



## **LIST OF TOPICS FOR YOUR PUPPY'S THIRD VISIT**

Age Comparison Chart

Gentle Leader

Socialization Visits

Lifestage Wellness Testing

Wellness Testing

Flip the Lip (a healthy mouth means a healthy pet)

The Obesity Epidemic

Gastrointestinal Foreign Bodies

Top 5 Things You Should Know About Pet Food

How to Recognize Pain in Your Dog

Newly Emerging Diseases in Ontario as of 2019



## **AGE COMPARISON CHART**

## How old is my pet, really?

Pet's Age	Estimated Equivalent Age in Human Years			
	Cats	Dogs		
		Small/Medium	Large Breed	Giant Breed
1	7	7	8	9
2	13	14	16	18
3	20	21	24	26
4	26	27	31	34
5	33	34	38	41
6	40	42	45	49
7	44	47	50	56
8	48	51	55	64
9	52	56	61	71
10	56	60	66	78
11	60	65	72	86
12	64	69	77	93
13	68	74	82	101
14	72	78	88	108
15	76	83	93	115
16	80	87	99	
17	84	92	104	
18	88	96	109	
19	92	101		
20	96	105		
21	100	109		
22	104	113	PEDIATRIC	
23	108		ADULT	
24	112		SENIOR	



## GENTLE LEADER HEAD HALTER

The **Gentle Leader** head halter is an essential tool in canine behaviour management. A head halter allows you to control your dog in a humane, effective, natural way. Being able to control your dog means that you will be able to enjoy time spent walking with your dog, and not be frustrated by pulling and jumping and other unruly behaviour. The Gentle Leader can be used on almost all breeds of dogs, no matter their size. The best time to start with a Gentle Leader is when your dog is a puppy, but no dog is too old to learn.

The Gentle leader is made up of two connecting loops of soft nylon: one loop fits high on the neck, the other one goes over the muzzle of the dog. Each loop is individually adjusted to fit your dog. The leash is attached to a ring under the dog's chin. The Gentle Leader is NOT a muzzle - your dog will still be able to eat, drink, pant, bark and even bite while fitted with a Gentle Leader. You will, however, be able to keep the dog's mouth closed if necessary, using upwards pressure on the leash.

Dogs have a natural instinct to resist pressure; this is called the opposition reflex. If you pull on a traditional collar, the dog will naturally pull forward, away from you. Not only does this hurt your arms and risk an accident, but it may also actually hurt the dog by causing damage to the sensitive areas of the neck and throat. Pulling on leash is very rewarding to dogs because of this reflex, and also because they eventually get where they want to go! Because the Gentle Leader fits high on the neck, damaging pressure to the throat is avoided. When a dog pulls with a Gentle Leader on, the pull is felt on the top of the muzzle and on the back of the neck (vs. the front of the throat with a traditional collar). The opposition reflex tends to make the dog pull LESS, not more.

Almost every dog and owner can enjoy success with the Gentle Leader. Most owners are simply happy to have a nice walk with their dog, but the Gentle leader can also be used inside the house to help control such obnoxious behaviours as jumping up, chewing, barking and so on. The most important elements for successful head halter training include:

1. Ensure that the head halter is properly fitted and introduced to your dog. If the Gentle Leader is too tight or too loose, your dog will not accept the halter as readily. Pairing the halter with "good things" such as food, walks and playtime will help promote acceptance.
2. Motivate your dog to succeed. The Gentle Leader is a highly effective training tool, but you and your dog will progress faster if you give your dog a reason to perform the desired behaviours.
3. React quickly. Dogs learn much more rapidly if the consequences of their actions are immediate. A quick sit on cue should earn a quick cookie, just as failure to sit on cue should earn a quick upwards pull (not jerk) on the leash.
4. Release tension on the leash as soon as the desired behaviour is performed. Constant pressure on the head halter is uncomfortable, and will cause the dog to fuss



## SOCIALIZATION VISITS

### Why are Socialization Visits recommended?

We recommend that some puppies come to during their first 12 months of life for 2

1. We want your puppy to have frequent, our hospital to earn your puppy's trust your puppy may have with respect to and new faces.
2. We wish to provide increased communication so any concern you may be addressed in a timely manner.



the hospital monthly reasons:

positive experiences at and decrease any fears unfamiliar environments

opportunity for have about your pet can

### When are Socialization Visits

Not all puppies require socialization visits, as relaxed when exposed to new environments and experiences. If we recommend socialization visits for your puppy, they should ideally occur monthly between the Third Puppy Visit and the First Birthday.

### recommended?

some puppies are naturally

### What will I expect at the Socialization Visit?

You will be greeted by a Veterinary Technician, who will do the following:

1. Weigh your puppy and score it on the "Body Condition Scoring" scale.
2. Trim your puppy's nails if required and if it can be done without upsetting your puppy.
3. Initiate a brief handling and play session.
4. Address any behavioural or health issues you may have and schedule a follow-up appointment with a veterinarian if necessary (regular fees will apply).

### Do I have to book an appointment?

Yes. We want to ensure a Veterinary Technician will be available.

### What is the fee?

Each one of these socialization visits will be free of charge. We strongly believe that positive experiences early on in life will influence the way your pet reacts in the future. It is in the best interest of our patients, their owners, and our team to create adult pets that are as comfortable as possible in our hospital environment.

If your puppy has additional health or behavioural concerns, however, a separate appointment will be scheduled, and standard charges will apply.



## LIFESTAGE WELLNESS TESTING

Different breeds and individuals age at variable rates, but in general, your pet's age can also indicate their lifestage:

Puppy or Kitten = under 1 year  
Adult = 1-6 years  
Mature = 7+ years

Larger breeds tend to age more quickly than smaller breeds, and certain breeds or individuals are more predisposed to particular diseases. Your veterinarian will consider these factors when making wellness testing recommendations for your pet.



When planning your pet's wellness care, we will generally follow the guidelines below for wellness testing:

Recommended Test	Lifestage	WHEN?
Fecal testing	All	Yearly
Heartworm testing (may be combined with tests for other diseases)	All	Yearly or every other year (in dogs, dependent on lifestyle risk)
Baseline blood and urine tests	Adult	At 4-5 years old
Early Disease Detection blood and urine tests	Mature	At 7+ years old

After age 7, we recommend continued Early Disease Detection testing every other year or more often for monitoring depending on health status.



**WELLNESS TESTING**

### What is Wellness testing?

Wellness testing is the term given to a group of tests performed on an apparently healthy pet.

### Why do Wellness testing?

- To establish **baseline** laboratory values for the individual pet while healthy. These values can then be used to compare to future test results.
- For **early disease detection**.  
Pets cannot tell you how they are feeling, and as a result, disease may be present before you are aware of it. If a disease or condition can be detected before a pet shows signs of illness, we can often take steps to manage or correct the problem before irreparable damage is done. Wellness testing is particularly important in the middle aged and senior pet, since there is a greater chance that underlying disease may be present.

### How often is Wellness testing done?

Testing may be recommended once yearly or more, depending on your pet's **age** and specific health concerns.

### What is involved in Wellness testing?

There are three main categories of wellness testing: blood tests, urine tests, and fecal tests. Within each category, the veterinarian will determine how extensive the testing should be. Other tests such as blood pressure, eye pressure, chest x-rays or abdominal ultrasound may be recommended as well, depending on the patient's individual risk factors.

#### ▪ Blood Tests

**The Complete Blood Count (CBC)** provides details about the number, size, and shape of the red and white blood cells and identifies the presence of any abnormal cells. Anemia, inflammation, infection, certain cancers, and bleeding disorders can be detected.

**The Biochemical Profile** provides information about how well the various organs of the body are working (i.e., liver, kidney, and pancreas), evaluates electrolytes, proteins, and can be the first step in detecting certain metabolic diseases. Measurement of thyroid hormone screens for an over or under-active thyroid gland.

#### ▪ Urine Tests

A urinalysis involves an analysis of the chemical components in urine, as well as a microscopic examination of the cells and solid material present in urine. Urinalysis provides information about how well the kidneys are working, identifies the presence of inflammation or infection, and may detect the presence of underlying metabolic diseases such as diabetes. Urinalysis is a particularly important component of senior wellness testing because of the remarkably high rate of kidney disease in older pets.

#### ▪ Fecal Tests

Most of the time, a fecal analysis is done with the use of a microscope to determine if any intestinal parasite (worm) eggs are being shed in the feces. The general appearance or consistency of the feces can also be an indication of disease and may lead to recommendation for further testing.

### Summary

Wellness testing is a simple and effective way of monitoring your pet's health beyond regular physical examinations by your veterinarian. Early detection and correction of medical problems help to ensure that your pet will be healthy and active for as long as possible.

**"FLIP THE LIP!"**

A healthy mouth means a healthy pet.

Did you know?



- Dental disease is the most common disease in both dogs and cats - by the time they are three years old, more than 70% of pets have some form of dental disease.
- Left untreated, dental disease can make eating, play, and other day-to-day activities painful for your pet.
- Dental disease does not stay in the mouth - inflamed gums allow dangerous bacteria access to the bloodstream, where they shower important organs, leading to respiratory problems, heart disease, kidney and liver diseases, diabetes, and more.



How will you know if your pet has dental disease? **Bad Breath is one clue!** Bacteria forms a film of **plaque** on the teeth, and breath gets gross. If that plaque is not removed, it starts to thicken and harden into **tartar**. **Tartar** is a yellow-brown buildup that you can see on the teeth - but by the time you see it, tartar is also below the gum line, where it causes inflammation called **gingivitis**. If left untreated, gingivitis progresses to **periodontal disease**: swollen bleeding gums, chronic pain, loose and broken teeth, and infection.

**The bad news is;** most pets never show any symptoms of dental disease. Even those with painful mouths will continue to eat and even play with toys. Pets instinctively hide pain as, in the wild, pain is seen as a weakness.

**The good news is;** there is plenty you can do to keep your pet's mouth clean and healthy.

Today, we may have recommended a full dental cleaning. This is much like we would get at our dentist, but your pet must be under anaesthesia, because even the best-trained pet won't tolerate the scraping and polishing and probing under the gums that is required to do a thorough job.

**To prevent dental disease, we recommend some or all the following:**

- A prescription diet that cleans the teeth and has the Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) seal of approval.
- **SAFE** dental chews that are designed to help remove plaque.
- Brushing your pet's teeth regularly with a pet-safe toothpaste (human toothpaste is toxic to pets)

## THE OBESITY EPIDEMIC

If you feel that our team is obsessed with measuring your pet's weight and discussing nutrition, you are absolutely correct! There is an obesity epidemic in North American pets, and it is getting worse. In 2013, more than 50% of cats and dogs were overweight or obese.

**Why does it matter? Even a few excess pounds put your pet at increased risk for:**

- Arthritis
- Diabetes

- High Blood Pressure
- Heart and Lung Disease
- Cranial Cruciate (knee) Ligament Injury
- Kidney Disease
- Many Forms of Cancer
- Decreased life expectancy (up to 2.5 years)

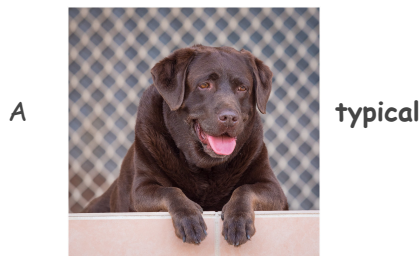
Here are three common reasons for excess weight gain:

- 1) **Perception.** Sometimes it can be hard to get too worried about "just a few extra pounds" on your pet but remember how much smaller than us most pets are. The link below helps you figure out how much your pet weighs compared to an adult human:

<http://www.petobesityprevention.org/pet-weight-translator/> .

For example,

A **Labrador Retriever** who should weigh 60lbs, weighing 75lbs, is like a 5'8" person who should weigh 165lbs, weighing in at 205lbs.



cat should weigh 10 lbs. At 18lbs, that's like a 5'4" person who should weigh 140 lbs, weighing in at 265lbs.



- 2) **Portions.** It is best to feed your pet at set mealtimes, two to three times per day, measuring out the food each time. We can help you determine how much to feed. If you follow the feeding guide on the food package, keep in mind that you should be feeding to your pet's ideal body weight. Many feeding guides on the packages overestimate what a typical pet needs.
- 3) **Treats.** We tend to overdo it. To use a Labrador Retriever as an example, the maximum number of calories from treats per day should be 100 or less. **This is equivalent to:** 2 medium sized typical dog bone treats, **OR** 1 tablespoon peanut butter **OR** 1.5 oz. cheddar cheese **OR** 6 low calorie veterinary prescribed dog bone treats.

How many treats does your pet get per day?

What can you do to help your pet?

1. If your pet has weight to lose, accept that and take action! If not, work to prevent obesity.
2. Feed your pet the recommended daily amount in two to three meals.
3. Reduce treats and the number of times you reward with food; use toys, attention, and love, instead.
4. Bring your pet in for free monthly weigh-ins to monitor progress.



# GASTROINTESTINAL FOREIGN BODIES

Can you believe they eat these things?

Our pets like to play with things and play often involves chewing. Chewing can lead to accidental swallowing, and potential disaster can ensue. Pets of any age can get into trouble, but young dogs and cats are most at risk. Common objects, or "foreign bodies", that are sometimes swallowed include:

- Toys, especially the squeakers from dog toys
- Socks, underwear, nylons
- Rocks, sticks, pine needles
- Corn cobs
- Balls
- Jewelry, coins
- Leashes and collars
- Plastic bags
- Fishhooks
- Tinsel, ribbon
- Elastic bands, hair ties
- Ear plugs
- Bathroom garbage (dental floss, feminine hygiene products)
- Kitchen garbage (bones, foil, packaging)
- Sewing needles (especially tempting to cats when attached to thread), yarn
- Wooden skewers with meat attached (we cannot see the skewers on an x-ray!)



The list goes on. If the object does not pass and causes obstruction or partial obstruction, surgery will be needed to remove it. Swift diagnosis allows for prompt removal of the foreign body before the bowel is severely damaged. In more advanced situations, sections of damaged bowel must be removed and in the worst possible scenario, the intestine breaks open and spills bacteria and digested food throughout the abdomen. This latter possibility is associated with exceedingly high death rate and should be avoided.

Sometimes the pet ingests a stringy object such as tinsel, yarn, or pieces of fabric. These objects can cause the intestine to bunch up on itself like a drawstring. They may also saw right through the intestine, leading to a much more serious situation. This can also happen when a needle is caught under a cat's tongue, leaving the attached thread to trail down to the stomach and intestines.

**Prevention is, by far, the best medicine:** keep these and other hazards out of your pet's reach and inspect toys regularly to ensure safety. If you have reason to suspect your pet has eaten something they should not have, contact us right away for advice.

# TOP 5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PET FOOD

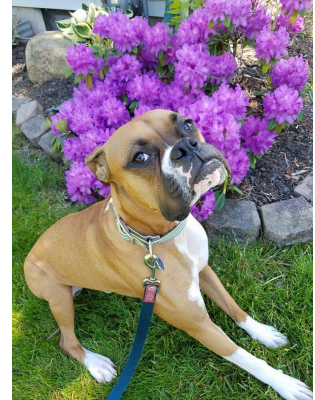
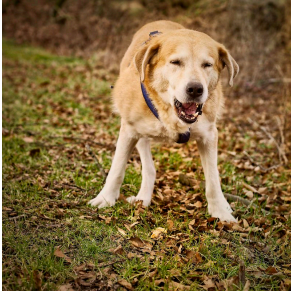
Reading labels and information online can be overwhelming and confusing, and not all information you read is factual. Here are the top 5 things you should know when choosing a pet food for your dog or cat:



1. **Credentials.** The pet food manufacturer should utilize at least one board-certified veterinary nutritionist (i.e. ACVN: American College of Veterinary Nutrition or ECVN: European College of Veterinary Comparative Nutrition) to formulate their diets. To determine this, you usually need to investigate through the company website or contact the company directly.
2. **AAFCO Statement.** Look for the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) statement on the label, which designates the lifestage the food is indicated for (this may be different than what is conveyed on the front of the bag). A food that meets AAFCO requirements for "all lifestages" means it is in fact, a kitten or puppy food formulation, and may not be ideal for an adult, overweight, or aging pet.
3. **Ingredients.** Pets derive nutrients from the ingredients in their food. Some ingredients may sound more appetizing to humans but may actually be less nutritious than other ingredients that seem less appealing. Some manufacturers may add unproven ingredients to diets solely for marketing purposes in order to attract consumers. Ingredients are listed on labels in order of weight, including water, so ingredients with high water content (like "chicken") are going to appear higher on the list than similar amounts of dry ingredients (like "rice" or "chicken meal" - cooked, dehydrated chicken meat) even though they may contribute fewer nutrients to the overall diet.
4. **Grain-Free.** Whole grains, rather than being fillers, contribute valuable nutrients, including vitamins, minerals, essential fatty acids, and fiber, to diets while helping to keep the fat and calories lower. Most dogs and cats are very efficient at digesting and utilizing nutrients from grains. Allergies to grains are very uncommon in pets and feeding a food free of grains does NOT prevent allergies in non-allergic pets. Many grain-free diets contain starches such as those from sweet potatoes or tapioca (cassava) in place of grains. These ingredients often provide fewer nutrients and less fiber than whole grains, while costing more.
5. **By-products.** By-products (mainly organ meats) often provide more nutrients than muscle meats on a per weight basis, are important components of many pet foods, and even considered delicacies for humans in other countries. The term by-product comes from the fact that these are the leftovers from animal carcasses once the desirable (for North Americans) muscle meat has been removed for human consumption. Mammal by-products by AAFCO definition **DO NOT INCLUDE** hair, hooves, horn, hide trimmings, or intestinal contents. Like all ingredients, the quality of by-products can vary, so it is important to select manufacturers who have stringent internal quality control standards.

# HOW TO RECOGNIZE PAIN IN YOUR DOG

Dogs often hide pain and illness. If a dog was in the wild and showed pain or was acting unwell, it would be at risk from predators. The instinct to protect oneself is strong, and it means that sometimes it can be difficult to tell if your dog is sick or in pain. It is common for pet owners to miss signs of pain in their dog and assume if the dog is not whining, it is not in pain.



The dogs:

following can be subtle signs of pain

in

- Avoidance of slippery floor surfaces.
- Choosing to lay down when eating or drinking.
- Difficulty rising or sitting/laying down, or difficulty getting comfortable, or not sleeping well.
- Reduction in mobility. Limping is an obvious sign, but if more than one leg is affected, it can be more subtle and the dog may just have a "stiffer" gait than before.
- Reluctance or inability to jump/climb onto the furniture or bed or into the car.
- Reluctance to raise the head to take a treat.
- Lagging behind on walks.
- Reluctance to go up or down stairs.
- Resentment of brushing/grooming when the dog didn't mind before.
- Housesoiling accidents.
- Change in personality: aggressive or short-tempered or withdrawn/hiding.
- Loss of appetite.

The causes of pain in dogs can be as varied as they are in humans, but in middle-aged to older pets, osteoarthritis would be one of the most common causes of chronic pain. Osteoarthritis is diagnosed on history, physical examination and x-rays of the joints, and treatments are available to help with comfort.

**Please do not administer ANY pain medications to your dog without first discussing it with your veterinarian.** Some over-the-counter pain remedies used for people are toxic to dogs (ie. Advil®, Aleve®), and a pain medication prescribed for one problem may not be safe for another. No one deserves to be in pain, and your pet is no exception. Effective pain management options are available, and sometimes the only way to know if your pet has been in pain is to have your veterinarian prescribe a course of pain medication and see if you notice behaviour changes in your

pet. None of us want our pets to suffer in silence. Talk to us if you think your dog is in pain so we can help.



## NEWLY EMERGING DISEASES IN ONTARIO AS OF 2019

The last few years, much attention has been focused on ticks and the diseases that they can transmit, such as Lyme disease. We are still just as concerned about tick bite prevention, especially as the climate changes, but now there are a few other diseases on the horizon that we want you to know about.

Take a moment to learn more about the following infections, but rest assured, they are still considered uncommon in Ontario:

1. **Blastomycosis** is caused by a fungus, *Blastomyces dermatitidis*, that is present in soil. There are parts of the US where this infection is commonly diagnosed but fortunately in Ontario, this is still considered a rare disease. There are several hot spots around Georgian Bay and Kenora, however, where dogs are at increased risk. Dogs become infected through contamination of a wound or by inhaling the fungal spores (i.e. while rooting around in soil). The organism causes open and draining sores on the skin, or if inhaled, a serious pneumonia can result. Other signs of infection are more vague including fever, weight loss and decreased appetite. Either way, the disease is difficult to diagnose and the treatment is expensive and prolonged. People can become infected as well, but the infection is not passed directly from an infected dog to a human. There is no good way to prevent this infection, but if you frequent the areas of concern, try to restrict your dog from digging around in the soil.
2. **Lungworms**. When presented with a dog with a chronic cough, there are many causes we consider, but now added to the list would be the possibility the dog has been infected with lungworm. There are two such parasites of concern in Ontario. In both cases, the fox is the natural host, but coyotes, wolves, and dogs can be infected as well. Infection occurs when the dog eats an infected intermediate host, such as an earthworm, snail, slug, or eats a frog, mouse, or bird that has one of these critters in its stomach. Sometimes chest x-rays may indicate infection. A fecal sample can be analyzed for microscopic parasite eggs or larvae which are coughed up in phlegm by the dog and then swallowed and passed in the stool. Diagnosis can be difficult, so many times a treatment trial with an oral or topical dewormer will be started, and then response to treatment assessed.



3. **Echinococcus tapeworms.** Usually when we talk about tapeworm infection and prevention, we are discussing *Dipylidium caninum* or *Taenia* spp. To become infected with these tapeworms, a dog or cat needs to eat a flea, rabbit, or rodent. *Echinococcus* spp. tapeworm infection causes more concern because the infection can lead to cysts in the organs of the body with serious medical consequences, and both dogs and humans can be affected. The natural host is the fox or coyote, and they spread the tapeworm eggs in their stool. If a dog becomes infected, they could pass infective eggs to the humans in the household through contact with their fecal material, or the dog could develop the dangerous cysts in their organs. Many of the dewormers we use for the more routine tapeworms also help prevent infection with *Echinococcus* spp., but the best prevention includes prohibiting dogs from eating rodents and the feces of wildlife, and not allowing dogs to eat the entrails of sheep or white-tailed deer (**attention, hunters!**). People should always practice good hygiene, especially after contact with their dog or its feces. Be aware that eating wild berries, mushrooms or greens that may have been contaminated by fox or coyote feces also increases the risk of infection.

