

Early Nutrition

The skin is a remarkable organ whose primary function is to form a barrier between a living organism and its external environment. This barrier provides protection against physical and chemical insults as well as the penetration of allergens and bacteria. Studies have shown that feeding a high quality food during a puppy or kittens early life will help them create a solid foundation for the skin to build on.

Puppies and kittens fed a high quality food with optimal amounts of B vitamins and amino acids help reduce transepidermal water losses (TEWL) and help strengthen the barrier effect of the skin. As the epidermal (outer) layer of the skin loses water, it lowers the barrier effect of the skin which triggers allergic reactions. In dogs and cats, allergies cause itchy skin and ears as well as skin and ear infections.

Pets that are fed off-brand foods have a higher rate of skin related diseases such as allergies. However, nutrition is not the be-all-end-all. Genetics also play a role. The best chance of preventing or mitigating allergic skin diseases is by feeding premium foods such as Science Diet or Royal Canin. These brands perform studies on their products and have proved pets fed their foods have healthier hair coats, stronger bones, and less bowel movements.

Nutrition is a vital part of our pet's well-being. Proper nutrition helps our pets live a long, healthy life. Call us today to discuss your pet's nutritional needs.

Reference Articles can be found at www.Sogevalus.com/files/DrLam_article.pdf

Dental Month

It's that time of year again. February is National Dental Month. To celebrate, every dentistry in the month of February is 10% off. Remember, a pet's teeth are windows to their entire body's health. Animals with healthy teeth live up to 6 years longer.

A dentistry, in animals, requires anesthesia. As with any anesthetic procedure, we recommend preanesthetic bloodwork before the anesthesia and IV fluids during the dentistry. Depending on the age of your pet, bloodwork and IV fluids may be required. Once your animal is under anesthesia, we clean your pet's teeth just like the dental hygienist cleans your teeth. We remove any plaque or tartar, clean between the teeth, and scale under the gumline. Once the teeth are clean, we polish the teeth to remove any fine scratches and crevices in the enamel of the tooth. We also offer fluoride treatment and OraVet.

If Dr. Steele recommended a dentistry, call us in January to schedule your pet's dental during Dental Month.

Heartworm Disease

Heartworm season is again quickly approaching. Especially with the crazy Michigan weather this winter!!

We recommend year round heartworm medications for the best in parasite control. The preventatives we carry not only control heartworm, but also intestinal parasites and fleas. We also have preventative for ticks and other external parasites.

Heartworm tests must be performed annually. If your pet is on year round prevention, we try to coincide the test with your annual exam and vaccines.

Year round prevention is the best health option for your pet and family. Many parasites that infect animals are transmissible to humans.

Thundershirts and Anxiety

This spring, we will be adding a new tool to help our patients with anxiety, whether that be thunderstorm phobia, separation anxiety, or fear phobias.

Thundershirt is an excellent treatment for most types of dog anxiety and fear issues. For many anxieties, we recommend just putting on a Thundershirt and observing the results. You very well may see significant improvement in noise, crate, travel, and barking behaviors with absolutely no training. For more complicated anxiety cases, we recommend using the thundershirt as part of a behavior modification program.

For a large percentage of dogs, Thundershirt's gentle, constant pressure has a calming effect. The Thundershirt is also a useful tool in management of excitability, leash training, hyperactivity with strangers or behavior training. Thundershirt's calming effect helps a dog to focus (or refocus) her energies in a more constructive direction, allowing training to be more effective.

Based on surveys completed by over two thousand customers, **over 80% of dogs have significant improvement in symptoms when using Thundershirt.** The gentle, constant pressure has a dramatic effect for most anxious, fearful or over-excited dogs.

If your dog has anxiety issues, give us a call to see if Thundershirt would benefit you and your pet. We will help you choose the correct size to fit your dog.

Exotic Corner

Guinea Pig Health

Guinea Pigs are one of the *only* animals that must have vitamin C in their diets. Without enough vitamin C, they will develop scurvy. While guinea pig pellets do contain vitamin C, the vitamins are only present in the food within the first 3 months of being made. Often times, the pellets are over 3 months old when purchased, therefore, we must supplement the guinea pig's diet to ensure he or she is getting enough vitamin C. Some examples of good sources of vitamin C for your guinea pig include red peppers, kale, parsley, broccoli and cauliflower. Consult with your veterinarian for specific dietary recommendations for your pig regarding the amount of pellets, hay and produce to feed each day.

Common signs of scurvy include limping, a poor appetite, rough hair-coat, diarrhea, reluctance to move or vocalizing in pain. Guinea pigs with scurvy sometimes have an accompanying respiratory infection as well. Scurvy can be reversed with proper medication and treatment from your veterinarian, but it is important to begin treatment as soon as possible.

We recommend a physical exam for your guinea pig at the first signs of illness. Because guinea pigs (and other exotic pets) hide signs of sickness, they are usually very ill by the time the symptoms are noticed. We also recommend a wellness exam for your pig as soon as you adopt him or her, as well as on an annual basis.