

PET TALK

THREE NOTCH VETERINARY HOSPITAL
PARK VETERINARY CLINIC

Editor/Publisher: Terry S. Harvey

October
2011

ZOONOTIC DISEASES

Pets are part of our family. As members, they do share all areas of the house including furniture in our living and bedroom space. Since they have the potential to carry parasites, it's necessary to know which of these parasites have the potential to infect humans as well. These types of infections are called zoonoses. Zoonoses, or zoonotic diseases, are those diseases that can be transmitted directly or indirectly from animals to humans. The zoonotic diseases that are spread by parasites we'll cover in this newsletter are intestinal worms, flea and tick borne diseases, and toxoplasmosis.

Intestinal worms include roundworms, hookworms, whipworms and tapeworms. Roundworms are the most commonly found worms in dogs and cats and the one most likely to be transmitted to humans. The eggs of roundworms pass in the pets feces and mix with soil. The most likely victims are children who inadvertently ingest the eggs when they put their dirty fingers in their mouths. The eggs will then hatch in the intestinal tract and can migrate to the eyes or brain causing an inflammatory reaction.

Tapeworms that infect dogs and cats have a more complicated life cycle. A certain stage of their development must occur in an invertebrate host, most likely a flea. When a dog or cat ingest a flea while grooming themselves the tapeworm can then develop in the intestinal tract. Theoretically, a human can be infected with the same species of tapeworms that infect animals, but human would also have to ingest the flea to gain exposure. (There are species of tapeworms that primarily infect humans, but these are not spread by fleas.)

Fleas and ticks on their own are truly pests, and they also have the potential to carry other diseases into the household. Besides carrying tapeworms, fleas can also carry the bacteria, *Bartonella*, that causes

cat scratch fever. If a cat is infected with *Bartonella* it can transmit it to people through scratches. Signs in humans are skin infections at scratch site, fever, malaise, enlarged lymph nodes and headaches. Ticks are the vectors for multiple diseases including Lyme disease, ehrlichiosis and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever.

Toxoplasmosis is a disease caused by a protozoa that has the ability to infect a large variety of animals, most notably sheep, pigs, cats, deer and humans. It also has the ability to use insects, fish and earthworms as carriers. The biggest risk in humans is it's ability to infect pregnant women and cross the placental barrier. The amount of damage done depends on the stage of pregnancy at the time of infection. Infections can lead to miscarriages, blindness or neurologic diseases.

So, does this mean that all pregnant women should give up their cats? No, it's not necessary, and if you understand the life cycle of the organism you will be able to fully protect yourself. (Note: the most common way of infection for humans is not through cats at all. Eating undercooked meat is the most common mode!)

Exposure to Toxoplasma comes in two ways. When a food animal (pigs, lambs, deer, etc) is infected, the protozoa can migrate to muscles and form cysts. There they stay dormant. If the meat from these animals is cooked thoroughly before human consumption, the cysts will die. If undercooked, the cyst becomes active once the meat is eaten and infects the consumer. The other way humans are exposed is through contact (and ingestion) of a cat's fecal matter that contains eggs shed by protozoa.

**CHECK OUT PAGE 2
FOR INFORMATION ON
APVES, our partner emergency
facility, located in :**
**Calvert County
Allied Partners Veterinary
Emergency Services**

Special points of interest:

- * Zoonotic diseases are spread by parasites
- * Pregnant women do not need to give up their cats.
- * Ticks are vectors for multiple diseases.

FEATURES THIS ISSUE:

<i>Front Page Zoonotic Diseases</i>	1
---	---

<i>APVES Emergency Services</i>	2
-------------------------------------	---

<i>Obedience Corner - Edges Journey</i>	3
---	---

*Mission Statement
Service Numbers
Office Hours*

*Available on our website
www.threenotch.com*



Links for both locations available on our website...www.threenotch.com

EMERGENCY SERVICES

ALLIED PARTNERS VETERINARY EMERGENCY SERVICES

Three Notch Veterinary Hospital and Park Veterinary Clinic provide after hours emergency services through our partner emergency service, Allied Partner Veterinary Emergency Services.

APVES is located just north of Prince Frederick, Maryland in Huntingtown. APVES has emergency hours weekdays: 6PM-8AM, weekends and holidays: 24 hours.

**You may reach them by calling:
410.535.9722**

To learn more about APVES visit their website
www.vetmash.com/APVES



Continued from page 1

ZOONOTIC DISEASES

How is the cat infected? Most commonly by hunting and ingestion of mice, although insects and earthworms have also been found to be carriers of the Toxoplasma eggs. But here is a fact most people don't know. Once a cat is infected, it will shed eggs for 5-14 days only. The cat will never shed eggs again in it's lifetime even if re-exposed to Toxoplasma again. The exception is a cat who is immunosuppressed due to cancer or another severe disease. Also, the eggs are not immediately infective once shed in the feces. The eggs need to be oxidized (exposed to oxygen) for a full 24 hours to become infective. That means, if you clean the litter box at the same time every day, that will ensure that there is never fecal matter in the box over 24 hours old thus greatly diminishing your chance of exposure.

There is another way of contracting Toxoplasma, which is a more common method than from your cats litter box, and that is through gardening. Any feral animal (not just cats) that are shedding eggs in their feces can leave droppings in your garden at any time. If you garden without gloves and then touch your mouth or eat before washing your hands you can be infected.

In America it is estimated that 20-30% of the population have been exposed to Toxoplasma. Many studies have been performed to try to find any correlation between cat ownership and human exposure and none have found any. There have been studies that have found a correlation between exposure and consumption of undercooked meat.

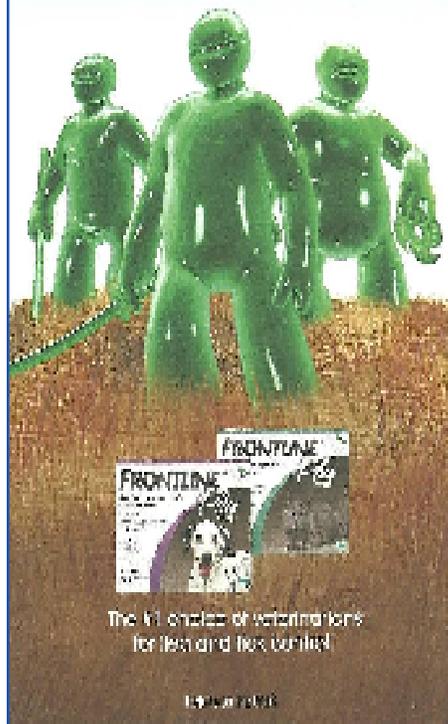
The CDC (Center for Disease Control) has a very informative website with information about Toxoplasma (and many other parasites) that can give you more details and insight for protection for you and your family.

Author
Jennifer O'Connor, DVM

FRONTLINE PLUS SPECIAL OFFER Vet Exclusive

Buy 6 doses get
2 FREE

OR Buy 3 doses get
1 FREE



Limited time only.
Offer expires March 31, 2011
Hurry and stock up on your
Frontline Plus
Today!!



OBEDIENCE CORNER

Hello Readers. We took a break from the last edition of Obedience Corner to work on an exciting home project: a new puppy! We've been having a great time and I thought it might be fun to share some of the stories and lessons we've learned from our new little guy. Our new addition is a male Belgian Tervuren called "Edge". He was born in Brunswick Canada in a little town called Edgett's Landing. We liked the name of the town and thought our new pup had a little "edge" to him so the name seemed to fit.

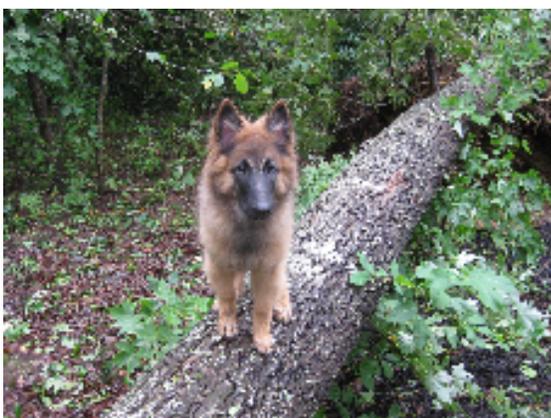
When I bring home a new dog, the first thing I focus on is housebreaking. So what have we learned about housebreaking this time? Just when you think you've seen it all, an 8 week puppy will always prove you wrong. Since most puppies' plumbing doesn't fully develop until 4-6 months old, young puppies have very little bladders and even less control. So with my new dogs, including Edge, I take them outside often and start to develop a routine. I use my "potty words" and use lots of treats. That's the first step. The second step is to watch them like a hawk or crate them when they're inside.

This could even mean having them on a leash with you inside – NO chances for mistakes unless you can catch them. Edge seemed to be getting into a nice pattern and he even started going to the door when he needed to go out. But that's where Edge threw us a curve ball and even surprised an old hand like me.

Let me walk you through the scenario. When Edge was ready for a nap this hot summer, he liked to lie down on the air vents. Edge says, "I'm sleepy. The air is nice and cool here. I think I'll curl up here, and...uh oh!" Brian says, "Look at Edge. He's sleepy and is standing on the air vent. Hey! Did Edge just pee in the vent?" Amy then yells at all of us!! After 3 times, you'd think I would have figured this out, but he kept changing air vents!

After we finally caught on, all we did was watch him closer especially around the vents and especially when he was sleepy.

When we're at home, we work on housebreaking and when we're not at home, we work on riding in the car and seeing different things. Because Edge was born in Canada, we had to decide whether to fly him to Maryland or go get him. Since I'm not a fan of dogs flying in cargo, it was an easy decision. The car ride from Canada to Maryland was 8 hours a day for 3 days and Edge did perfect. We thought we had a great co-pilot. Nope. Once we got home, the next 5 car rides all went like this: Edge plays in the car, Edge looks out the window, Edge barfs. Edge didn't seem anxious and seemed to love the car right up to the point when he tossed his cookies. So what did we do? We limited our rides to no



more than 5-10 minutes or we would pull over and let Edge out for a walk. We also fed him very little 2-3 hours before a ride. We also tried the old standby of letting him nibble a gingersnap.

Little by little, the problem eased and Edge (and his stomach) seems to be doing much better. We are still being careful and practicing in little bursts. He's going to need to be a super traveler so we want to do it right.

Edge likes meeting new dogs and doing new things. The one thing Edge is careful about is new people. He's curious and loves treats, but isn't thrilled when people reach to pet him. He's never been nasty, but he does back up. I can see some owners making a mistake here. Edge is very cute and he's got a very cuddly coat and people want to pet him. Sometimes I feel myself wanting to hold Edge still so people can pet him.

I don't do this because I think it would scare him more. Instead, I let him move closer when HE wants to or back up when he wants. Yes, people may get disappointed when they can't pet Edge, but I think they'll live. When he is around new people, I give the people lots of treats to give him and now Edge is already more social. Some dogs need a little time to warm up to people and some dogs may never be the life of the party. That's ok and we don't want to force dogs to do things that scare them. That's where aggression comes from. Socialization at this age is all about baby steps and about making the things that could scare them be "good things" with treats and a matter of fact manner. The more you expose them to many situations and make those situations positive, the more well balanced your puppy will become.

I hope you all got a little chuckle out of our adventures with baby Edge and maybe you even picked up a couple of helpful hints. We've decided that getting a puppy periodically is great for us so we feel your pain! Once our dogs are older and settled, we all forget the early trials and tribulations and remember it as being "so easy with the last dog". Now we remember and can make sure that all our good advice really works. Have a great Fall with your furry friends and take advantage of these brisk beautiful sunny days.

Happy Training.



Brian Markowich, CPDT
Author, Editor, & Trainer

