



# Acadia Pet News

WINTER 2009



To Add to Your Knowledge of and Pleasure in Your Pets' Good Health  
Eric Griesshaber, D.V.M. Donald K. Jones, D.V.M. Genie Griesshaber, D.V.M.

## Do My Pets Need Dental Care?

The dental care of dogs and cats is one of the most commonly overlooked areas of pet health care. The American Veterinary Dental Society reports that 80 percent of dogs and 70 percent of cats show signs of oral disease by the age of three. However, dental disease doesn't affect just the mouth. It can lead to more serious health problems including heart, lung and kidney disease.

Periodontal disease is an infection of the tissue surrounding the teeth that takes hold in progressive stages. It starts out as a bacterial film called plaque. The bacteria firmly attach to the teeth. When the bacteria die, they can become calcified by calcium and other minerals in saliva. This forms a hard, rough substance called tartar or calculus, which allows more plaque to accumulate. Initially, plaque is soft and brushing or chewing hard food and toys can dislodge it. If left to spread, however, plaque can lead to gingivitis, inflammation of the gums, causing the gums tissue to become red and swollen and to bleed easily.

As plaque and calculus develop below the gum line, professional cleaning is needed to help manage it. If the plaque and tartar buildup is left unchecked, infection can form around the root of the tooth. In the final stages of periodontal disease, the tissues surrounding the tooth are destroyed, the bony socket holding the tooth in erodes and the tooth becomes loose. This is a very painful process.

In accordance with American Animal Hospital Association's (AAHA's) guidelines, Acadia veterinary clinic recommends regular oral examinations and dental cleanings, under anesthesia. Before the dental procedure, our veterinarians perform a pre-anesthetic exam, blood work to look for underlying metabolic disease, and may perform additional tests depending on the pets age and condition. During the anesthesia, the patient is monitored by a veterinary nurse. The teeth are scaled and polished using instruments similar to those used by human dentists. If needed, dental radiographs (x-rays) and advanced procedures are performed. OraVet™ sealant is then applied. If the OraVet™ maintenance sealant is reapplied weekly at home, a 40% reduction of calculus can be expected. The pet owner plays a pivotal role at home by brushing the teeth daily.

Remember... pets can live longer, healthier lives if oral health care is managed and maintained throughout their lives. In fact, proper dental care may add as much as five years to your pet's life! Talk to our veterinarians about developing a dental care plan for your pet.

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## Success Stories

Karson, a handsome 4 year old German Shepherd, presented to Acadia for sudden onset of vomiting. Karson was lethargic and had also been having bloody diarrhea. His caretakers were quite concerned, especially since he had now also lost his appetite.

Although a general laboratory profile, stool analysis, a special test for pancreatitis, abdominal radiographs and ultrasound did not provide a diagnosis, our in-hospital blood analysis machine did reveal one abnormality that Dr. Jones noticed - a low platelet count. This abnormality was confirmed upon repeat testing and it was found that



Karson's platelet count had decreased even further on recheck examination and platelet count. Karson was immediately hospitalized and treated with IV fluids for dehydration and GI protectants to minimize the gastrointestinal side effects (bleeding, ulceration) from high doses of steroids. The final diagnosis was IMMUNE-MEDIATED THROMBOCYTOPENIA. With appropriate treatment, Karson steadily improved and began eating and feeling better in a few days. He is currently doing well on maintenance doses of prednisone (steroids).

There are several causes of thrombocytopenia (platelets < 50,000) that include: immune-mediated destruction, infections, drug reactions (including vaccinations) and neoplasia (cancer). Patients with thrombocytopenia often present to the clinic with signs of lethargy, lack of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, or bruising anywhere on the body.

Gunner, a 9 1/2 year old male yellow Labrador Retriever, had come into Acadia for his annual check-up and vaccinations.

The clients had coincidentally noticed that Gunner's abdomen seemed abnormally large that day. Dr. Jones could palpate (feel) an enlarged stomach as Gunner began panting and vomiting in the exam room. Abdominal radiographs, taken immediately after Gunner's presentation, revealed dilatation (enlargement) as well as a large amount of bone and other debris (see radiograph on the right). An exploratory gastrotomy was performed that night at Veterinary Surgical Associates (VSA) in Campbell. The surgeon found meat, more than 50 bone fragments, plastic and fruit salad remnants in Gunner's full stomach. Gunner had apparently found and feasted on a full garbage can earlier that day. Gunner has made an uneventful recovery and is doing great!



# The Acadia Team

STAFF NEWS

Acadia is pleased to introduce the newest member of our team - Michael Armer. Michael joined our technical team in April 2008 with a background in the computer technical field. He is a hard worker and quick learner with great attention to detail. Michael has become very proficient at running our in-house laboratory instruments as well as reading blood slides. He is working on his prerequisites at Foothill College with his sights set on veterinary school! When Michael is not

working at Acadia or studying, you will find him working at a nearby bird veterinary practice, planning his upcoming wedding, or photographing birds. Check out his professional photographs at: [www.aworldofbirds.com!](http://www.aworldofbirds.com!)

Please join us in welcoming Michael! Don't forget to say hello to the rest of our team when you stop by. Technicians: Charles, Kim and Jollene. Receptionists: Holly and Joanna. Doctors: Donald Jones, Genie Griesshaber, Eric Griesshaber.



Top Row: Dr. Eric Griesshaber, Charles, Michael, Dr. Donald Jones

Bottom Row: Kim, Joanna, Holly, Chris, Jollene, Dr. Genie Griesshaber, André

## Should my dog be vaccinated against Leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection that is transmitted through the urine of infected animals. Mammals, including dogs and humans, can be at risk for infection. Dogs, raccoons, opossums, skunks, rats and livestock can carry the bacteria. The bacteria can enter the dog through a cut in the skin or by ingesting infected urine. It has been found that Leptospirosis infections increase during periods of rainy weather probably because it can be transmitted through standing water such as puddles. There are 8 serovars (strains) of leptospirosis. The dog serves as the "reservoir host" for leptospirosis canicola. It can carry this strain of leptospirosis and spread it, but has minimal to no clinical signs of disease when infected. However, when dogs are infected with one of the other strains, they can become very ill. The clinical signs include: weakness, vomiting, abdominal and lower back pain, excessive drinking and urination, weight loss, and fever. If the disease goes untreated, it often leads to liver and kidney failure and even death.

Since the 1990's, reports of leptospirosis infections in dogs and humans have been on the rise. In the 1970's, *L. icterohemorrhagiae* and *L. canicola* infections were found to be the most prevalent in dogs and a vaccine was developed that provided immunity against the two strains. In the 1990's, however, infections with the aforementioned strains decreased and infections with *L. grippityphosa* and *L. Pomona* began to rise. In response, Fort Dodge developed a new leptospirosis vaccine that protects against all 4 of these strains. Below is a list of the leptospirosis strains and corresponding reservoir hosts. Dogs are thought to be resistant to *L. autumnalis* and have only mild symptoms if infected with *L. bratislava*.



### SEROVAR

- L. grippityphosa*
- L. pomona*
- L. icterohemorrhagiae*
- L. canicola*
- L. hardjo*
- L. bratislava*
- L. autumnalis*

### RESERVOIR HOST

- Raccoons, skunks, voles
- Raccoons (possibly), skunks, pigs, cattle (possibly)
- Rats
- Dogs
- Cattle, sheep
- Pigs (horses, dogs)
- Raccoons (possibly), mice

If your dog comes into contact with standing water or mammalian wildlife (including marine wildlife such as sea lions), if he/she visits dog parks or "doggy day care", or lives in a newly developed area or near open space, then your dog may be at risk for leptospirosis. The Fort Dodge LeptoVax™ 4 is a safe, effective way of preventing leptospirosis. Schedule some time to discuss the vaccine with our doctors today. For more information, please visit: [www.leptoinfo.com](http://www.leptoinfo.com)

LeptoVax™ 4 is a registered trade mark of Fort Dodge Animal Health

Acadia



Veterinary  
Clinic

10012 N. Foothill Blvd., Cupertino, CA 95014

408.996.1030

Mon - Fri: 8am - 6pm

Sat: 9am - 2pm

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[www.AcadiaVet.com](http://www.AcadiaVet.com)



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