

Hollywood Insider 2016

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Why Is It Recommended to Spay or Neuter Your Pets?

It seems like a pretty normal thing, to have your dog or cat spayed or neutered when they are young. However, many pet owners choose not to, for various reasons such as post-surgery weight gain. However, many people don't know the benefits of spaying and neutering and why it is actually very important to have these procedures done at an early age.

First, the obvious reason most people have their pets spayed and neutered is to prevent unwanted litters. Of course, puppies and kittens are very cute, but then you have to find good homes for all of them, and hope that they get spayed or neutered or else those animals will produce more litters and on and on. There are over 5 million dogs and cats in animal shelters nationwide already looking for homes – so many that over 60% of them are euthanized each year. Let's not add to that number!

Second, it is true that spaying or neutering can alter behaviors. But this has more of a good outcome than bad. For example, neutering a male dog at or around 6 months of age can modify certain male behaviors such as marking territory, mounting, and aggression (although obedience training will help improve aggression outcomes along with neutering).

Third, neutering a male dog will help keep him from roaming away from home. 9 out of 10 dogs that are hit by cars are intact male dogs, who most likely

escaped from home in search of an intact female dog in heat. Neutering will calm those hormones and help keep your dogs at home!

Fourth, spaying a female dog or cat drastically decreases her chances of developing mammary cancer later in life. Each heat cycle she goes through puts her more at risk.

Fifth, spaying will 100% prevent pyometra (infection of the uterus) which they are more prone to in the diestrus phase of the heat cycle, or soon after coming out of heat. Yes, spaying may make a female gain a little weight due to hormonal changes, but coupling this with diet changes and exercise can easily prevent obesity.

Sixth, neutering your male dog or cat will 100% prevent testicular cancer and will drastically decrease his chances of developing prostate problems later in life.

Lastly, spaying your female dog will prevent her from going into heat twice a year! No more diapers or messy clean-ups! Not to mention, you will keep the roaming male dogs away from your yard. We recommend spaying or neutering between 6 months of age and a year. We do require pets to be up-to-date on all vaccines prior to the spay or neuter surgery. We also require a heartworm test for dogs prior to surgery if the pet has not been tested recently or been on prevention regularly. A pet with

heartworms is at a greater risk under anesthesia, and while we can still perform surgery, we need to know the pet's heartworm status beforehand.

For cats, we also require all vaccines to be up-to-date. We also require an FeLV/FIV test prior to surgery. We need to know whether they could have one of these immune deficiency diseases before having surgery.

If you have any questions about surgery, check our new website <http://natchitoches.petstar.vet> where you can also find estimates for prices. Or, give us a call at 318-352-1164!

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The “Bark” Around Town

Upcoming events in December:

Hope For Paws:

Dec 5th – Jazz for Pups! NSU Jazz Combos 7:30-8:30 @Magale Recital Hall

Dec 15th – Chill'a Give Back Night 4:00 – 10:00

Natchitoches Humane Society:

Dec 3rd – Christmas Festival Parade Float

Dec 6th – NHS Night Out with Cane's @ Raising Cane's 4:00 – 8:00

Dec 7th – Puppies & Papers @ NSU Alumni Square 11:30 – 3:30

Dec 10th – Adoption Day 10:00 – 2:00 and Photos with Santa 11:00 – 2:00

Dec 15th – Drawing for Split the Pot Winner

Glaucoma in Pets

Most of you have heard of Glaucoma in humans, but did you know that dogs can be affected by this disease too? Glaucoma is a very painful eye condition in which pressure builds up within the eyeball itself.

The size and shape of a normal eye is maintained by fluid within the eyeball. Fluid is constantly being produced by the ciliary body within the eyeball. This fluid, also called aqueous humor, contains nutrients and oxygen that are used by other structures within the eye. Excess fluid that is not used normally drains out (which causes tear staining on white-haired dogs). Tear staining is normal – this means that the eye is draining properly. As long as production of fluid and drainage of fluid are equal, the pressure within the eye (intraocular pressure) will remain normal. If for whatever reason

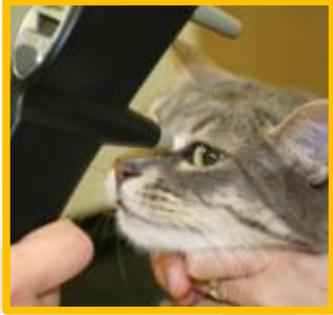
this balance is thrown off, pressure will start to build up in the eye. This is what is known as Glaucoma.

Glaucoma can be primary or secondary. Primary Glaucoma is pressure build-up in a healthy eye. Some breeds are pre-disposed to drainage problems and therefore are more prone to Glaucoma. Secondary Glaucoma is pressure build-up due to disease or injury to the eye. Secondary Glaucoma is much more common than primary Glaucoma. Severe inflammation (conjunctivitis) or severe eye infections can result in scar tissue which blocks drainage, resulting in pressure build-up. Other causes can be tumors, intraocular bleeding, or damage to the lens.

A pet owner may first notice eye pain. Your pet may rub at

his eye or squint constantly. Also, excessive watering or physical swelling or bulging of the eye ball may be seen. You may notice a cloudy appearance to the eye as well.

Blindness can occur very quickly with Glaucoma unless the intraocular pressure is reduced ASAP. Some treatments are life long and may include eye drops several times a day. Sometimes, surgery can be done by a veterinary ophthalmologist. It is extremely important to treat Glaucoma at the very first signs.



Montey had his intraocular pressure checked with the Tonovet

Reptile Care By Monika in Ruston

Reptiles come in many shapes, sizes, colors, and are fascinating pets to own. Reptile care can be challenging. Yet, one of the greatest rewards of owning a reptile is conquering this challenge. Watching your pet thrive in an environment that you provided is quite fulfilling. Providing the proper diet is essential for your pet to grow properly and exhibit colorations that are, in some cases, spectacular. If you are interested in owning a reptile as a pet, the most important thing you can do to prepare yourself is RESEARCH.

Different reptiles have different requirements. Some reptiles are adapted to desert environments while others are adapted to tropical environments. It is important to provide a habitat of an adequate size. You can buy a juvenile blue tongued skink which fits in your hand, yet this juvenile can eventually grow up to 2 ft. in length!

Next, you must provide the proper temperature, lighting, substrate, water, and humidity for your reptile's habitat. It is also necessary to provide the proper diet for your reptile. Some reptiles are strictly carnivores, some

reptiles are insectivores, and some reptiles supplement their diet with fruits. Some reptiles require the insects/fruits they consume be dusted in a vitamin/mineral supplement.

Owning a reptile is a rewarding experience. Yet, prior to purchasing a reptile as a pet, it is necessary to do some homework. RESEARCH the reptile's habitat size, habitat requirements, and dietary requirements. Once you have educated yourself fully, there will be no doubt you can provide an enriching habitat for your pet to enjoy for years to come.

"The most important thing you can do to prepare yourself is RESEARCH"



Mango,
the Leopard Gecko

Ask the Doctor!

Q: Now that my cat is getting older, what are some signs to watch for to help me decide if my cat is in pain?

A: Unfortunately, cats are very good at hiding their pain, discomfort, and disease processes making it difficult to catch these issues early. Luckily, there are subtle signs that can alert you to a possible problem with your feline companion. A decreased appetite is a common sign associated with many disease processes in both cats and dogs. A cat in pain either from arthritis or other internal disease processes will most likely have a decreased appetite. Just like with us when we are painful, our favorite foods may not be enough to spark an appetite. Hiding is another sign that most cat owners will associate with normal behavior of their cat. While all cats love to have a safe hiding spot, and will spend time in that spot most days, hiding excessively should clue you in that something is wrong. If you notice that your cat is hiding in an unusual spot or hiding more often than usual, something may be bothering your furry companion. Think of things such as pain, excessive stress, or a disease process that may leave your cat feeling unwell or scared. Most cats are very good at keeping up their good looks by grooming their luxurious coat; as most cat owners are very familiar with those wonderful hair balls. A decrease in grooming, or only grooming the hair coat to a certain point could be a sign of pain or a disease process. Cats require a lot of flexibility and muscle strength to contort their bodies for grooming. When cats are painful or arthritic they will no longer want to bend their bodies to groom adequately. You may notice matting, dry brittle coat, or areas that your cat just cannot groom anymore due to discomfort. Lastly, a cat that cannot jump up on furniture or that uses extra obstacles to get to their desired location are signs that their joints may be too painful to make a big jump. All cats are remarkable in their ability to make high and long distance jumps. A cat that cannot or is unwilling to make those daring jumps are telling you that arthritis may be making them uncomfortable. You know your cat best, so if you are noticing any of these signs or have other concerns, an exam is a non-invasive first step to address these concerns. The earlier that these issues are addressed the more comfortable and happy your cat will be.

~Dr. Janie Dufrene

Case Story – Charlie and the Strange Event of Icterus

Charlie is a spayed 5-year-old English Setter that presented to Petstar Animal Care of Natchitoches in August because she would not eat and was vomiting and lethargic. Her owner was working in town but resides in Oklahoma. Dr. Landry examined her and found her to be extremely icteric. The whites of her eyes and her gums had a yellow discoloration. This can be due to either break down of red blood cells (termed hemolysis) or liver disease. Her abdomen was a little tender on palpation but there were no significant abnormalities felt. We performed blood work that revealed that all of her liver enzymes were at least 10 times normal and her red blood cell count was normal. Abdominal radiographs did not show any evidence of liver enlargement. Supportive care was begun with Charlie which involved intravenous fluids, Cerenia to prevent vomiting, and an antibiotic to prevent infection in the damaged liver. She was also placed on a liver antioxidant medication called Denamarin to also prevent further damage to the liver. Dr. Landry talked with her owner about potential causes of the liver disease, such as gall bladder or bile duct problems, toxins (sago palm, mushrooms, medications), infections, or cancer. Dr. Landry

instructed him that an ultrasound of the liver with aspirates or biopsy would be needed to try to determine the cause of the liver disease. Her wonderful owner elected to go to the LSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital to have these procedures performed.

The ultrasound of the liver only revealed that it was smaller than normal and that there was some isolated pancreatitis and peritonitis present. A needle aspirate revealed a lymphocytic infiltrate that could have been inflammatory or possible cancerous, so a liver biopsy was performed via a laparoscope. The biopsy revealed that there was severe cholestasis, or impaired bile flow, and low grade hepatitis that was likely due to some previous toxic or inflammatory event. LSU continued supportive care and also added a medication to improve bile flow through the liver. Thankfully, Charlie began showing signs of improvement on the fifth day that she was hospitalized and began eating a little and became more energetic. She continued to improve and was discharged two days later.

Unfortunately, Charlie had a stall in her recovery about six days after she was discharged from LSU. She

began vomiting again and would not eat. Dr. Landry repeated blood work on Charlie and found that her liver enzymes were continuing to improve but she now had an extremely elevated white blood cell count and some elevated pancreatic enzymes. A canine pancreatic lipase test was performed and indicated that Charlie had developed pancreatitis, which is inflammation and infection of the pancreas. Dr. Landry gave her an injection of a broad-spectrum antibiotic and Cerenia to stop the vomiting. She ate a little the next day and was placed on oral medications to continue treatment for pancreatitis, and she continued improvement. On her last recheck, her white blood cell count and liver enzymes had normalized and her pancreatic enzymes were improved. On our last conversation with her owner, he says that Charlie is energetic, eating well, and back to her normal happy self.



Charlie's Eye, below, showing the yellow part where it should be white

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Give Your Pet the STAR
Treatment



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Coming Next Month

Itchy Pets

Luxating Patellas

Meet Our Staff

Meet the Shiba Inu

At PetStar, our primary focus is to provide you with the most advanced and compassionate veterinary care. Our dedicated veterinary team members cater to your pet's needs in a new, state-of-the-art facility. We have two staff veterinarians supported by a team of well-trained and caring assistants and administrative staff. PetStar offers a unique combination of general veterinary care and boarding, as well as advanced procedures in small animal medicine, surgery and dentistry.

The PetStar Newsletter is dedicated to each of our friends that we have lost along the way. It has been a pleasant journey, and you will always be a part of the PetStar family. You will remain forever in our hearts.

Natchitoches Humane Society Pet of the Month!

"Berry"

Berry wants to be your new best friend! Berry is a young energetic Leopard Cur. He is scheduled to be neutered at PetStar and up to date on his shots. Berry has some special needs but nothing that would stop anyone from welcoming him into their family FOREVER. If you are interested in adopting this loyal and fun companion, e-mail natchitocheshumane@yahoo.com and fill out the questionnaire on the NHS website www.natchitocheshumane.com under adoptions.



Meet the Maine Coon!

This breed actually originated in the state of Maine. It is known for its large size and thick double coat, which is suited well for the climate of Maine.

Maine Coons are people friendly but also okay with being independent. They generally want to be where their owners are, will come when called, and can be taught to play fetch. Some even enjoy water and like to go for an occasional swim!

Maine Coons are typically gentle mannered, highly intelligent, able to learn

tricks, and laid back. They can also be quite talkative.



Photo courtesy of ePet Health

The thick coat of the Maine Coon will become matted if not brushed regularly. There are about 75 different coat color combinations! Wow!

Breed Characteristics:

Life expectancy: 10-15 years

Weight: avg. 17 lbs

Colors: 75 color combinations!

Other Names: Coon Cat, Gentle Giant