

# Introduction

Lakeland Veterinary Hospital, through its doctors and staff, continuously strive to offer our patients and clients the very best medical care and advice that it is possible for us to provide.

We have put together this health notebook to provide you, the pet owner, with as much information as we can, to help guide you in providing your loved pets the care and training they deserve.



No part of this text may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission of Lakeland Veterinary Hospital.

We have exerted every effort to ensure that the information contained in this text is in accord with current recommendations and practice at the time of publication. However, in view of ongoing research and rapid advances in veterinary medicine, information in this publication may change.

Lakeland Veterinary Hospital wishes to acknowledge Nan Boss, DVM for her contribution to this publication.

## **ANIMALS ENRICH OUR LIVES**

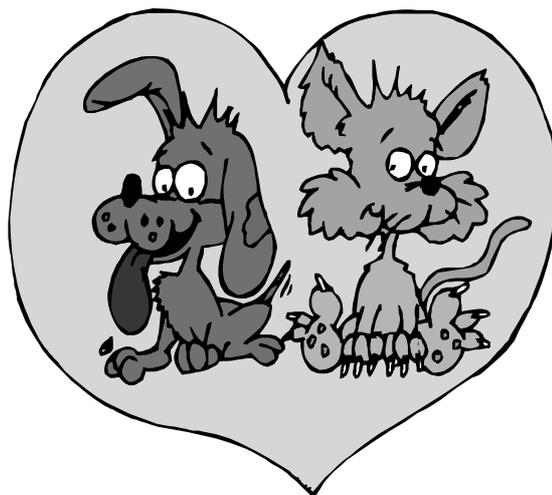
People who own pets live longer, happier, fuller lives. Our pets remind us of what it is to be wild, to be gentle, to be loyal, to trust, to flourish, to slow with age, to die. They connect us to something fundamental in our beings. We are the caretakers of that connection. For all that our pets teach us, for all the love and joy they bring to our lives, they deserve good care – and they rely on us to give it.

## **WHY LIFETIME VETERINARY CARE MATTERS**

The average lifespan of dogs and cats in the United States is 7.4 years. The POTENTIAL life span of the average dog or cat in the United States is 15 years. Comprehensive medical care, good nutrition and proper training allow pets to live up to their potential as long-term family members. In other words, the care you give your pet throughout it's life will determine how long he or she will remain a happy, healthy member of your family.

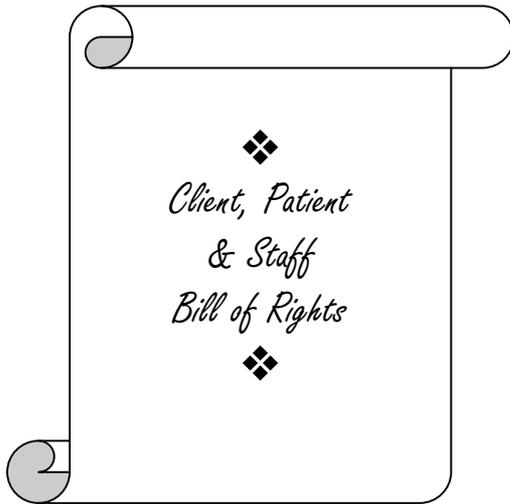
Our goal is to maximize the lifespan and the health of your dog or cat through preventative medical care and nutritional and behavioral counseling. We are advocates for your pet – our job is to advise you as to the best care options available for you and your pet.

Working together as a team, we hope to help our patients and their families spend many happy years together.



# BILL OF RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES

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## **Client Bill of Rights**

**We believe you are always entitled to:**

Friendly, helpful, courteous service

Respect for your time, feelings,  
preferences and wishes

Respect for your right to understand the  
needs of your pet

The right to know the cost of services  
provided, and to receive value for your  
investment in those services

## **Patient Bill of Rights**

**We believe your pet is always entitled to:**

Be treated gently, kindly and with  
compassion

Have wants and needs communicated  
clearly to you, the owner, by our staff

Up-to-date, high-quality care

Be as clean, safe, comfortable  
and pain-free as possible

## **Staff Member Bill of Rights**

**We believe every staff member is  
entitled to:**

Be treated respectfully and courteously  
by both clients, fellow staff  
members, and the doctors

Be listened to

Be accepted by the group

Be praised for work well done

Receive constructive feedback and be  
given the opportunity to grow and improve

Have their personal life and choices  
respected

Make mistakes sometimes, but be allowed  
to learn and grow from them

## Client Responsibilities

**We believe every client is obligated to:**

Have only as many pets as you have the means to take care of

Learn what your pet needs in order to be healthy and well cared for

Invest an appropriate amount of time and effort into training and socializing your pet, so that it can be a well-behaved and enjoyable member of the household

Treat staff members of the hospital with courtesy and respect

Honestly communicate to our staff what level of care you want for your pet

*Provide the pet with at least this minimum standard of care:*

*Adequate shelter, food and water*

*Regular examinations and vaccinations for diseases for which the pet is at risk*

*Parasite prevention and control*

*Spaying and neutering, to prevent health problems and pet overpopulation, unless the pet is to be shown or bred in a responsible manner, i.e. with careful consideration for the health of the parents and the offspring*

*Health care sufficient to prevent pain and suffering, including treatment of medical disease, dental disease and injury*

*Gentle, kind and humane training and treatment*

*To have pain or suffering relieved by gentle euthanasia when necessary*

## Staff Member Responsibilities

**We believe every staff member is obligated to:**

Treat clients and other staff members with respect and courtesy

Work hard and diligently for the betterment of themselves and the practice

Treat every patient kindly and gently

Do everything within their power to maintain the health and happiness of the patients, and to do nothing they can avoid doing that will injure the health of the patients

Do everything in their power to improve the health of the practice, and to do nothing to injure the health of the practice

Keep up-to-date, and maintain and improve their skills



# CARE OF THE SKIN COAT, NAILS AND EARS

## SKIN CARE...

Skin is the heaviest single organ of the body, accounting for about 16% of the total body weight.

The skin has many functions: it prevents water loss; it serves as a sensory organ; it protects the body from impact and friction injuries; it is elastic to allow for swelling; and it protects against ultraviolet rays from the sun. The skin's glands, blood vessels and fatty tissue participate in thermoregulation, metabolism and excretion. The skin is also the body's first defense against disease.

Proper care of your pet's skin and coat is very important to his overall health. Skin and ear problems are among the most common reasons for pet owners to seek veterinary care.

Check your pet's skin often and look for sores, lumps, bald spots, reddened areas and fleas. Call us if you find any abnormalities. Brush and comb your pet regularly to prevent mats and tangles. When brushing, make sure to brush the coat all the way to the skin, not just over the top coat. Matting and tangles generally start near the skin. Start when your puppy is young with short brushing sessions. When possible, get your puppy up off the floor for grooming sessions, onto a non-slip surface. This will give you more control over your puppy. Reward your puppy with praise when he sits still. Choose a time that is just for grooming. Your puppy needs to know that grooming is not the time for play. Be gentle, but firm and give lots of praise when your puppy holds still for grooming. Check with your groomer to see what kind of brush and comb works best with your breed of dog.

How often you bathe your pet will depend on your lifestyle. Once a month is a good rule of thumb for an indoor dog. When your dog smells or looks dirty, it's probably time for a bath.

Be sure to use shampoos made for pets. Human soaps and shampoos are formulated for human skin pH, which is different from that of dogs. Human shampoos usually cause dry, irritated, itchy skin in dogs.

If you need to bathe the face, place a little artificial tears (eye) ointment in each of your pet's eyes before bathing to avoid irritation from soap. Use lukewarm water to bathe your pet and be sure to rinse thoroughly with a spray attachment. Soap residue will cause red, itchy skin. Towel dry your dog and then blow dry if needed.

If you don't have the facilities to bathe your dog yourself, our groomers are equipped to do it for you. Our groomers are also trained to recognize skin, ear and oral diseases that you may be unaware of, thereby giving you an opportunity to have them treated before they become serious. Owners of Poodles, Schnauzers, Cocker Spaniels and other breeds that need regular clipping usually see their groomer every six to eight weeks. A first puppy



grooming is recommended by 8-12 weeks of age, to get your puppy accustomed to clippers, baths, nail trimming, ear cleaning and being away from you. Feel free to call our professional groomers for advice or to schedule an appointment.

Parasites such as fleas or skin problems such as seborrhea or allergies usually require bathing with a special therapeutic shampoo. We can help you choose the product that is best for your situation. Many pets are prone to dry, flakey, irritated skin, especially in the winter when the air is dry. Special shampoos, conditioners and vitamin-fatty acid supplements are all used to alleviate this problem. Your pet will also have a thicker, shinier hair coat when he or she is eating a good quality diet.

## **EAR CARE...**

Regular ear cleaning should also be part of your routine with your dog. Dogs with upright ears, such as German Shepherds, will only need occasional cleaning. Their ears receive plenty of air circulation and resist infections.

Breeds such as Cocker Spaniels and Springer Spaniels often develop serious and chronic ear disease. We recommend regular and thorough cleaning at least once weekly in these breeds. Instill a liberal amount of an ear cleaning solution made for pets. Massage the base of the ear to squeeze the cleaner down the entire length of the ear canal. Allow to shake. Then wipe out any excess with a cotton ball.

If green, yellow or brown discharge appears on the cotton ball, or if the ear canal seems red, sore or swollen, **contact us right away**. Ear infections are very painful to your dog, and treatment is more successful if started early in the disease.

If your dog swims often, regular use of ear cleaning solutions will help prevent infection from too much moisture in the ears. It is also a good idea to place cotton balls in your pet's ears before bathing to avoid getting soap in the ears. Don't forget to take the cotton back out again.

## **NAIL CARE...**

Some dogs wear their toenails down from walking on hard surfaces and never need to have them clipped. Most of us aren't so lucky, and our pets have nails that need regular trimming.

If your pet has white toenails, you will be able to see the pink blood vessel inside the nail. Use caution when trimming nails, as you can cut into the blood vessel, and your pet will bleed. With dark toenails, it's best to let us show you how to trim the nails. Many people prefer to let us or the groomer trim the toenails.

Toenail trimming will be far easier if a puppy is introduced to it slowly and patiently from a young age. The feet should be handled daily, to condition him to having his feet handled, and the nails clipped here and there or filed short with a nail file. Whether or not you plan to trim the nails yourself, you should still go through this process. Your veterinarian or groomer will charge you more for nail trimming if your pet has to be muzzled or requires multiple people to hold it down for the procedure. A little training early on makes nail trimming a quick and painless task for all concerned.



# PREVENTING FLEAS & TICKS

## FLEAS

Fleas are among the most common health problems of dogs and cats. In the long run, it is much easier and more cost-effective to prevent fleas on your pets than to have to treat a major infestation of fleas in your house. Regular use of flea products will take care of the occasional flea your pets may encounter in the yard, and should prevent you from having to spend large sums of money on foggers and exterminators. Treating a bad flea infestation in your house usually costs upwards of \$150.

Fleas will bite your pets, causing an itchy allergic reaction, which can become quite severe. They carry viral and bacterial diseases. In small animals, especially puppies and kittens, the anemia they cause from feeding on the animal's blood can be fatal. They also can carry tapeworms. Tapeworm segments in the stool or around the rectal area look like small grains of rice. If your dog or cat has fleas, chances are good he has tapeworms – and vice versa.

Wildlife, as well as other cats and dogs, bring fleas into your yard. Pets and people can then bring the fleas into the house. Squirrels or mice seeking shelter can also bring fleas into your home. Fleas also travel on their own, at speeds up to as much as a mile an hour. They will hop inside through an open door and window and are often small enough to come through a window screen. Once inside your home, there is no place a flea cannot get to. Adult fleas spend most of their time on our pet, but the remainder of the time, they are roaming your house and laying eggs – thousands of them!



If you've never been lucky enough to see a flea, they are about 1/8 inch long, reddish brown and shaped like a sesame seed with legs. They are usually found on your pet's head, belly or lower back. If you ripple the hair backwards and look at the skin, they can be seen scurrying through the base of the hair coat. The droppings they leave behind can be seen in clusters. They look like grains of pepper. If you place some of these on white paper toweling, wet it and mush it around, it will turn the toweling red. This is because flea droppings contain digested blood. Plain dirt stays black or gray when wet.

## Prevention

Fleas can usually be prevented by treating all pets that go outdoors, so they don't bring reproducing fleas into the house. If you had fleas in previous years, it is wise to spray some insecticide in the house as well, especially on the ground floor near doors and windows. This will kill the occasional flea that hops in on its own.

Many flea products sold in grocery and discount stores are wasting your time and money. Some are even harmful to pets. Most compounds strong enough to be effective are sold only through licensed veterinarians and exterminators, who are properly trained in their use and are regulated by the state and the EPA. Insecticides should be used only according to label directions. Care is needed to ensure that toxicity does not develop due to the concurrent use of other drugs, pesticides or chemicals, or because the compound used was not safe for a particular age or type of animal.

Several different topical-oil products are now available for both dogs and cats. These products are applied to a small area of skin and spread over the whole pet themselves. Some kill ticks as well as fleas, and they can remain effective for 1-2 months. The most effective of these products is Fipronil. It kills both fleas and ticks. It is found in **Parastar Plus** for dogs and **Frontline Plus** for cats, both of which are carried at Lakeland Veterinary Hospital.

Many insecticidal flea collars available in stores are not very effective and often cause irritation to the pet's neck. If you prefer a collar, we recommend **Seresto Collars**. Flea shampoos and soaps are great for cleaning a dog or cat with fleas, but they have no residual effect. They only kill fleas present on the pet at the time the bath is given. As soon as the animal dries off, fleas will hop right back on. For long-term control, you need a product that safely stays in or on the body for days or weeks at a time.

## Products on the Market

There are various products on the market, which have changed the way we deal with fleas. These products are called growth regulators. They don't kill adult fleas, but they break the life cycle by preventing flea eggs from hatching.

Capstar is a tablet that kills fleas rapidly following administration. It is not toxic, but must be given daily, so it is not used for long-term control.

**Parastar Plus** for dogs and **Frontline Plus** for cats contain insecticide. If used monthly as directed, these products WILL prevent your home from being infested by killing adult fleas.

**Sentinel Spectrum** is an oral parasiticide for dogs that contains Lufenuron, an insect growth regulator which prevents flea eggs from hatching. We can also have a version made especially for your cat.

Growth regulators are also present in the house sprays we sell, to help break the fleas' life cycle as well as killing the adult fleas.



# TICKS

While ticks were once considered to only be a nuisance in the area, they are now known to carry several serious diseases. Most people are aware of the role ticks play in spreading Lyme disease, but they also carry the more frequently diagnosed disease Anaplasmosis (previously called Ehrlichiosis) and, on rare occasions, Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

Currently, the best product in our experience is **Parastar Plus** for dogs, and **Frontline Plus** for cats. For ticks, its duration of activity is about one month and has excellent resistance to water, an advantage for sporting breeds. Most flea products kill or repel ticks, but ticks are tougher than fleas. They require higher levels of insecticides to kill them, so flea products usually have to be applied more often to control ticks. These are the safest product available. Side effects in over-the-counter tick preventatives can be severe, especially in cats, and we have seen many cats die by using them.

If you prefer a collar, the longest lasting is a product called the **Seresto Collar**. This can be used on both dogs and cats and is highly effective in prevention and treatment of flea and tick infestations. It last for 8 months, longer than any other collar on the market. Unlike other collars on the market, it is odorless so does not leave your pet with a strong chemical scent.

If you are considering beginning a flea or tick control program for your pets, please consult with us. There are so many products on the market nowadays that it's tough to decide which ones are right for you. We are more than happy to help!



# WORMING

Most puppies and kittens are born with worms! These internal parasites can cause vomiting, diarrhea, weight loss or failure to grow, and even death. Some kinds are also transmissible to humans. **Over 10,000 cases of animal roundworms cause illness in children every year in the United States.** The CDC (Center for Disease Control) recommends that all puppies and kittens receive 3 doses of wormer for roundworm and hookworm. These doses are given at 2-week intervals. Adult pets should be wormed monthly. We recommend all dogs be placed on **Sentinel Spectrum** (prevents heartworm, roundworm, hookworm, whipworm, tapeworm, and fleas). This is the broadest spectrum parasiticide on the market. Cats should take a specially formulated parasiticide that covers for heartworm, roundworms, hookworms, tapeworms, and fleas.

Internal parasites are diagnosed by having a fresh stool sample examined under a microscope by someone here at the veterinary hospital. This should be done as part of a health exam when you obtain a new pet. It should also be done on a yearly basis as part of your dog or cat's annual health exam and vaccinations.

Stool samples should be collected when they are fresh and stored in the refrigerator until they can be brought to the hospital. The sample **MUST NOT** be frozen. A teaspoon or two is all that is necessary.

If a stool sample from your puppy or kitten is found to be positive for worms, the veterinarian will prescribe an effective wormer. Please weigh your puppy or kitten before picking up wormer, to ensure proper dosage. Stool samples should be checked again 4 weeks after the final worming, to ensure that your dog or cat is not being reinfested by his or her environment. For prevention of internal parasites, remove fecal material from your yard regularly and dispose of it.

So that you may better understand the problems internal parasites may cause and what signs to look for, we have included a short description of the six most common types of intestinal parasites:

## **ROUNDWORMS...**

are the most common type of intestinal worm. They are 2-4 inches long and resemble strands of spaghetti. They live in the small intestine and may cause vomiting, diarrhea or weight loss. Larval worms also damage the liver and lungs while migrating through these organs on their way to the small intestine. Roundworms are transmitted via stools of other infected dogs or cats, or through the uterus of the mother dog or cat to her unborn pups or kittens. Entire worms can sometimes be seen in the stools or vomitus of infested animals.

## **HOOKWORMS...**

are half-inch long worms, which attach to the lining of the small intestine, causing blood loss and diarrhea. Puppies & kittens can become infected through the mother's uterus before birth or via her milk after birth. Older animals acquire hookworms through skin contact with the stools of other dogs or cats.

## **WHIPWORMS...**

live in the large intestine. They are not as common as the other intestinal parasites, but the disease they cause can be very serious. Bloody diarrhea and weight loss are the symptoms seen. These worms are transmitted by ingestion of the stools of infested animals. These worms affect dogs only.

## **TAPEWORMS...**

live in the small intestine, where the head attaches to the intestinal wall and produces a chain of segments. Mature segments containing eggs are passed with the stool or may be seen around the rectum. They resemble small grains of rice. They may be acquired by the ingestion of rodents or birds or through the ingestion of fleas. Preventing access to rodents and controlling fleas is essential to preventing tapeworm infestation.

## **COCCIDIA...**

are one-celled protozoal parasites, more like bacteria rather than "worms". Puppies and kittens can pick these up from their mother, and they can also be acquired by eating rabbit or other wildlife droppings. They are treated with antibiotics.

## **GIARDIA...**

are also protozoans. They are very difficult to pick up on a regular stool check. Antibiotics or special wormers kill them, but they are difficult to eradicate completely and often flare up with stress or other intestinal problems. They are contagious to humans and cause vomiting and diarrhea in both people and pets.

## **HEARTWORMS...**

are a deadly parasite carried by mosquitoes. By blood testing your dog each spring and giving preventative medication throughout the mosquito season, you can save your dog from needless suffering and death. Blood tests are often unreliable in cats, but preventative medication is still recommended.

## **OTHERS...**

Many other less common parasites can be found in our area in addition to those already described. Some can be serious.

## **Why risk problems for your pet or for your family?**

We recommend having a stool sample checked for intestinal parasites every year. If the stool sample is positive for intestinal parasites, your pet will need additional deworming to kill adult intestinal worms, or protozoa. Eggs of intestinal parasites survive on grass for long periods of time, so it is very common for dogs and cats to pick up these parasites repeatedly from their yard. Heartworm preventative will help prevent some intestinal parasites.

**REMEMBER TO HAVE A  
STOOL SAMPLE CHECKED ANNUALLY!**

# CHOOSING TO MICROCHIP YOUR PET

Do you love your pet? Would you want your pet returned if it were lost or stolen? Then you need a microchip!

Every day, we receive calls about lost pets. Now we can help. Our hospital can safely and permanently identify your dog or cat. A simple injection of a tiny microchip under the skin gives your pet A LIFETIME OF PROTECTION. Local animal shelters and clinics use a scanner to check stray animals for this device. It could save your pet's life.

The ideal time to implant one of these microchips is while your pet is anesthetized for surgery. There will be no pain from the injection, and you won't need to come in for an additional office visit later.

The price includes registration along with many other benefits (see HomeAgain brochure). Even if your pet is recovered in another state, they will be able to trace him or her straight back to you, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

