



Arbor Animal News

A Quarterly publication from Arbor Animal Clinic

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www.arboranimalclinic.com



Dental Month: February 2009

This is our fifth year to participate in the annual "Dental Month". The American Veterinary Dental Society designated February as Dental Month to focus the attention of pet owners and Veterinarians on the importance of regular pet dental care. This is because dental disease is the number one medical problem in dogs and cats and often leads to many other health problems. It is estimated that periodontal disease affects 85% of all dogs by the age of three. This is especially true in small breed dogs and may cause kidney disease and heart disease. This happens when the overgrowth of bacteria in the mouth is absorbed into the blood stream daily from the gumline and causes tiny infections in the kidneys and on the edges of the mitral valve in the heart. A heart murmur in a dog is often the earliest clue that this is occurring. Unfortunately, by the time lab tests show kidney problems, the damage to the kidneys is often severe and permanent. That is why we recommend dental cleanings (often needed annually for small breed dogs) to prevent serious dental problems.

Dental health for pets starts with an exam of the oral cavity. We do dental exams during your pet's annual visit, but it can be scheduled at anytime. If needed, a dental cleaning in our clinic will be recommended. As general anesthesia is necessary to do a thorough cleaning, options for blood testing to be done prior to the procedure is recommended by our doctors.

In addition to veterinary dental cleaning, home dental care is essential for prevention. Our doctors recommend daily tooth brushing. This is especially necessary for small dog breeds. We carry tooth brushes, pet toothpaste, tartar control foods and treats, rinses, and other products to use at home on your dog or cat. You can schedule an appointment to go over the home care options with our staff and allow us explain how to get you started. With some time and patience, you will be making a difference in no time!

What's News:

A giant Thank You! To all of our clients who participated in our Photos with Santa "Fun Raiser" We raised \$229 for EmanciPet non-profit spay/neuter organization and made some wonderful Christmas photos. Santa was very impressed with how cooperative and sweet all the "children" were for their photos and he hopes that each of them got what they asked for on Christmas.

We also sold calendars for EmanciPet again this year and appreciate everyone's support. All calendars were sold and 100% of the proceeds went to EmanciPet. Dr. Hartwell served the last two years on their Board of Directors and is now a member of their Advisory Board. We continue to sponsor a kennel at the Austin Humane Society and stay committed to animal issues and charities in the Austin area.

Staff Notes:

We have had several staff changes since I last reported. Our Head Receptionist, Deborah Beosch, has moved to Houston to join her fiancé. Kimberly Bundrick has also left Arbor to return to Seattle, Washington. We will miss both of them. We are proud to announce that Sarah Roberson has been named our Head Receptionist, and Mali Voglund (pronounced "Molly") has become our newest receptionist. Jody Adams is now our Kennel Manager. He oversees all boarding patients and makes sure that they have a good time when they stay. He is also a Veterinary Assistant, so you will see him assisting doctors in Exam Room visits and with hospitalized patients. Joseph Blackmon has joined our staff as our newest Animal Caretaker. Finally, two of our Veterinary Technicians, Tracy Mason and Stormy Shipman, have been chosen to join our outstanding Surgery and Anesthesia Department.

We are proud of the team of fine individuals that we have assembled to care for your dogs and cats, thanks to our hard-working Hospital Manager, Nancee Swanson. And what makes all of this possible is our incredibly gifted doctors. They are well-trained, highly skilled, and dedicated to serving each patient and client to the best of their abilities. **Dr. Laurie Dulaney, Dr. John Faught, Dr. Rebecca Davies, and Dr. Abby Stephens** are what make Arbor Animal Clinic the exceptional veterinary practice that it is. We are fortunate to have such fine doctors and they are fortunate to have such wonderful clients!

Doctor's Corner:

I hope that each of you had a great Holiday Season and I hope that this new year will bring you many blessings. We are in an uncertain time with the financial challenges that face all Americans.

Many of us will be watching our budgets very closely in 2009. I want our clients to know that we understand that veterinary medicine can be expensive.....especially when our pets are faced with serious illness or surgery. We will continue to offer our Calendar Savings to help you save, as well as continuing our emphasis on disease prevention which is so important in the life of your pet. We also have Care Credit (a no-interest payment plan) which can come in handy for those large or unexpected bills.

Our philosophy has always been that, as vets, we want to offer you the very best care for your dogs and cats and this can include diagnostics or treatments which are expensive. Our philosophy is also to give you the best information and guidance that we can and support the choices that you make because they are yours to make. Our doctors do everything from routine care to cancer chemotherapy and sophisticated surgeries and diagnostic procedures. However, veterinary medicine is not a "one size fits all" kind of profession and we understand that sometimes there are choices that our clients must make on what they want for their pet. The important thing to me personally, as a vet, is the relationship we have with our clients. This might involve an understanding that "all that can be done" is what an owner wants or it might mean understanding that an owner wants to try the very least costly option first even if there is some risk in that option. The most important part is helping you understand the options and honoring your decision. The relationship is important because there is usually no "right" or "wrong".....just some tough decisions. All of us love our pets and want to do our best in caring for them. This is why it is so important that vets have that human connection because the humans have to make such important decisions from time to time. We will do our very best to help you understand and make those choices and together we will have a wonderful year with happier and healthier pets.

