

## **Why is my cat vomiting?**

Feline vomiting can be a very frustrating ailment that should never be ignored. Vomiting can be a sign of many diseases including foreign body ingestion and subsequent GI impaction, food sensitivity, liver disease, kidney disease, pancreatitis, parasitic infections, and the list goes on. A visit to your veterinarian is important if your cat's vomiting is happening on a regular basis, or if he/she stops eating. A complete history of your cat's vomiting episodes will be assessed during their physical exam and your veterinarian will make recommendations for diagnostics such as a blood work and /or radiographs.

## **Why is my dog scooting?**

There are several reasons that may cause dogs and sometimes cats to "scoot." Parasites, anal gland abnormalities, allergies and constipation are all probable causes for the behavior. The Bird and Pet Clinic recommends yearly fecal testing on both dogs and cats. Some parasites (tapeworms) may not be easily found on a standard fecal test and often times the segments or egg sacs of tapeworms are visualized around the rectum. They are often described to look like pieces of rice or sesame seeds. Animals get tapeworms from ingesting fleas and wild rodents, so we recommend year round flea prevention for cats and dogs, and appropriate de-worming schedules for outdoor animals that may eat mice and rats. Anal Glands are a pair of scent glands that both dogs and cats have. They are often expressed naturally when your pet defecates, and sometimes when an animal is scared or startled. Some dogs and cats have trouble with their anal glands and need them manually expressed by a Veterinarian or trained Veterinary Technician.

For more information specifically on your pet please contact your Veterinarian.

## **How do dogs and cats get heartworm?**

Animals are just as vulnerable to mosquito bites as we are and this is how heartworm is transmitted. There are various stages involved in the life cycle of the heartworm. Filarial worms called larvae are present in the blood of a heartworm positive animal, like a coyote or another pet dog. If the right species of mosquito bites them, it can ingest these larvae. The larvae develop further within the mosquito. When the mosquito bites another individual, there is now an opportunity for the worm to swim into the new dog host. It takes about 4 months for the larvae to grow into adult worms. The adult worms live within the dog's heart, which can affect overall function of the heart muscle and lungs and can result in death. Within cats, the larval heartworms may end up in the lungs, liver or other organ since they are not the parasite's "normal" host. Not every cat exposed to heartworms will develop disease and if they do, the symptoms can vary. Therefore the disease in cats is harder to diagnose and treat.

If your dog tests positive for heartworm there is treatment available, but it is recommended to offer preventative instead. There are various products available at your local veterinary office. Because the disease in cats is variable and difficult to recognize and treat, we recommend that you discuss the use of preventatives and risk of disease in your cat(s) with your veterinarian.

## **What can I do about my pet's bad breath?**

Bad breath can be an indication of a few different things. Smelly breath can be a sign of dental disease or problems with oral hygiene. Your pet's veterinarian can do a thorough oral exam to decide if this is the problem. Sometimes dogs will also lick their hind end if they have trouble expressing their anal glands. If their anal glands are full, they try to release the pressure themselves by licking or scooting, thus contributing to bad breath. Typically, the veterinarian will need to express them manually so they do not become infected.

In either situation, you should schedule an appointment with your veterinarian. It might be necessary to send home medications or schedule a dental if needed.

## **How often should my pet go to the veterinarian?**

Unless you have a concern or your dog/cat needs to be seen for unexpected health problems, we suggest that you bring in your pet for yearly wellness exams. This allows the veterinarian to keep track of your pets overall health and recognize potential problems before they have a chance to cause serious illness. Providing necessary vaccines, when needed, can also be done during the exam. Keeping in touch with your pet's veterinarian is a great way to keep him/her in the best health possible.

## **Should my pet be on flea or heartworm preventative year round?**

We highly recommend continuing prevention year round. If the temperature is higher than 57 degrees for a short period of time, the conditions are right for infested mosquitoes to transmit the disease. Generally speaking, it is a good idea to continue giving the prevention year round in climates like ours.

It is also a good idea to continue flea prevention year round as well. Most fleas will survive the winter in the larval or pupae stage and grow during warm, moist winters and spring. The flea population is made up of 5% adults and the other 95% include eggs, larvae and pupae. Although you might not see adults on your pet, there is this hidden fraction that needs to be guarded against as well.

## **Should I spay or neuter my pet?**

Yes. Spaying or neutering your animal is an important part of basic health care. This procedure can prevent ovarian and testicular cancer, and significantly reduce the chances of prostate and mammary cancers. It can make house training easier and decrease marking and certain aggressive behaviors. Depending on the breed, we typically suggest that your pet gets spayed or neutered at around 5-6 months of age.