

Lakeland Veterinary Hospital

www.lakelandvet.net



7372 Wolda Road • Baxter, MN 56425 • (218) 829-1709

Spring 2007

Heartworm Disease Continues to be a Problem

By Matt Eberts, DVM

Heartworm disease continues to be a problem in the lakes area. This is a parasite that is spread by mosquitoes and, if left untreated, will kill your dog. The number of heartworm cases we see at Lakeland Veterinary Hospital has been very steady for the past 4 years. Fortunately, we have some great products that can prevent this infection.

The most important step you need to take with your dog is to put them on Heartgard Plus starting on June 1st. This medication is given once a month, June through November. It is vital to use this medication because heartworm disease is much easier to prevent than it is to treat. Heartgard Plus also kills two of the most common intestinal worms, so it controls a variety of parasites in addition to heartworms. Based on the biology of

the heartworm, in this area of the country you only need to give the medication for 6 months to protect your pet. If you travel south during the winter, let us know so we can modify our plans to protect your dog.

*Catching infections early
allow us to prevent
as much damage as possible*

The second important step in managing heartworm disease is to test your dog once a year for heartworm infection. If the medication is started late, if a dose is forgotten, or if your dog vomits up the medication and no one sees it, your dog may become infected. By the time heartworm infection causes your dog to show signs, the worms

have already caused permanent damage. Catching infections early allow us to prevent as much damage as possible. The test is a blood test and takes about 8 minutes to get results.

Cats are at risk for heartworm infection, too. In the past we haven't diagnosed heartworm infection in cats, but with each summer getting hotter and longer, the risk is increasing. Fortunately, there are new tests in development that should help us to find heartworm infection in cats. Please talk to one of our veterinarians to determine if your cat should be on heartworm prevention as well.

Please don't forget to get your Heartgard Plus by June 1st. This will allow us to protect your family's friend from a very serious disease!

To Breed or Not to Breed

By Colleen Williams, CVT

Sometimes people will express an interest in breeding their family pet so the children have a chance to witness the miracle of birth or perhaps they want to replicate a beloved pet. Although it may seem appealing to raise a litter of these cute little fur balls, there are a few things that one should consider before doing so.

First and foremost, are you able to find good, loving homes? Even though there is nothing cuter than a puppy or kitten, sometimes it is very difficult to find good homes. And, most humane societies are so overcrowded that it is rare that they will take in an entire litter.

Another thing to consider is the possible health risks associated with the gestation & whelping. Are you prepared to pay for a C-section if problems occur during the birthing process? Will your employer allow you time off work to supervise an anxious new mother? Are you prepared to bottle feed in the event that mom has insufficient milk or

wants nothing to do with her pups? These situations can and do happen quite frequently, especially with new moms.

The health status of the parents also needs to be considered. Have they been checked for hip dysplasia? Is there a history of seizures, eye problems, ear problems, skin conditions, etc.? Many health problems we see today can be prevented by careful selection and screening of the parents before choosing to breed. Even a poor temperament can show up in the offspring.

Also, there are vaccines to consider. Both mom and pups should be dewormed and started on heartworm, as well as flea and tick prevention. Some breeds will require tail docking and dewclaw removal.

The bottom line is that breeding should not be taken lightly. It requires careful planning, a lot of time and hard work, and yes – money! The passion of a good breeder should be to promote and improve the quality of the breed, regardless of little or no economic return.

Not always sure what is under all that hair?

By Julie Knowlen, Groomer

Getting your dog or cat groomed at Lakeland Veterinary Hospital doesn't mean that you will just get a haircut or bath for your pet. Many times, our groomers find health problems, that due to thick hair, owners don't always find. They sometimes find skin problems, ear infections, external parasites (fleas or ticks), as well as lumps that may be new and have gone unnoticed since the last grooming.

A big advantage to having your pet groomed at LVH is that if a problem is found, our groomers can make you aware of the problem and your pet can be seen by a doctor that same day. This will result in faster treatment for your pet and will get your pet on the road to recovery!

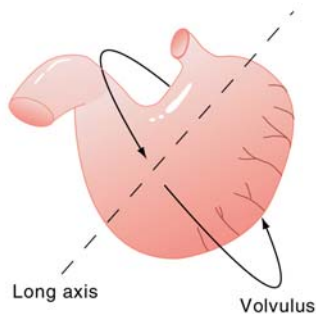
What is Gastric Dilatation-Volvulus (GDV)?

By Craig Reiman, DVM

Gastric dilatation-volvulus (GDV) syndrome is a life-threatening condition where the stomach rotates and is unable to unrotate. The twisting of the stomach makes it impossible to vomit, burp, or empty into the intestines. Gas and fluid build up, and the stomach becomes very bloated. Even with the best and most prompt treatment, approximately 20-45% of dogs die from this condition.

The exact cause is unknown; however, there are some things that make it more likely to occur. The most well known risk factor is breed. Deep chested dogs, such as Standard Poodles, Great Danes, Weimeraners, Saint Bernards, German Shepherds, Doberman Pinschers and Irish and Gordon Setters, are at higher risk. Other risk factors include: exer-

cise after eating a large meal, primary stomach disorders, vomiting, and stress. Male gender, eating once daily, and eating rapidly are also risk factors. Studies have not supported soy-based or cereal-based foods as being risk factors.



There are several things that can be done to reduce the risk for GDV. Feed several small meals. Do NOT use an elevated food bowl (this increases the swallowing of air and can actu-

ally increase the risk). Restrict exercise for 1-2 hours after eating. For breeds that are known to be at higher risk, surgery can be done to help reduce the risk of GDV. This surgery is called Gastropexy. This is where the stomach is stitched to the abdominal wall to prevent it from rotating.

The most notable sign of GDV is the stomach bloating. Other signs include retching, drooling, restlessness, lethargy, stomach pain, arched back, or even collapse.

Treatment for GDV includes stabilization of shock, decompression of the stomach (ideally by placing a stomach tube), followed by surgery to return the stomach to its normal position. After which, the stomach is "tacked" to the body to help prevent the rotation in the future.

Even after the stomach is tacked, GDV recurs in 10-30% of dogs. However, the recurrence rate when stomachs are not tacked is near 80%.

The most common complication following surgery is death. The surgery itself is not complicated. The recovery from anesthesia and the following 24-48 hours are where complications occur. The complications include shock, heart arrhythmias, and infection, just to name a few. Most dogs are hospitalized for 24-48 hours for intensive monitoring to help prevent and/or treat these complications.

If you suspect your dog has GDV, please contact your veterinarian immediately. The sooner it is diagnosed and treated, the better the odds are of a good outcome.

Hair Hair Everywhere!

Is your dog's shedding coat driving you crazy?

By Dianna Anderson, Groomer

If so, bring your dog in to see one of our professional groomers, Julie, Dianna or Karen!

The grooming will start with a deep cleansing Hydrosurge bath, followed by a great smelling leave-in conditioner. As the conditioner is massaged into your dog's skin, it helps to release dead undercoat that needs to come out. Next, we use a high velocity blow dryer to blow out additional hair and water. This also gives us a closer look at your dog's skin to make sure it is healthy. After bathing your dog, we will use several tools, such as the Furminator, brushes and combs to remove any excess hair. Then he will receive another finishing blow dry. Finally, your dog will have its nails trimmed and ears cleaned out.



After all this pampering, is it any wonder that many of our clients call it "a day at the spa"?

Remember, to reduce shedding in between groomings, your dog will need at least 10 minutes of brushing per week at home.

If you have any questions about our grooming services or would like to make an appointment, call 829-6542. Our groomers would love to pamper your pet!

Like our newsletter? Visit us online at www.lakelandvet.net to view other important articles and information!

Lakeland Veterinary Hospital's Staff

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Deb Piepgras, DVM,
Hospital Director
Matt Eberts, DVM,
Medical Director
Craig Reiman, DVM

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Kim Erickson, Hospital Mgr
Jen Waidelich, Kennel Mgr

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Tick-borne Illnesses: Most Common Infectious Diseases Seen at LVH

By Matt Eberts, DVM

Lyme disease and anaplasmosis (formerly called ehrlichiosis) continue to be the most common infectious diseases we see at Lakeland Veterinary Hospital. Over the past 3½ years, we have been conducting research with designed to create better tests for these diseases and give us more understanding on how they impact your pets. Fortunately, this research has brought us a new test, called the 4Dx, and given deeper understanding of these infections.

The 4Dx test is a blood test developed by IDEXX laboratories. This test detects infection with Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, ehrlichiosis and heartworm. With a small amount of blood (3 drops!) and eight minutes, we can tell if your dog has been in-

fectured with any of these parasites. Because these infections are very common in this area, we strongly recommend that all dogs have this test performed



yearly. Around 40% of Lakes area dogs have been infected with Lyme & over 50% have been infected with anaplasmosis.

If your dog is infected with Lyme disease or anaplasmosis, we will go over our options of how we are going to keep your dog healthy. We may recom-

mend treatment or further tests to make sure your family pet is not going to develop disease.

A surprising finding with our research is that dogs infected with both Lyme and anaplasmosis have a much higher risk of developing disease. This is called co-infection and it is very important to catch these as early as possible to avoid sickness.

Both of these infections are spread by the black-legged tick (also called the deer tick). This tick has become more common in our area over the past years. The first step in controlling infection is to use tick control regularly. We recommend Frontline Plus, since this is the safest product for your pet and is water resistant (so you can give baths and let your dogs swim). You will need to be on this from spring

through autumn (usually starting in March through November, possibly even December). Depending on the weather, you may need to use it even longer.

Unfortunately, no tick control is 100%. We also recommend vaccinating your dog for Lyme disease. This will increase their natural immunity to prevent infection. When combined with great tick control, vaccination is a useful tool to prevent Lyme disease. There is no vaccine available for anaplasmosis.

Your dogs are at risk for these parasites, and we now have the ability to screen your pets quickly for multiple infections. All dogs in this area should be tested with the 4Dx every year, have regular tick control from March through November, and be vaccinated for Lyme disease.

What's new at Lakeland Veterinary Hospital?

By Stacy Fetters, Receptionist

As always, our goal is to provide your family with the highest quality care for your pets. This means continuing our staff's education through seminars & special courses, keeping up-to-date on the latest research and findings in veterinary medicine, as well as using technology to the best of our abilities.

In 2006, we adopted a new system of record keeping for all our patients. In the past, each patient had his own file in which medical history, official copies of lab work, surgery reports and other important information from the doctor was hand written. Although this traditional system was functional, its efficiency left something to be desired. For example, each time a patient came in for an appointment or a doctor needed to review the medical history, this file had to be pulled from our extensive filing system. This process was often time consuming. In an attempt to reduce inefficiency, we have begun to

keep all records in an electronic, paperless manner.

Our doctors are now able to enter all your pet's information into our computer system using a specialized set of forms. These forms allow the doctors to make quick notations about all aspects of a patient's examination or treatment without having to retrieve a physical file. Laboratory reports are also inserted into a patient's computerized history. In addition to being convenient for our doctors and hospital staff, this type of filing system makes records significantly easier for others in the veterinary world to read and understand. Consequently, if you need to be referred to a specialist, or move out of town we are able to simply print off your pet's medical history, including lab reports for another veterinarian's reference. No more guesswork about handwriting or spelling!

What does all this mean for you? Now when you call us with a question about your pet's medi-

cation, or which food the doctor recommended at the last visit, the staff member answering the phone will be able to assist you much more quickly. The paperless system puts us only a keystroke away from your pet's complete medical history. This enables us to provide you with the kind of well-informed, efficient customer service we strive



for. All these things add up to more efficient service and faster response time for you. Of course, we still have the original files on hand if it becomes necessary to access previous history.

For those of you with inquiring minds, you may wonder how we can entirely eliminate paperwork. What about the forms and estimates you need to sign or what about records from another

veterinarian you want to keep in your pet's file? We have that covered too! As many of you have already experienced, authorization forms and estimates can now be signed on a tablet style computer. The form you signed will then be permanently attached to your pet's personal record in the computer. This will enable us to view the form at any point in time in the future it might be necessary. As for paperwork you bring from another clinic, this can be scanned into our computer and also attached to your pet's personal file.

We hope the changes you notice with our new filing system will only improve your experiences at Lakeland Veterinary Hospital. As always, our goal is to give you the best we can in customer service and of course the highest quality health care possible. We always welcome your input and feedback, so if you have any comments or concerns, please feel free to let us know.



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Thinking of Getting a New Puppy?

By Gretchen Patrick, CVT

Purchasing a new puppy can be very exciting and also rather nerve wracking - especially if this will be the first time you have ever owned a dog or if it has been several years since owning your last dog. There are many things you will need to consider before acquiring a new puppy:

***Do I want a puppy or an adult dog?** Puppies are fun to watch grow up and train. Adults are usually calmer and have more established behaviors.

***Why am I looking for a dog?** Will it be a hunting, working or house dog?

***What size & breed am I looking for?** Both mixed and pure-bred dogs can have pros and cons. Make sure the size you would like is appropriate for your home and yard.

***Am I willing to train it?** One of the primary reasons for dogs being abandoned or given up for adoption is lack of training! Even a few commands such as sit and down can be a great help.

***Can I take care of a pet financially?** All pets will need annual vaccines, exams & de-worming.

Food and toys are mandatory costs as well. Also, don't forget about unexpected medical expenses.

***Am I willing to have it professionally groomed or do it myself at home?** Many breeds need routine grooming every 6-8 weeks.

***Do I have time to give a dog the love and attention needed?** All dogs need plenty of time with house training, playtime and walks, as well as behavioral training. Some dogs need more attention than others.

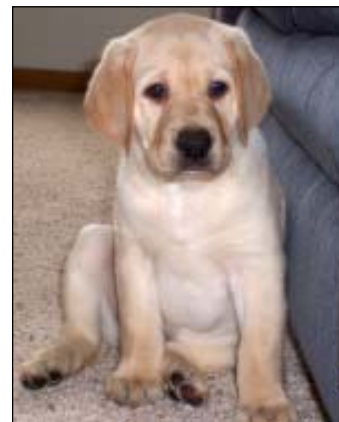
Once you know the time is right to make an addition to your family and have an idea of what size you want, it's time to look at puppies! There are several things to consider and questions to ask the breeder before deciding or choosing a dog. Don't be afraid to "shop around" for puppies before making a final decision.

***What is the temperament of both parents?** Watch for signs of aggressive or nippy behavior, as well as how the dogs act around you in general.

***Are there any health issues or genetic defects?** Examples

would be allergy or skin problems, joint issues, eye, or heart problems.

***If you are considering a hunting breed, were both parents OFA (hip) certified with a rating of good or excellent?** Has either



parent had any shoulder, elbow, or hip problems? Both parents should have their hips checked for dysplasia at 2 years old, prior to breeding. If a dog is going to be used for herding or tracking, have the puppies eyes been checked for defects?

***Do both parents have a good vaccine history, especially the mother?** Since puppies get initial protection from their mother,

this is very important.

***How big are the parents?** While parent size doesn't always determine how big puppies will get, it will at least give you an idea.

***Will they let you see where the parents and puppies are kept?** It's important to see how clean the facility is kept and how the parents are housed.

***How were the parents for training?** If parents were both very difficult to train, chances are the puppies may also be a bit of a challenge.

***How old are the parents?** Large breed females should be 2 years old prior to breeding. Small breed females should go through one normal heat cycle prior to breeding.

***Have the parents had previous litters of puppies?** If so, have there been any behavior or health issues?

There is a lot to think of when picking out a new puppy! If you have any questions, remember you can always call us! To learn more about what to do once you have chosen a new puppy, visit us at www.lakelandvet.net.