

# The Creekside News



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Welcome to another edition of the Creekside News. This newsletter is brought to you by veterinarians and staff at Creekside Animal Hospital and is meant to give you the latest and greatest news and information about the clinic and treatment options for your pets.

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## WHAT'S NEW AT CREEKSIDE?

The staff at Creekside would all like to welcome the newest member of our team, Amanda. Amanda is a Registered Veterinary Technician with a special interest in dentistry and behavior. She comes to us with many years experience, and is already proving herself to be a valuable member of our team. She has a very cheerful personality, and a very special way with our furry friends. We hope to keep her with us for many years to come. If you have scheduled one of our free dental exams, then you have probably met Amanda. If not, be sure to give us a call today and make an appointment to see her. She can help you learn how to keep your pets mouth in tip top shape!

Creekside Staff participated in the Almost Home Humane Society's event, "Strike out Suffering" at Star Lanes on March 4. A great time was had by all, but more importantly we helped raise much needed funds for the injured animal fund at AHHS. We are in the planning stages with AHHS to help sponsor their annual "Tails and Trails" run/walk this fall at the Tippecanoe Amphitheater. We hope to make this an even better event than it was last year. Look for more information about "Tails and Trails" in our next newsletter.

## SENIOR PETS – HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF YOUR PETS "GOLDEN YEARS"

As pets age, there is a decline in organ, mental abilities, sensory function and immunity. The following is a short list of the most common problems for aging pets:

Heart disease	Dental disease (tooth loss and infection)	Change in appetite	Skin and haircoat problems
Kidney disease	Cataracts	Loss of housetraining	Increased thirst or urination
Liver disease	Glaucoma	Incontinence	Decreased immune system
Osteoarthritis	Blindness	Changes in sleep patterns	Endocrine dysfunction
Hip dysplasia	Weight gain or loss	Hearing loss	Behavioral changes
Cancer			

A physical examination performed every six months on pets over 7 years will enable us to detect the presence of small problems or changes in your pet's health before they can become major health problems. During this physical exam, the veterinarian assesses your pet's cardiovascular system, respiratory system, gastrointestinal system, urinary and reproductive systems, central nervous system, eyes and ears, skin and coat, mouth, teeth, and gums, and weight.

A thorough physical exam alone is not capable of detecting all possible health problems, and additional tests may help us get a more complete evaluation. Blood work gives us a means of checking your pet's internal functions in a non-invasive manner. Because of our strong commitment to providing the best medicine that we can for your pet, we strongly believe that regular blood testing is important. Many clinical signs of disease do not develop until late in the disease process. Pets cannot tell us when they do not feel 100% and because of their instinct to protect themselves, many animals will 'hide' their illness. A good example of this situation is a cat with kidney disease. This patient may be afflicted with kidney disease for months to years before developing signs of the disease because a pet can lose up to 75% of kidney function before clinical signs will develop. Performing blood work and urinalysis will detect early changes in kidney enzymes and allow us to manage this disease earlier.

Complete blood cell count, or CBC: Red blood cells carry oxygen to tissues. White blood cells are the body's primary defense against infection. Platelets are involved in the clotting process. Abnormalities with any of these values help to potentially detect anemia, inflammation, acute or chronic infection, bleeding disorders, blood parasites, dehydration and autoimmune diseases.

Comprehensive Blood Serum Chemistry: a series of individual tests that analyzed together give us valuable information concerning the kidneys, liver, pancreas, intestinal tract, and endocrine diseases. Sometimes other diagnostics may be recommended based upon these results. Some of these involve specialized tests at outside laboratories. Some of the more common diagnostics involve:

Thyroid: Hyperthyroidism is extremely common in older cats. It can cause hypertension, heart disease, and weight loss. Dogs tend to get hypothyroidism which causes weight gain, problems with the hair coat, and other problems.

Urinalysis: This is a common test that will help to detect kidney disease, diabetes, infection, inflammation, and metabolic disorders. Kidney disease is first evident here.

ECG (Electrocardiogram): This enables us to see the electrical activity of the heart. Abnormalities may indicate a serious problem and a chest x-ray or a cardiac ultrasound may be recommended to further diagnose heart disease.

Ultrasound: This is a specialized piece of equipment that allows us to obtain a three dimensional image of your pet's organs. We can visualize the heart, liver, spleen, kidneys, stomach, intestines, pancreas, adrenal glands and bladder. When diseases of the liver or kidney are detected, the ultrasound can give us a look at the internal structure of these organs and allow for ultrasound guided biopsies to help further identify the cause of the disease. We strongly recommend an ultrasound on all of our cardiac patients, especially cats. Older cats are prone to HCM—Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy. This is a disease in which the heart muscle hypertrophies, decreasing the available volume of blood to be moved through the heart. Radiographs will not diagnose this disease; it can only be diagnosed via ultrasound. This disease is fatal without specific and appropriate medical management.

Blood Pressure: Many older cats and dogs become hypertensive, especially with hyperthyroidism and/or kidney disease. The test is quite simple, painless, and easy to perform.

X-Rays (Radiographs): These can help to detect problems with the heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, bones, soft tissue and intestinal tract. They are used to identify disease and also to monitor progress/response to therapy. X-rays are an essential component in the work up of heart patients as well as looking for organ enlargement or tumors.

Glaucoma testing using the Tonopen: Many older pets can have problems with increased intraocular pressure (glaucoma) same as people do. Increases in pressure in the eye will cause pain and also lead to blindness if not detected early and treated appropriately.

**Other Considerations:** A normal result on blood work is great! You have not wasted your money. We now have a baseline for how your pet is doing at this time. Normal blood work results give both of us peace of mind that your pet is doing well. We can compare current and previous blood results in order to look for trends that may indicate early disease.

Many older pets suffer from arthritis. This may be presented as lameness, difficulty getting up or climbing stairs, increased irritability, decreased appetite, and overall decrease in activity. New pain management medications help pets with chronic pain have a better quality of life. Creekside carries a variety of nutritional supplements containing Glucosamine and Chondroitin, as well as prescription anti-inflammatory medications.

In addition to medications, appropriate nutrition for your pet's condition will also prolong his/her lifespan. Most older pets suffer from obesity. These pets would benefit from increased dietary fiber. Other pets with kidney problems or heart disease may need specialized diets restricting sodium and protein. Skin problems can often be improved by adding omega 3 fatty acids to your pet's diet. Some older pets will actually do better with a diet high in carbohydrates and increased protein. Together you and your veterinarian will decide upon an appropriate diet based upon your pet's individual needs.

Many older pets will suffer from various dental problems: tooth decay and loss, gingivitis, infection and oral tumors. Pain caused by a tooth abscess can cause your pet to have a decreased appetite, be more irritable, and also lead to infection elsewhere in the body. These problems can be treated with antibiotics, teeth cleaning and oral rinses.

Behavioral changes may be an early signal of various medical problems. Many of these can be related to pain from arthritis, dental disease, etc. Cognitive dysfunction is due to age related changes in the brain. Some symptoms of this are confusion and disorientation, decline in social interactions, changes in the sleep-wake cycle and house soiling.

The doctors at Creekside can help you formulate a plan for keeping your senior pet as healthy as possible. This overall patient assessment will include diet, exercise, and treatment recommendations. With your love and dedication, these can be your best years together!

## **SPRING HAS SPRUNG! IT'S TIME TO GET OUTSIDE AND ENJOY. HOW TO MAKE SURE THIS SPRING IS A SAFE ONE FOR OUR FOUR LEGGED FRIENDS.**

Spring is probably one of the most welcomed seasons, but with the change in weather and increase of outdoor activity, comes an increase of dangers for our animal friends. Knowledge and awareness lay the foundation for prevention. We should be aware of springtime dangers, some of which may have fatal consequences. Our goal at Creekside is always to provide as much quality information possible for our clients in order to help them give their pets the best life possible and keep them safe. Some common hazards for spring include:

Mulches: Cocoa bean mulch is a known to poison dogs. Because this mulch is made from the hulls of cacao beans, it has a rich chocolate aroma that entices animals to eat it. Chocolate contains a substance called theobromine, which is toxic to animals and can even kill them if enough is ingested.

Easter Dangers: We must be careful not to leave Easter candy around where animals can eat it or let children feed it to them. Although baker's chocolate is more fatal than milk chocolate, it is not worth taking any chances. Another danger with Easter is plastic "grass" that we use to decorate baskets and other items this time of year. These strings of brightly colored plastic can cause many complications if your pet eats it.

Plants and Flowers: Flowering plants, both indoors and out, can create a wonderful springtime ambiance, but there is a wide variety of popular seasonal plants that are also poisonous if ingested by pets. All the parts of lilies, even a tiny amount, can cause kidney failure in cats. All parts of tulips and daffodils, the bulb being most toxic, can cause intense gastric irritation, cardiac and central nervous system problems and seizures. Amaryllis can also cause abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, depression and tremors. Azalea and Rhododendron can be harmful to small animals. They contain toxins, which if ingested, can damage the heart and nervous system. Some safe alternatives may be Easter orchids, daisies, violets or Easter cactus.

Fertilizers: Often times the when you see the term "natural" on a label, it does not always mean the product is non-toxic. It is also important to check the labels for exceptions and warnings, as certain products labeled for use in one species of animal could be harmful to others. **ALWAYS READ THE LABEL.**

Allergies: Scratching, sneezing, losing excess amounts of fur, red or dry skin, constant licking and nasal discharge all are signs of an allergic reaction to something. Allergies are at the top of the list for medical complaints among pet owners. If you find your pets life being affected by the signs of allergies, please give us a call. There are many treatment options for pets with allergies. While there is no cure for allergies yet, we can help to control the symptoms.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND "THE FINE PRINT"

We hope you have found the newsletter to be helpful and informative. If you have any questions or concerns please call our office at: (765)742-0140. Our hours of operation are Monday - Friday 7:30am - 6:00pm and Saturday 8:00am - 12:00pm.

If you do not want to receive further newsletters from Creekside please send us an email at [CreeksideAH@gmail.com](mailto:CreeksideAH@gmail.com) and let us know you want to unsubscribe from the newsletters. We will take you off the mailing list.

Please note that while we always strive to help our clients learn as much as possible to help provide them with the knowledge and tools to give their pets the best quality of life, the newsletter is not a replacement for medical attention. While our goal is to give the best possible medical treatment at a reasonable price we cannot treat your pets over the phone or via email. This newsletter is intended for informational purposes only.