



Patton Veterinary Hospital

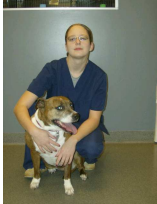
# Midnight's Mewsings

Volume 4, Issue 1 Spring 2009



Layout done by : Leslie Leffler

## Employee Spotlight



**Name:** Jess Scott  
**Started at PVH:** Oct. 2004  
**Hometown:** Red Lion, PA  
**Education/Experience:** Graduated in 2005 from Red Lion Senior High, currently pursuing a degree in Technology Education from Millersville University.

**Have you always been interested in animals?** Yes! How could I possibly resist them? I've always been one to fall for animals. Even as a child I was rescuing birds and frogs from our pool and sneaking food out to feed the strays cats near our house.

**Why did you choose to work at PVH?** My mother began working here first and not long after she told me they were hiring. Having a true love for animals in my heart, I knew that I, just like my mother, would easily find my work at PVH rewarding and enjoyable.



## Feline Hypertension

By: Dr Sabrina Walters

You are probably used to having your blood pressure checked by your doctor as part of an annual check up. Did you know that cats should have their blood pressures checked too? Soon, Patton Veterinary Hospital hopes to make blood pressure monitoring a regular part of the annual exam for senior cats.



### What is High Blood Pressure Anyway?

Primary hypertension (high blood pressure) associated with risk factors like excess salt in the diet, smoking, obesity or family history is common in people. Hopefully, you are not letting your cat smoke or use the salt shaker, so this form of hypertension is rare in animals. However, there are several medical conditions in pets that can lead to an unhealthy rise in blood pressure. Senior cats are especially at risk for hyperthyroid disease (overactive thyroid gland), kidney disease, and diabetes, all of which increase the risk for high blood pressure.

### How Do I Know if My Cat Has High Blood Pressure?

High blood pressure is often a silent disease with no noticeable symptoms in the early stages. Occasionally, pets may have increased thirst and urination or develop a nose bleed. Left untreated, high blood pressure can cause damage to major organs such as the eyes, heart, kidneys and brain. Blindness, enlarged heart, seizures, fainting, and kidney failure are all serious complications of undiagnosed hypertension. The good news is that annual screening can detect early changes and allow treatment to begin that will lower the blood pressure and decrease the chance of serious complications

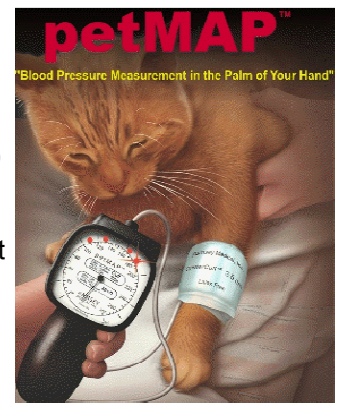
### How Do You Measure a Cat's Blood Pressure?

Taking a cat's blood pressure is simple and does not cause any discomfort to your cat. In fact, it is very similar to having your own blood pressure checked. A Velcro cuff is placed around either your cat's front leg or the base of her tail. The cuff is inflated and in about 60 seconds, the measurement is read. This is repeated 2-3 times to get an average reading. The focus group for screening would be cats over seven years of age as they are the most likely to develop high blood pressure.

### What Do I Do if My Cat Has Hypertension?

An average blood pressure reading of greater than 160 is considered to be elevated for a cat, even if he is stressed. If your cat has high blood pressure, he can take medication to control his blood pressure. Sometimes, a low salt diet or weight loss may be recommended.

Measuring blood pressure is a quick, easy test for your senior cat and one that may save her vision and even her life. Please ask us about checking your cat's blood pressure today.



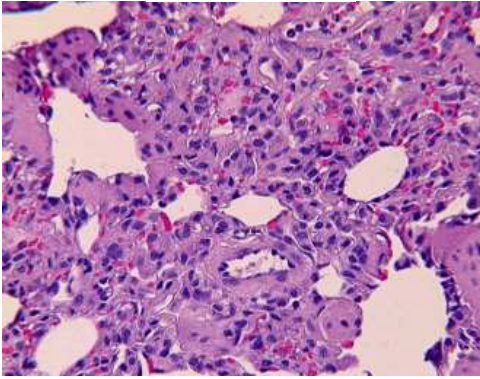
## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Cat Hypertension	1
Employee Spotlight	1
Feline Heartworm	2
Community Events	3
Why Wait for Appt	3
Kitty Korner	4
Interesting Fact	4



## Feline Heartworm

By: Rebecca Dougherty



Section of lung from a cat with circulating larval heartworms.

If you knew that one of the most prevalent and lethal diseases to affect dogs and cats is completely avoidable, wouldn't you do your best to prevent it? Heartworm disease in dogs and cats can be prevented with oral or topical products for mere dollars a month. All dogs and cats are susceptible to heartworm, even if they are strictly indoor. Also, dogs or cats that travel to certain areas of the country can be even more at risk. All it takes is one mosquito carrying the larval heartworm to spread heartworm infection.

Heartworms are only spread from animal to animal. An infected mosquito bites your dog or cat and transmits the infective larvae to your pet. Once your pet is infected, the larvae mature into adult heartworms in about 6 months. The larvae migrate through the body during these months and eventually reach the blood vessels of the lungs. As they continue to grow they damage the lungs and blood vessels and then begin to invade the heart. Adult heartworms can grow up to 14 inches in length and cause severe inflammation, as well as physically blocking the heart's chambers. If both male and female heartworms are present they will mate and produce live young; these microfilaria can cause the immune system to launch an attack, which can lead to damage of other organs. This is also the stage where the mosquito picks up the microfilaria, thus resulting in possible transmission to another animal. Adult heartworms can live for 5-7 years in a dog, and several months, or years in a cat. Cats are not likely to have both sexes present and

so are not likely to spread the heartworm infection.

Just because an animal becomes infected with heartworms does not mean it has heartworm disease. Animals with heartworm *infection* have one or more of the larval life stages present in their bodies, but not necessarily in their hearts. In cats, especially, the worms tend to get lost while trying to find the heart. Infected pets may not even be clinically sick.

Dogs with heartworm *disease*, however, may show several possible symptoms; coughing, exercise intolerance, nose bleeds, or non-infectious pneumonia. As the arteries become damaged, the body will try to mount a defense, but the parasites are too large for the immune cells to destroy and inflammation results instead, further damaging the arteries. The arteries expand, becoming weaker and possibly developing clotting abnormalities. Fluid begins to accumulate in the lungs and around the arteries. Blood cannot efficiently carry oxygen, causing coughing and breathing difficulties.

As the arteries become further clogged, the heart must pump even harder against the parasites in the arteries, creating pulmonary hypertension. If the worms are backed up into the heart, the heart chamber will have less space to pump; therefore it must pump harder still. At some point the heart simply stops. Meanwhile, the immune system is mounting its defense, producing vast quantities of antibodies. The antibodies can cause damage to the eye, kidney, joints and blood vessels, causing tissue damage and pain. As few as 25 worms can begin to back up the dog's heart chambers; one hundred can cause sudden death.

In cats, one adult heartworm is enough to cause death. Typically, symptoms in cats are different than those in dogs, tending to be more immune-related than heart-failure related. Cats may develop chronic coughing and vomiting, as well as respiratory distress. For this reason, they are often misdiagnosed as having asthma.

Treatment for canine heartworm disease can be just as bad as

the disease itself. To kill adult heartworms a chemical called melarsomine hydrochloride (immiticide) is used. This drug must be administered only under veterinary care. The patient gets up to three injections into the muscle of the lower back; these injections are very painful and can remain painful for some time. Pain medication is required. Also abscesses may form, requiring further treatment. Afterwards, the dog must be kept very quiet, and strictly confined for one month. Any physical activity can cause an embolism, which is a clog in an artery, resulting in death. The heart needs complete rest during this period after treatment. Costs for treating heartworm disease can range from \$1200 to \$1600. For cats, there is no current treatment for the disease. Medications can reduce arterial inflammation, or surgery can be performed, physically removing the heartworms, but the success rate for this is low.

Prevention, therefore, is key in both cats and dogs. Our veterinarians recommend Interceptor or Sentinel for dogs, or Revolution for cats. Blood testing to check for an existing heartworm infection is necessary before starting preventatives in dogs. This is a simple in-house test, with results available in eight minutes. Cats can be put on preventative at any time, without testing first. Pets should remain on heartworm protection year-round. Testing should be done on dogs at least every two years. Puppies should be started on protection at eight weeks, and tested at their first annual checkup. Heartworm medications also guard against intestinal roundworms, hookworms and whipworms in dogs, and ear mites in cats (with Revolution). Compared to the costs and associated risks of treating heartworm disease, prevention is a much safer, and a less costly alternative.



# Community Events

Patton's Community Events Update  
By Kristi McArthur

Patton Veterinary Hospital is pleased to announce that our first Pet Valentines sale was a success. This year we offered \$1 valentines and treats for pets and their human counterparts. Proceeds benefited the hospital's Pennies for Paws fund. Pennies for Paws was created to ease the physical suffering of pets, and to alleviate the financial and emotional burden of the people who care for them. The fund comes entirely from the donations of other clients.

To kick off February's Pet Dental Health Month, we hosted two in-hospital seminars on the importance of home oral care for your animals. Just as humans who floss daily can decrease heart disease and add anywhere from 4-6 years to their lifespan, a dog or cat who receives daily oral care can add anywhere from 1-3 years to their lifespan. The seminars took place at Patton Veterinary Hospital on February 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. We are very excited about the interest the community showed in providing proper oral care for their pets. Everyone who attended received a dental kit to start home care off right. Thanks to all who came...together we can add years to the time you have with your furry friends!!

And to wrap up our winter community events, the staff took our pets to visit the seniors at the Dallastown Victorian Villa and Nursing Home. We love to see their faces light up when wet kisses and wagging tails welcome the residents' love and attention! Thanks to Victorian Villa for opening their doors to us! Stay tuned for more community events in the upcoming summer newsletter.



## *Why Do I Have To Wait For My Appointment?*

*By: Julie Good*

Time is precious; you can't buy more time and you can't get back what you've lost. It's frustrating when you have to wait for anything because you're thinking about all the other things you could be doing. So if we know this – if we've been through this ourselves – why do you sometimes have to wait for your scheduled appointment here at Patton Veterinary Hospital?

The most obvious reason could be that we might have an emergency. If your dog were hit by a car or your cat had a life-threatening urinary blockage, you would probably hope that the people waiting for an annual wellness exam or similar appointment wouldn't mind waiting a little while longer so our veterinarians can save your pet's life.

Or it could be that the visit before you turned out to be more complicated than expected e.g. during examination of an apparently healthy pet, the doctor has discovered ear or skin problems and suddenly it's necessary to take skin samples and ear swabs and look at them under the microscope to determine which medicine is best to solve the problem. And radio-

graphs can be even more time-consuming. Can the nurses do some of these procedures and allow the doctor to continue his or her appointments? Yes, but eventually a doctor will have to look at the results and discuss with the client what to do next – which takes time.

Although it may not seem like it at that moment, while you're waiting for your appointment or for the doctor to come back, this is actually more efficient than when you go to your human doctor. Your family practitioner would have to send you out for lab work or radiographs – often we can do it all right here, tell you the results, and plan a course of treatment immediately; things that might take days or even weeks in human medicine.

Below are examples of two different doctor visits:

**Dr. A: How is Sparky today?**

**You: Well, fine, I guess, but he's starting to get old and slow and I'm a little worried.**

**Dr. A: Oh, it happens to all of us sooner or later! Let's see what vaccines Sparky is due for...**

or

**Dr. B: How is Sparky today?**

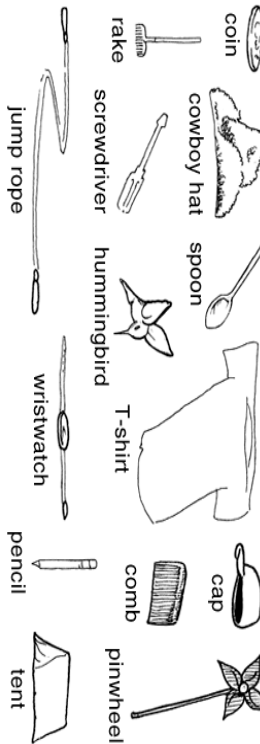
**You: Well, fine, I guess, but he's starting to get old and slow and I'm a little worried.**

**Dr. B: Yes, I noticed he was limping a bit when he came into the room. We can take an x-ray and see if there's some arthritis in that hip or leg. There may be some medications and dietary supplements that can make him more comfortable. Sparky might not act like a puppy again but hopefully he can still go on your evening walks with you...**

Remember that a thorough, caring exam (like example 2) may cost more time, but it may also allow you the gift of spending more time with your best friend.



# Kitty Corner contributed by Kristi McArthur



## Lend A Paw

### **SPCA**

3159 Susquehanna Trail North  
York, PA 17406

(717) 764-6109

[www.ycspca.org](http://www.ycspca.org)

**\*Isaac's Night- March 19**

[Pancake Barkfast and Doggie Egg Roll-  
April 18](#)

### **Animal Rescue Inc.**

2 Heritage Farm Drive  
New Freedom, PA 17349

(717) 993-3232

[www.animalrescueinc.org](http://www.animalrescueinc.org)

**\*Flea Market: New Freedom Lioness  
Club**

**Community Center**

March 7, 2009

*New Freedom, PA*

**\*Vaccine and Microchip Clinic**

Shrewsbury Township Building

5/16/2009

*Shrewsbury, PA*

## **Did You Know?**

Nose prints are used to identify dogs, much like humans use fingerprints.

### **Patton Veterinary Hospital**

425 East Broadway

Red Lion, PA 17356

Phone (717) 246-3611

**WE'RE ON THE WEB!!**

[www.pattonvethospital.com](http://www.pattonvethospital.com)

