



Bright Eyes & Bushy Tails

Housecall and Full-Service Veterinary Clinic

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September 1, 2000
Quarterly Newsletter

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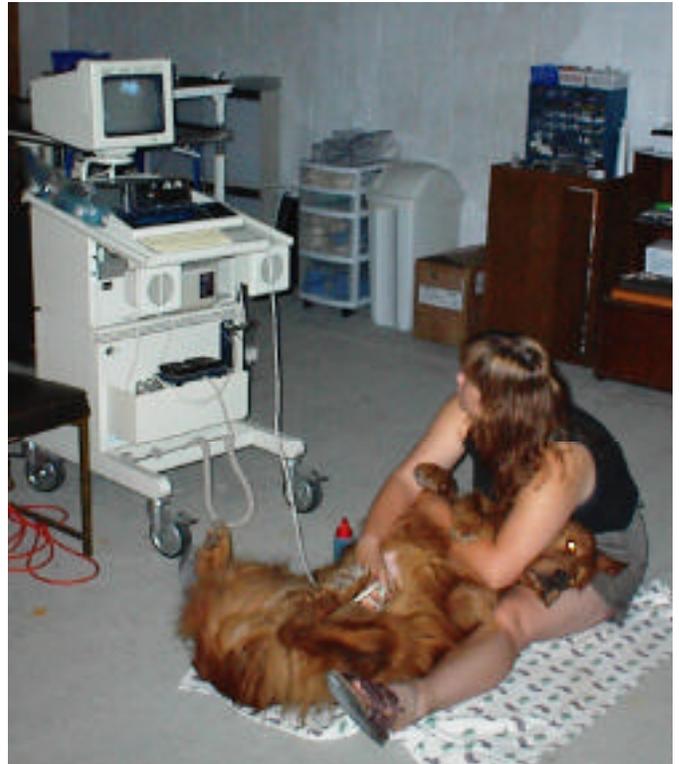
Dear friends and clients,

Ultrasound!

When Allan graduated from vet school in 1993, he asked his first boss to buy an ultrasound machine. When he left that practice in 1998, he was still waiting for his boss to buy one. Ultrasound can be used to complement X-rays, and can be used to safely obtain images of kidney, liver, spleen, bladder, and other organs to help decide if surgery is needed. The equipment is fairly expensive, but sometimes it is the only way to get a good image of internal organs without surgery.

Well, Bright Eyes & Bushy Tails is now the first small animal veterinary clinic in the Iowa City area with an ultrasound machine! We are still sending complicated cases to Cedar Rapids (we aren't comfortable interpreting some heart ultrasounds) but already the machine has been very useful for emergency cases. We were able to image the kidneys of one dog that drank antifreeze, and were able to localize a splenic tumor in another dog in the last few weeks.

Above, Jennifer is seen demonstrating an abdominal ultrasound study on her Golden Retriever, Jaxson. We shaved the hair on his belly, but the rest of the procedure just involves sliding a probe over the surface of his skin. Jaxson thinks being the most compliant Berger Family Dog is a disadvantage, but he will appreciate the under-body cooling effect of having his belly shaved for the rest of the summer. The black arrows in the ultrasound image point to the edges of his liver, and the white arrows point to his stomach.



Airplane travel

Traveling with a pet can be stressful—for both you and your pet! Planning ahead can avoid a lot of problems. Interstate travel requires a health certificate from a veterinarian. Health certificates are usually issued within 10 days of the trip, and always within 30 days of travel. In addition to a general health check, for the certificate we also review vaccination status and discuss preparation for diseases that you might encounter (e.g. extra heartworm preventative if you are going south). Always always always carry a rabies vaccine certificate with you.

Airplane travel is very convenient for humans, but is often not so great for pets. If you have a pet in a carrier that will fit under the seat in front of you, that's by far the best way to fly! Unfortunately it doesn't work so well for Great Danes. Check with your airline for detailed instructions, but here are some tips if you have a dog that needs to fly as cargo:

☞ You will be asked for vaccine records and a health certificate. Expect it.

☞ Some people tranquilize their dogs before putting them on the plane, but we usually try to avoid it. Crate training your pet before the flight might be enough to make him or her comfortable.

☞ If at all possible, take a direct flight even if that means flying out of Chicago.

☞ Try to get a wide-body jet. (For instance, a 767 isn't, the body is shaped like a cigar. A DC-10 is a wide-body).

☞ If you are flying in warm weather, fly only in the morning or late in the evening. If you fly in the afternoon, the cargo hold could become overheated when the plane is waiting to take off or when awaiting a terminal after landing. Many airlines refuse to fly animals in cargo during certain times of the year (summer).

☞ Get a good, large crate, with plenty of "breathing space" for your dog.

☞ If your dog isn't used to a crate, start crate training at least a month in advance. Start by feeding him or her in it. Praise your dog in the crate, and make it a comfortable, fun place to be. If you can get him or her used to sleeping in the crate at night, that's optimal.

☞ Decorate your kennel. You read that right—not the inside, the outside. Put stuff on the crate so you'll be able to see your kennel a mile away! You want to be able to recognize it from the terminal window while it's being loaded onto the plane. Get some bright fluorescent tape from the hardware store and put it all over the top, sides, and ends. Reflectors are also a good idea, so light will reflect and you can easily notice it. People might laugh at your crate, but no one will miss it and no one will forget it.

☞ Make sure you have a favorite toy and some clothing that smells like you to keep your dog company in the crate.

☞ Freeze water in your dog's dish so there is fresh water when it melts.

☞ Find a way to attach dog food (and water, if you can) to the outside of the crate. Include a note about where to contact you, the health certificate, etc. This way if your dog is lost, at least there will be food and water for him or her.

Top 10 reasons why dogs are better than kids:

10. Kibble and water are cheaper than formula and nappies.
9. Dogs can go on long trips without yelling "MUM HE'S TOUCHING ME!!!"
8. Dogs don't wear holes in the knees of their trousers.
7. You can crate a dog without going to jail.
6. Dogs will watch classic Star Trek with you and won't laugh at the special effects.
5. The older a Dog gets, the more he or she likes you.
4. Dogs don't ask why. Dogs don't ask why. Dogs don't ask why.
3. Dogs don't roll their eyes when you insist dogs today have it easier.
2. Dogs have tails, making it easier to grab them as they run away.

And the number one reason dogs are better than kids?

1. Dogs, when entering those teen years, are neutered.

- ☞ Get a good ID tag for your dog's collar. There are stories of dogs getting loose! One frequent flier also includes a blank check for \$100 with a letter explaining that it's a reward on the crate. Even if the check is cashed without returning the dog, you'll have the person's name and account, and a head start on finding your dog.
- ☞ Get to the airport at least an hour before the plane takes off. Go up to the ticket counter to check in your baggage. They'll then call up someone to come take your dog away. Try not to let them take your dog early—try to keep him or her with you until about 25 minutes before the scheduled take-off time.
- ☞ Ask for directions to a dog walking area (for some reason they don't post lighted signs on the ceiling like for the direction of the baggage claim and taxi stand).
- ☞ Some people lock their crates, but if there is an emergency this could cause problems. Use your own judgement and follow the rules of the airline.
- ☞ Once you see them take the dog away, run to your plane's boarding gate. Don't board yet, though. Stand at the window and watch to see your dog being loaded (this is why you decorated the crate). Pets are usually loaded in the front cargo hold (where the pilots keep their luggage). This is often on the right side of the plane. Don't get onboard until you see your dog boarded. If they announce last boarding call and you still haven't seen your dog get on the plane yet, walk up to the gate attendant and explain the circumstances. Ask the attendant to have an employee go to the cargo hold and to come back and describe what your dog (and/or crate) looks like.
- ☞ If you don't have a direct flight, try to be one of the first people off the plane. Then when you land stand and watch to see your dog come off the plane. Once you see your dog get off the plane, run to your connecting flight and then sit and watch to see your dog get on this plane. If the connecting flight is a long wait, you can request to get your dog out of the crate and walk him.
- ☞ When you are starting to land at your final destination, ask the flight attendant if this plane will be grounded at this stop, or if it is a continuing flight. If it will be grounded, then relax. If not and the plane will be continuing on to another city, again try to be one of the first people off to watch your dog unload.
- ☞ You'll claim your dog in the luggage area. You might get in trouble if you let him or her out of the crate in the luggage area, so we can't tell you to give you dog a proper greeting right away unless "an emergency" arises.



Good luck! Remember, forethought can make the difference between a good trip and a disaster.

Housecalls

Bask (the dark blur under the sign) says the days are getting shorter. Winter is coming, so RUN while the light and warm weather remain! Don't sit in a vet's office, try a housecall and have the vet come to you!

Hypothyroidism

We haven't talked about a dog health problem for a few newsletter issues, so we decided to describe canine hypothyroidism, a relatively common disease that middle-aged dogs get. The thyroid gland is in the neck, and it secretes a hormone (cleverly called "thyroid hormone"). Thyroid hormone increases cellular activity. In hypothyroidism, a thyroid hormone deficiency causes the body's cells to slow down.

Clinical signs can be quite variable, ranging from a bouncy dog that just has mild skin changes to a dog with mental dullness, lethargy, weight gain, and hair loss. The classic “textbook” case of hypothyroid skin disease is a dog that has symmetrical hair loss on both sides of his or her body. The hair loss can also be in just a few places along the dog’s side, or it can be more generalized. A dull, dry haircoat with slow hair growth is also common. Secondary skin infections and dandruff (seborrhea) are common as well. Metabolic changes from the low thyroid hormone level are also common. As the body’s cells slow down, dogs gain weight and become lethargic. Dogs may feel cold, and seek out warm places to sit. Other signs of metabolic changes are more rare, and include neurological problems and gastrointestinal upsets.

Although any dog can get hypothyroidism as he or she gets older, some breeds get it more frequently than others do. We see it most often in Golden Retrievers, Laboradors, Doberman Pinschers, Dachshunds, and Poodles.

Testing dogs for hypothyroidism can be as simple as taking blood to run several different tests to check the levels of circulating thyroid hormone and related hormones and blood chemistry components.

On rare occasions this isn’t enough and more diagnostics need to be done, but we can cross that bridge if we come to it.

Luckily, if your dog is diagnosed with hypothyroidism, treatment is relatively inexpensive and easy. Thyroid supplementation can be given with a pill, and we recheck the blood levels 6 weeks later to adjust the dosage as needed. Hypothyroid dogs are often overweight, so we usually prescribe a diet dog food as well. Clinical signs usually reverse fairly quickly, and dogs go back to normal.

That’s canine hypothyroidism in a nutshell. Cats often get hyperthyroid disease (too much thyroid hormone instead of too little), but low thyroid hormone levels are almost unheard of in cats except as a result of treating hyperthyroidism.

Waiting

I'm waiting here in foster care for you to come and see
The one the others have passed by - Please stop and look at me!
I'm not alone here in my quest to find myself a place
Where someone will have love for me and softly stroke my face.
We're not so young in years they say, although we're young at heart
If you'll take a chance with us - please know we'll do our part.
Our faces have a bit of white, our legs a slower gait
Our hearts so full of love to give - but still we sit and wait.
A younger dog is what folks want, one who romps and plays
They won't take time to look at us - just think we're old and gray.
Little do they know the things we have to offer them
Manners learned and quiet souls - good dogs all we've been.
There are those here too whose souls were damaged and in pain
Before they came to this safe place and learned to trust again.
When new folks come and look at them, they seem withdrawn and shy.
Time is all they need to learn that new bonds they can tie.
Patience, love and gentle hands is all they ask of you
In exchange - their hearts they give you in their lives so new.
We may not be the perfect dogs in everybody's eye -
Too big, too small, too brown, too blue, too black, too old, too shy.
But, unless you sit and take the time and see all that we can be
You'll miss the best that is right here - Please stop - HEY - Look at ME!

Cyndee Walklet, Sheltie Rescue

The Iowa City/Coralville Animal Shelter has lots of pets waiting for homes. Or, check a breed rescue group. Call us if you need help locating a breed rescue. Dedicated to Joey the Great Dane we took from Pennsylvania rescue at 10 years of age.

Short things

Consider implanting a microchip ID in your dogs and cats. Animal shelters nation-wide use “scanners” to check stray pets for microchips. If a pet is microchipped, the shelter can locate the owner even if the pet has lost his or her collar. Microchips are the size of a grain of rice. Call us, and we can help you install one.

Bright Eyes & Bushy Tails sponsored a raffle at the Iowa City/Coralville Animal Shelter Adoptathon in July. The raffle question was “how many eggs does a female tick lay.” Check our web site at <http://www.BREBT.com/newsletter.html> if you want the answer, or telephone us and we can mail you a copy.

T3 the turkey chick

Photo in our last newsletter



Now



Next Newsletter:

December 1, 2000

As always, ideas for topics for the next newsletter are welcome.

Gratefully yours,

Jennifer and Allan Berger