



Arbor Animal News

A Quarterly publication from Arbor Animal Clinic

October 15, 2013

October is Dental Month:



October is here again and that means our Dental Month Specials are once again available to you and your pets. Although February is the designated National Dental Month, we began offering a second month in October each year. Both October and February book up fast, so schedule early so you don't miss out on the savings.

Dental disease continues to be the number one health problem our dogs and cats face. Our clinic sees many stages of dental disease. We often refer to the procedure as "a dental" but this can be anything from an annual dental prophylaxis which is just a teeth cleaning and polishing to prevent further problems all the way to patients who have to have many teeth removed due to advanced periodontal disease. This may involve extensive oral surgery and expense. Some dogs (usually large breeds) never have significant dental disease their whole lives. However, some dogs (usually smaller breeds), and many cats develop plaque and gingivitis by age two or three that will lead to periodontal disease and tooth loss if not treated. Cats can also develop a unique tooth disease, FORL, or Feline Osteoclastic Resorptive Lesions, which are cavity-like lesions which are very painful and ultimately lead to tooth loss. Unfortunately, we also see the consequences of untreated dental disease which often presents as chronic bacterial infections of the heart valves, kidneys, or liver. This can be fatal and is preventable with routine dental exams and treatment as needed.

We are committed to keeping our patients healthy by including an oral exam with each pet's annual exam. Often a simple cleaning is recommended, however some patients will need a cleaning followed by X-Rays to see if tooth root loss or abscess warrants more extensive work or tooth extractions. Our doctors and technicians are very proficient in this important area of veterinary medicine and we are proud to offer you these discount savings on the reverse of this newsletter.

Doctors corner:

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus, or FIV, is a virus in the same family of viruses as HIV in humans. FIV is not transmissible to humans and HIV is not transmissible to cats. FIV is found all over the world and is found in 1.5% to 3% of healthy cats in the United States. It is most common in outdoor cats.

The most common way for a cat to get infected with FIV is by being bitten by a cat who carries the virus. Luckily, it is not spread through nonaggressive or casual contact with other cats.

If a cat is exposed through a bite wound, they may experience a fever or swollen lymph nodes, although this stage may go unnoticed. Cats may live for years without any noticeable effects of the virus but over time their immune system becomes compromised. This may show up in many different ways such as fever, poor appetite, skin problems, inflammation of the mouth and gums, weight loss, diarrhea, bladder problems, neurologic diseases or certain cancers. The average life expectancy from the time of diagnosis for FIV is five years.

We diagnose FIV in cats with a simple blood test. We recommend testing all cats and kittens when they are acquired and sick cats who may have been exposed. It can take months for antibodies to be present so it may be appropriate to retest a cat after an initial test is negative.

Although a vaccine for FIV has been developed and is on the market, **our doctors do not recommend the FIV vaccine.** The vaccine is only helpful for one strain of the virus and this strain has not been found in Texas. The vaccine will cause a cat to test positive and cannot be distinguished from a truly positive cat creating a particularly difficult situation for shelters. Fortunately, the vaccine is not in common use in Texas. (Continued)



FIV (Continued)

If a cat is positive for FIV, we recommend that it be kept indoors to prevent exposure to other cats and decrease the risk to the cat for other communicable diseases. An FIV positive cat can live with other cats without problems unless the FIV + cat is likely to fight with the other residents.

FIV should not be confused with FeLV or Feline Leukemia Virus. This more common virus is usually tested for at the same time as FIV. Cats testing negative for FeLV can be vaccinated against it and protected. Some good news for cat owners!

Did You Know?

- 1) Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) was discovered in 1965.
- 2) FeLV is the cause for the most common cancers in cats (Lymphosarcoma).
- 3) A commercially available vaccine for FeLV became available in 1985.
- 4) FIV was first identified in 1986.
- 5) It was a veterinarian working for the Centers for Disease Control that first characterized the Human Immunodeficiency Virus as a retrovirus.