago. "The problem reaches beyond the tick gross-out factor," adds Paul. "Ticks carry diseases – often a variety of diseases can be delivered by a single tick."

Not only are there more individual ticks, most tick species are expanding their range. For example, the Gulf Coast tick – as the name implies – historically lived within about 100 miles of the Gulf of Mexico. Today, that species' range has extended to include much of the Southeast U.S. and up into the middle part of the country.

Tick-borne diseases such as ehrlichiosis, babesiosis, and hepatozoon – not to mention Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever – can affect dogs. Sometimes ticks transmit a cocktail of organisms which can make dogs very ill.

Cats are particularly susceptible to the tick-borne disease called cytauxzoonosis. This is transmitted most often by the Lone Star tick. While some newer therapies are increasing the likelihood of survival, cytauxzoonosis is costly to treat and cats with the illness become very sick and many do succumb. And wouldn't you know it, the range of the Lone Star tick is also expanding and so, therefore, is the risk of cytauxzoonosis transmission.

So, what the heck is going on? Are ticks more fertile? "No, that's not it," laughs veterinary parasitologist Dr. Susan Little of Oklahoma State University

College of Veterinary Medicine. "There is a complex combination of factors," she says. "At the top of the list, there's wildlife. While many of us appreciate the comeback of many wildlife species, they do carry ticks, particularly white-tail deer and the wild turkey." What's more, with sprawling suburbia intersecting with natural environments, our pet's potential exposure to ticks has never been so high.

The rising pet population is another contributing factor. There are more dogs in America today than ever before. What's more, our society is also more mobile. So dogs who might spend a weekend in upstate New York hiking without tick protection return to New York City and drop off ticks in Central Park. Today, even surrounded by concrete, ticks survive in parks in major metropolitan areas.

Paul says that you want to do what you can to decrease the risk that your pet will get a tick-borne disease. See your veterinarian for information. And also for tips about what to do if you do see ticks on your pet(s). Of course, keeping cats indoors helps decrease the odds of tick-borne disease transmission to our kitties.

Learn more about tick-borne diseases and check out a map where you can track where some of the most common tick-borne diseases occur at www.petsandparasites.org. 🐾



Photo Courtesy of Steve Dale

FEATURED WEBSITES

1. Animal Behavior Resources Institute
www.abrionline.org
2. American College of Veterinary Behaviorists
www.dacvb.org
3. American Humane Association
www.americanhumane.org
4. American Veterinary Medical Association
www.avma.org
5. American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior
www.avsabonline.org
6. CATalyst Council
www.catalystcouncil.org
7. Companion Animal Parasite Council
www.petsandparasites.org
8. International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants
www.iaabc.org
9. Winn Feline Foundation
www.winnfelinehealth.org
10. Steve Dale
www.stevedalepetworld.com
www.petworldradio.net
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