

FALL 2017

PATTON VETERINARY HOSPITAL

425 East Broadway
Red Lion, PA 17356
717-246-3611
www.pattonvethospital.com

Office hours:

Monday–Friday 8am – 8pm
Saturday 8am – 2pm



The Standard of
Veterinary Excellence



Dr. Nikki with Rosalie

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT Meet Dr. Nikki

Dr. Nikki Waltemire joined our team in July, but she is no stranger. Dr. Nikki began working at PVH in March of 2000 while still in high school. She worked as a kennel assistant, helped with receptionist duties, and even helped out as a veterinary assistant while in college. She majored in biology at Shippensburg University prior to obtaining a Masters in Laboratory Animal Science from Drexel University. During veterinary school, she also earned an MBA in

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Helping Reduce Fear, Anxiety, and Stress at the Veterinary Hospital



Does your dog cower and put on the brakes when you try to bring him through the front door of our veterinary office? Does your normally happy cat try to bite or scratch you when you put her into her carrier? These are examples of how pets behave when they are under stress, and a visit to the vet is a very stressful event for many.

Patton Veterinary Hospital is embracing the Fear Free philosophy, and we are trying to reduce fear and anxiety for our patients to make visiting our hospital as stress-free as possible. Many of our staff have completed or are in the process of completing Fear Free Certification programs.

Obviously, not every patient is going to love visiting us, but, if we can reduce fear, anxiety and stress, it will make things easier for you and your pet and it will make it easier for our veterinary team to provide the necessary care your pet needs.

Fear free strategies begin at home and extend to your visit to the veterinary office. Having a cat carrier visible to your cat in the main living area of the house for several days before a visit, putting treats in the carrier and using a calming spray like Feliway® before your visit help reduce anxiety before your kitty even arrives. Playing calming music in the car, having your dog's favorite blanket in the back seat and bringing favorite treats or a toy to the veterinary hospital also can go a long way toward reducing fear in our canine patients before they even arrive.

Keeping your pet calm and happy may involve feeding your pet treats (as long as he or she does not have a food allergy or other medical contraindication), using gentle handling techniques, and may even include the use of anti-anxiety medications and/or supplements to keep your pet calm for her visit. We may also do procedures such as drawing blood or trimming nails in the exam room if your pet is more comfortable in your presence.

While some pets may still require muzzles to prevent biting, we are finding that fewer and fewer patients need to be muzzled with fear free techniques and calming medications given prior to veterinary visits. Fear free handling is a win-win for your pet, for you (the pet owner), and for our veterinary team.



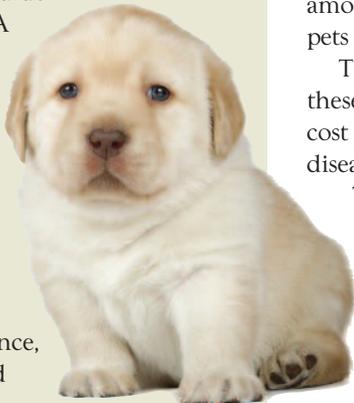
By Dr. Sabrina Walters



Pampered Pups

Pampered puppies don't grow to be good guides, according to a recent study that analyzed mother-puppy interactions in a group of would-be guide dogs.

The job of a guide dog is complex. A dog must have an even temperament and navigate through an unpredictable world, all while avoiding distractions. It requires intelligence, perseverance, and self-confidence.



About 30% of the puppies in a New Jersey breeding and training program for guide dogs end up being unsuccessful. Researchers from the University of Pennsylvania followed 98 puppies in the program from birth to adulthood, to see if they could determine predictors for success. The results of their study were recently published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

The researchers found that dogs whose mothers were more attentive (licking, grooming, and spending more time in the whelping box) were three times less likely to become guide dogs. Nursing styles made a difference as well. Some mothers laid down to nurse more often, making it easier for pups to nurse. Others often nursed their pups while sitting, which requires more effort for the pups. Pups from that second group were four times more likely to succeed as guide dogs.

Good mothering is important, but this research shows that a level of "tough love," where pups learn at a very young age to face challenges and solve problems, seems to serve them well as they grow.

The Value of Preventive Care

The statistics are sobering: each year, more than six million dogs and six million cats are diagnosed with cancer, and about 60% of aging dogs will experience heart disease. According to the Banfield State of Pet Health Report, there has been a 79.6% increase in the prevalence of diabetes in dogs over the past decade. These diseases are among "the silent killers," as they can easily go undetected in their early stages because pets often don't show symptoms until the diseases are advanced.

The good news is that in most cases, with early detection and treatment, many of these cases can be well-managed, and sometimes even cured. When caught early, the cost of treatment is often lower as well. Many other diseases, such as heartworm disease, rabies and distemper, are preventable.

The value of preventive care cannot be overstated for humans or pets. A key element of preventive care is a regular wellness examination.

A routine exam starts with asking you about your pet's history, then taking vital statistics (temperature, pulse, respiration, weight), followed by a thorough nose-to-tail examination including ears, eyes, mouth, skin and coat, abdominal palpations, and the limbs. Your veterinarian will be looking for a wide range of signs, including external parasites, such as ear mites or fleas, any inflammation, abnormal lumps or bumps, a normal ability to flex and extend each limb, signs of pain, an abnormal heart beat, and much more.

Lab tests may be recommended, especially if there are any abnormal findings during the physical examination, or if your pet has preexisting conditions, is on certain medications or is a senior pet.

Most pets will test positive for intestinal parasites at some time in their life simply from picking them up in the environment. Some parasites can be transferred to humans, so testing your pets helps keep your family safer as well. External parasites, such as fleas, ticks and ear mites, are an issue as well.

Because dogs and cats age more quickly than humans, an annual exam for them is the equivalent of an exam every few years for humans. For some pets, it is appropriate to have more frequent wellness exams; this is especially true for geriatric pets or those with chronic health problems. Whether you choose six or twelve month intervals, remember that the wellness exam is an important part of your pet's care.



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"I like everyone and I'm always in a good mood. That can't be normal!"



Optimize

Making the most of your annual veterinary exam

Dogs and cats are incredibly adept at hiding signs of illness, and when symptoms do arise, they can be very subtle at first. Pet owners play a key role in helping veterinarians to assess each pet's health. Here are some tips to make the most of your pet's wellness exam.

Observe your pet, and watch for changes in behavior. Does your dog play less, or hesitate before going up stairs? Does your cat forego her favorite window perch for a new spot, or does she seem to be hiding sometimes?

Note changes in appetite and drinking habits, as these can indicate many conditions, from painful teeth to kidney disease. Changes in the skin and coat may be the first indication you see of an underlying condition such as a thyroid problem. Vision and hearing changes often come with age, but they can be indications of other things as well, so be sure to mention them to your veterinarian. It's best to never pass something off as "normal aging," because it may be an important clue about your pet's health.

Prior to your visit, make a list of any changes you've noted, and any questions you have. In addition, bring a list of all the food your pet eats, including treats and people food, and all the medications and supplements that you feed as well.

If it's your first time at a new veterinary practice, be sure to have your pet's records with you.

Arrive a little early in case there are new forms you need to fill out. Be sure your dog is on a leash and your cat is in a carrier. While your dog may be gregarious and love meeting others, remember that not all dogs feel the same way, and many animals are very stressed when they're at the vet.

More than half of all pets who visit the vet are overweight, but many owners don't want to hear that news. Be proactive, and ask your vet: "How is my pet's weight?" If the answer is that she could lose a pound or two, ask for suggestions to get you on track. There are prescription diets that really help, and other suggestions your veterinarian can give you.

If your pet is diagnosed with a medical condition, ask your veterinarian to explain what options you may have for treatment. For example, if your pet has arthritis, there may be several choices of medications and supplements that can make him more comfortable. Your veterinarian can explain the pros and cons, and help you decide which choice is best for your dog.

In some cases, your veterinarian may recommend additional diagnostics to help reach an accurate diagnosis and determine the appropriate treatment protocol.



"I have lived with several Zen masters – all of them cats."

– Eckhart Tolle

Veterinary Diagnostics

State-of-the-art diagnostics help veterinarians provide the best medical care possible for pets. Some tests can be run "in-house," while others may need to be sent to an outside laboratory for processing by specialized equipment. Here's an overview of some common diagnostic tools:

Blood work – There are multiple types of tests to run on blood. Some measure the cellular components of blood, such as red and white blood cells, while others measure blood chemistry, such as glucose, protein, and various enzymes that are produced by different internal organs. Abnormal results can indicate things such as infection, leukemia, anemia, muscle injuries, and problems with the heart, pancreas, kidneys and liver.

Urinalysis – Urinalysis can detect urinary tract infections, bacteria, crystals and yeast, as well as diabetes, kidney and liver disease.

Intestinal Parasite Screening – Detects the presence of parasite eggs (larvae) in pets' feces.

4DX – This combination test can detect heartworms and three different tick-borne diseases: Lyme disease, anaplasmosis and ehrlichia.

X-rays (radiographs) – help to image bones, gas, soft tissue, fluids and metal. They help identify fractures or joint problems, and to find foreign body obstructions. X-rays also help to discover dental problems, including those that occur below the gum line.

Ultrasound – Ultrasound is valuable for imaging soft tissue and internal organs. The fast update rate allows organs like the heart to be viewed as they are functioning. Tumors, abscesses, cysts, bladder or kidney stones, fluid pockets and obstructions can be detected and measured with ultrasound. Ultrasound may also be used to help guide a needle when performing a needle biopsy of tissue.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

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Healthcare Management from Davenport University (online). Dr. Nikki graduated from St. Matthews University School of Veterinary Medicine in January of 2015.

Dr. Nikki developed a special interest in behavior while working on her Masters, however that interest was nurtured more during veterinary school by Dr. Lori Gaskins, a veterinary behaviorist. Dr. Gaskin's teachings altered the way Dr. Nikki would eventually practice veterinary medicine. "When you slow down,

come with a handful of tasty treats, and even ask pet parents to observe from outside the exam room window, you can help our more anxious and fearful pets enjoy their visit a little more...or at least not dread seeing us!"

When asked why she wanted to become a veterinarian, Dr. Nikki quickly pulled out a picture of her childhood dog, Calliope. Sadly, she was hit by a car when Dr. Nikki was just 8 years old. She recalled how her dog passed away before she even reached the veterinary office, and then reminded herself, "I can't save them all, but I want to help my patients to the best of my ability."

Dr. Nikki is fitting in nicely with our

team of veterinarians. She is a self-proclaimed cat enthusiast and loves our cat hospital. She has always wanted to work at PVH and considers the hospital to be the gold standard for veterinary care. She enjoys working with all the veterinarians and especially appreciates their various perspectives and interests.

In her spare time, Dr. Nikki enjoys spending time with her animals (one dog and four cats) and her family, taking naps, reading a good book, or going on walks with her St Bernard, Rosalie.

Welcome to our team, Dr. Nikki.



By Kelli Swanson



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 **FIND US ON FACEBOOK!**

Upcoming Events

Red Lion Halloween Parade
October 30, 7:00pm

Pet Loss Support Group
November 5, 1:00pm

Happy Cat

Nepeta cataria is a perennial herb of the mint family, better known as "catnip." Many cats appear to be "intoxicated" when exposed to catnip, but the variety of reactions includes excitement, anxiety, relaxation and sometimes aggression. Kittens are not affected by catnip, nor are all adult cats—about one-third of all cats do not have the gene that causes the catnip reaction. The effects of catnip usually last a few minutes, after which the cat will not react again for an hour or so.

The receptor for the chemical nepetalactone, which triggers the

reaction, is in the vomeronasal organ. This is a unique organ that dogs and cats (and many other animals) have in their nasal passage, which humans do not have. Catnip often initiates a behavior called the "Flehman response," where the lips are drawn back or curled, helping to draw scent molecules into the vomeronasal organ. Other animals, including horses, exhibit the Flehman response to certain scents.

Catnip is safe and not addictive, although in rare cases cats show compulsive scratching behavior. Playing with catnip toys might help your cat stay fit, and can also be used to lure your cat to appropriate scratching posts.

Ask about it when you bring your feline into our Cat Hospital; we have free samples for your cat to enjoy!

