

Increasing The Longevity of Our Pets

The most important function of an animal doctor is treating and curing disease. However, it is to every one's advantage to prevent disease before it begins. This role of a veterinary health care provider is extremely important and by following the recommendations below, a pet owner can extend and improve the quality of life for the pets who have become a rich part of the texture of many family's life.

1. Feed a high quality diet.

Pets fed a high quality diet have the advantage of a stronger immune system, a shiny hair coat, healthy skin, and bright eyes. A good diet can help maintain his or her intestinal health, help increase his or her mental acuity, and keep joints and muscles healthy. Most pet foods contain adequate amounts of vitamin and mineral supplements, however, I strongly recommend supplementing most diets with Omega 3's. They are found in fish oil. There are specially designed Omega 3 supplements that combine the different elements into special combinations that research has found especially beneficial to pets. This supplement improves the health of the skin, the heart and mental functions.

2. Prevent Overweight.

Pets that are overweight are at risk for many health issues. Obesity is the number one nutritional disease seen in pets currently and it is a proven fact that being overweight or obese can shorten a dog or cat's life span by as much as two years. Being overweight puts your pet at risk for joint disease, pancreatitis, heart disease and diabetes.

3 Dental Disease can be life threatening.

Dental disease and oral health problems can cause your pet pain and make it difficult for him or her to eat. In addition, if left untreated, oral health issues may lead to heart and kidney disease. One way of slowing down the process of periodontal disease in a pet's mouth is to brush his or her teeth at home. If your pet will not tolerate the use of toothbrushes there are other alternatives as well, including dental diets, treats such as Greenies and toys. Periodic cleaning under anesthesia

may be required. A dental exam by your veterinarian will reveal the extent of tarter build-up, gingivitis and periodontal disease.

4. Do not allow your pet to roam without your supervision.

Allowing your dog or cat to roam free may seem like a humane kindness, however, pets that roam are susceptible to a number of dangers, including automobile accidents, predation, exposure to contagious diseases, exposure to poisons, and more.

5. Take your pet to the veterinarian regularly.

All pets require regular veterinary care. However, veterinary care is more than just annual vaccinations. A routine examination by your veterinarian can uncover health issues of which you are unaware. This is especially important in an aging pet. Kidney disease is common in aging animals, and a blood chemistry test can help your veterinarian change the diet and extend the life of his patient. In many cases, an early diagnosis improves the chances of successful treatment. Early diagnosis is also likely to be less costly for you. In our geographic area, I recommend semi-annual blood tests for any pet exposed to ticks. Diagnosed early, Lyme disease and other tick born diseases can be successfully managed before they do irreversible damage.