

# The Creekside News



[creeksideah@gmail.com](mailto:creeksideah@gmail.com)

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

## CONTENTS

MAY, 2012

Section 1: What's New At Creekside?

Section 2: Overactive Thyroid Gland in Cats (Hyperthyroidism)

Section 3: Flea and Tick

Section 4: Geriatric Exams Recommended for Pets Over 8 years old

Section 5: Anterior Cruciate Ligament

Section 6: Case of the Month

## WHAT'S NEW AT CREEKSIDE?

**New faces** We are most pleased to introduce to you some talented new members of our team. Melissa is a registered technician. She received her training at Purdue and will be helping us behind the scenes to provide the safest and best possible care for our hospitalized patients. Kayla has joined our customer care team up front. She has several years of experience in the veterinary field and is eager to meet all of you. Kelsy will also be joining us this summer as a veterinary assistant. We welcome them onto our team! Dr. Schilling is expecting! She will be out on maternity leave for 6 weeks this summer. We will have a relief veterinarian working for her while she is away. Our other three doctors will continue hours as normal and may be working a little overtime to fill in the spaces. Congratulations to Dr. Schilling and family, we wish you a happy healthy baby!

### Feline Atopica now available for cat allergies

We have been awaiting arrival of a new product for cats with allergies and I am happy to say that Atopica has now arrived and we have already tried in on a few patients. If your cat is prone to allergies to the point that scabs around the neck or rump, oral or lip sores, or inflamed areas of hair loss has occurred, please give us a call and ask if your cat could benefit from Atopica.

## FELINE HYPERTHYROIDISM

A common medical condition in older cats is an overactive thyroid gland. This gland produces a hormone that regulates metabolism. Oddly enough, dogs tend to develop an underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism) whereas cats tend to do just the opposite. Hyperthyroid cats tend to have a very good, often ravenous appetite, but continue to lose weight. They are often anxious, pacing, crying, or just not wanting to be on one's lap due to their increased metabolic weight. Vomiting and or diarrhea are also common symptoms. This disease can be diagnosed with a simple blood test.

There are three treatment options for hyperthyroid cats:

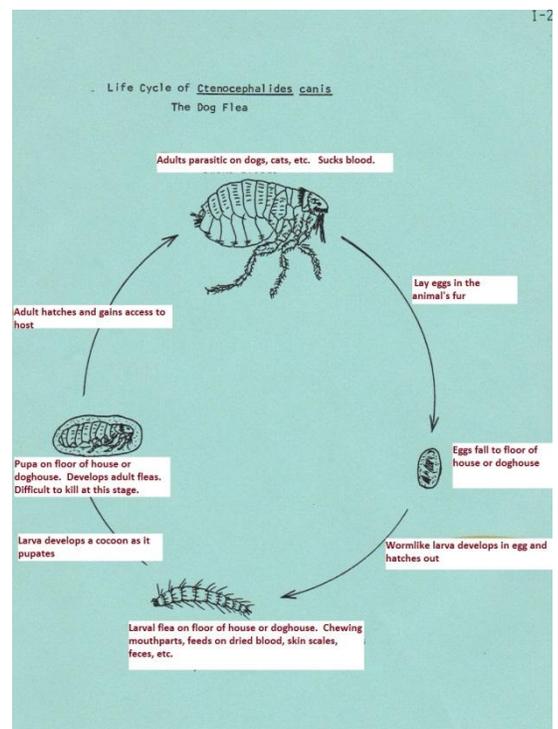
- Radioactive iodine therapy (I131) - this is done at a referral center only. Although it is quite expensive to have done, it does have a very good success rate for cure, does not require anesthesia, and most cats are back home within a few days.
- If the thyroid has a nodule which can be felt by a veterinarian, then surgical removal of that part of the thyroid gland may also provide a cure for the disease. Although there is no guarantee it will not become overactive at a different part of the thyroid later, the surgery may prove curative.
- Medical therapy is a third option. Either oral medication or topical medication may be used to suppress the overactive thyroid of the cat. Blood levels will need to be taken periodically to be sure the dose is being absorbed at a therapeutic level and medication must usually be given twice a day for the remainder of the cat's life.

Left untreated, a hyperthyroid cat will eventually develop all the symptoms of the disease. Not only vomiting, diarrhea, and weight loss, but also heart disease may occur. The overactive thyroid is responsible for causing a specific type of heart disease called thyrotoxic cardiomyopathy. Once this occurs, the damage is irreversible and many cats will die of the heart disease or high blood pressure due to the disease.

## FLEAS AND TICKS ARE HERE! (OR DID THEY EVER LEAVE LAST WINTER?)

### Do you know these flea facts?

- ❖ Each flea can lay 30-50 eggs per day and within just a few short weeks; each of those offspring will also be laying eggs daily. As you can imagine, only a few fleas can turn into thousands within a month's time.
- ❖ A flea can jump over 3 feet high
- ❖ A flea will take a blood meal from your pet within seconds of jumping on them
- ❖ Adult fleas spend over 80% of the time on your pet, feasting on their blood and laying eggs
- ❖ Flea eggs may attach to the hair, but commonly fall off into the environment everywhere the pet goes
- ❖ The flea life cycle includes a pupae stage (cocoon), during which time; no insecticide can easily kill it. Therefore, it is important to spray the premises for fleas on several occasions.
- ❖ If enough fleas are on the pet, it may die from anemia
- ❖ The egg of the tapeworm can live inside of the flea and once ingested by your pet, they may become infested with an intestinal tapeworm
- ❖ The adult flea itself can live for 6 months (laying eggs every day)
- ❖ An adult female flea will consume 15 times her weight!
- ❖ A newly emerged flea can live 3-5 weeks without a blood meal



## Troublesome ticks

Normally rare to find ticks in winter, we continued to pull ticks off of some pets every month this winter. Ticks can spread diseases such as Lyme Disease, Ehrlichia, Rocky Mountain Spotted fever and Anaplasmiasis. Some female ticks, when attached, can cause a condition of paralysis for the pet (or human) and even death if not removed. Many flea products do not kill ticks. According to Dr. Dryden, a well-known parasitologist, the best tick control method is a tick collar for dogs. This is not the typical flea and tick collar normally found, but one specific to repel ticks. Unfortunately, it cannot be applied to a cat as their sensitive bodies find the chemical in it to be toxic to the cat. Canine Advantix will not only kill, but also repel ticks (again a dog only product). Frontline Plus can be used for both species and will kill the tick, but only after it has been on the pet for a sustained length of time. If you live in an area where ticks are known to be, please call us for advice as to which product would be best for your pet.

## Promotional Offers

Many companies offer promotional deals on their flea and tick products. Those currently available include:

Frontline Plus, buy 3 doses get one free or buy 6 and get 2 free

Advantage or Canine Advantix: buy 4 doses get one free or buy 6 and get 2 free doses

Trifexis, \$10 rebate off the purchase of a 6 month supply or \$15 rebate off of a 12 month supply

These offers provide a significant savings and can only be redeemed if the purchase was made through your veterinarian. Please let us know the environment in which your pet lives so we can recommend the safest and most cost efficient product for your summer flea and tick needs.

## GERIATRIC PETS NEED SPECIAL ATTENTION

**Any cat or dog over the age of 7 years is considered a geriatric animal.**

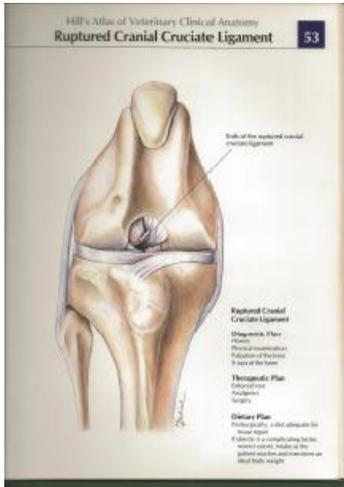
Just like we are more likely to develop health issues as we age, so are our pets. As a physical exam can only reveal part of the overall health, we also recommend geriatric blood and urine testing to look for underlying problems while they are not severe enough to become life threatening. Both kidney failure and liver failure will only show symptoms of disease AFTER 75% of those cells have been damaged. If caught in the early phases, we have a much better chance to stop or at least slow down the disease process. Geriatric conditions which may not be visible on exam but may be diagnosed with other testing include but are not limited to:

Diabetes mellitus	Anemia, low proteins
Hyperthyroidism or Hypothyroidism	Hypertension (high blood pressure)
Renal Failure or Disease	Glaucoma or Uveitis (low eye pressure)
Liver Failure or Disease	Cancers
Gall Bladder disease	Pancreatitis

Since our pets age much faster than a human, things can change very quickly and therefore, biannual exams are recommended for any pet over 8 years old.

## THE ANTERIOR CRUCIATE LIGAMENT RUPTURE

Animals, just like people have a ligaments and tendons to hold their muscles and skeleton together. There are 2 ligaments within the stifle (knee joint) that crisscross. The foremost one of those is the anterior cruciate (also called cranial cruciate) ligament. In predisposed dog breeds, this ligament becomes weak and is likely to break. This occurs most often when the dog has been running and turns quickly but can also occur for no apparent reason. Once this ligament has torn, the joint becomes unstable and every time the dog tries to step down, the upper bone (femur) slides forward. This is what veterinarians look for when trying to diagnose if the dog has torn an ACL. Cats may also tear this ligament, but usually only after a traumatic injury like being hit by a car.



There are several different methods use to “fix” the torn ACL. These include specialized surgeries using bone plates and screws to methods that simply stabilize the joint while the body builds up enough scar tissue to permanently support the joint again.

Signs of a torn ACL are usually a sudden onset of three legged lameness of a rear leg. If your dog has experienced any significant lameness for more than 3 days, please schedule an appointment to have one of our doctors take a feel of the joint for this instability. Treatment options and costs can be discussed in further detail at that time.

## CREEKSIDE CASE OF THE MONTH

An older female dog, unspayed, was presented with a history of lethargy, panting, drinking more and urinating more than normal for 2 days. The physical exam revealed a distended abdomen, pale gums, increased respiratory rate and fever. Blood work revealed anemia and a very high white blood cell count indicating infection. Radiographs were taken and a fluid filled mass was confirmed on x-rays. A diagnosis was made of pyometra (infected uterus). As the uterus can rupture at any time, she was immediately taken to surgery. An i.v. catheter was placed. I.V. fluids, antibiotics, fever reducer and pain relievers were immediately started. Anesthesia was induced and she was placed on a computerized anesthetic monitoring system. Her abdomen was shaved and prepped for surgery. One of our veterinarians did an exploratory laparotomy (opened the entire abdomen) and removed a very large, pus filled uterus. Our technicians weighed the removed organ at 14.6 pounds! The abdomen was examined and flushed with sterile saline prior to closing. She has made a full recovery and was back home with her loving family the following day.



*This dog's uterus should have been no more than 1" in diameter for each uterine horn. As you can see, it has been stretched far larger and filled with pus!*

Although this case has a happy ending, uterine infections are very common among older dogs. They tend to become rather acutely ill, drink more water, decrease in appetite is noted with fever. A pyometra is considered a life-threatening situation and if not immediately treated, the animal may die. Both cats and dogs can develop this, so please have your pet spayed.

## FELINE ALLERGIES PART 2

### What are allergies and how do they affect cats?

One of the most common conditions affecting cats is allergy. An allergy occurs when the cat's immune system "overreacts" to foreign substances called allergens or antigens. Signs may include: itching of the skin, either localized or all over the cat's body, coughing, sneezing, wheezing, ocular (eye) discharge, and even vomiting, flatulence or diarrhea.

There are four known types of allergies in the cat: contact, flea, food, and inhalant. Each has common clinical signs and unique characteristics. In our last edition we discussed the first two types of allergies known to felines. This time we will discuss inhalant and food allergies. (Please see our last newsletter for the former types)

### Inhalant Allergy

Inhalant allergy or atopy is estimated to be the third most common type of allergy in cats. Cats may be allergic to tree pollens (cedar, ash, oak, etc.), grass pollens (especially Bermuda), weed pollens (ragweed, etc.), molds, mildew, and the house dust mite. Many of these allergies occur seasonally, such as ragweed, cedar, and grass pollens. However, others are with us all the time, such as molds, mildew, and house dust mites. When humans inhale these allergens, we express the allergy as a respiratory problem. Atopy is sometimes called "hayfever." The cat's reaction, however, usually produces severe, generalized itching. Cats with allergies may also develop open sores in the mouth.

Treatment depends largely on the length of the cat's allergy season. It involves one of two approaches.

The first approach involves the use of steroids and shampoos. Steroids will dramatically block the allergic reaction in most cases. If steroids are appropriate for your cat, you will be instructed in their proper use and side effects.

Some cats are helped considerably by a hypoallergenic shampoo. It has been demonstrated that some allergens may be absorbed through the skin. Frequent bathing will reduce the amount of antigen exposure through this route. In addition to removing surface antigen, bathing alone will provide some temporary relief from itching and may allow the use of a lower dose of steroids.

The second approach to inhalant allergy treatment is desensitization with specific antigen injections or "allergy shots". This is not to be confused with injections of corticosteroids. Once the specific sources of allergy are identified, very small amounts of the antigen are injected weekly. This is in an attempt to reprogram the cat's immune system. Although desensitization is the ideal way to treat inhalant allergy, it does have some drawbacks and may not be the best choice in certain circumstances. Success rate varies, but the majority of cats do get some benefits.

A new product, called Atopica has proven some success in treating allergies in cats by using cyclosporine. This drug is considered an immunosuppressant but does not have all the side effects of corticosteroids. We have had great success in treating dog allergies with this and a new product is now available in liquid form for cats.

### Food Allergy

Although cats can have food allergies, they are not nearly as common as other forms. It is however, a very easy test to feed them a hypoallergenic diet and nothing else for 6 full weeks to see if they respond. Those few cats who do have food allergies will then only need a special diet and the expensive testing and treatments for allergies can be avoided. Many hypoallergenic diets are available. Please ask us what would be most appropriate for your cat.

Or current resident

Creekside Animal Hospital  
2840 Schuyler Avenue  
Lafayette, IN 47905

Bulk Mailing  
Presorted  
Permit #81

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND "THE FINE PRINT"

We hope you have found the newsletter to be helpful and informative. If you have any questions or concerns please call our office at: (765)742-0140. Our hours of operation are Monday - Friday 7:30am - 6:00pm and Saturday 8:00am - 12:00pm.

If you do not want to receive further newsletters from Creekside please send us an email at [CreeksideAH@gmail.com](mailto:CreeksideAH@gmail.com) and let us know you want to unsubscribe from the newsletters. We will take you off the mailing list.

Please note that while we always strive to help our clients learn as much as possible to help provide them with the knowledge and tools to give their pets the best quality of life, the newsletter is not a replacement for medical attention. While our goal is to give the best possible medical treatment at a reasonable price we cannot treat your pets over the phone or via email. This newsletter is intended for informational purposes only.