



Island Cats Mews

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Don't Forget Your Coat, Hat...and Cat?

Aaaah, summer! Time to get away! When making travel plans for your family, be sure to make proper arrangements for your cat as well. No one considers leaving a young child home alone for days, yet some cat owners leave their kitty alone at home for up to a week believing that a big bowl of food and water is sufficient. Unfortunately, during all vacation seasons, veterinarians see a dramatic increase in the number of owners who return home to find their cat critically ill, complicated by the delay in care. No one was available to see that the cat was ill, injured, on a hunger strike, or unable to urinate or defecate. Sadly, cats can die within twenty four hours if unable to urinate (usually due to a common cat *(cont. pg 2)*)



How Does Your Cat's Mouth Look?



Dental disease is a silent process that may cause many other illnesses, including kidney, heart, and blood infections. When cats don't receive the dental care they need to keep their teeth clean and their gums healthy, their mouths can harbor bad bacteria. When they groom themselves, they spread this bacteria across their coat as well as in your home which, aside from being a gross thought, can cause bad smells, greasy coats, a decrease in appetite, in addition to increased health risks. If you've ever had a cavity or dental work done, you know how painful it can be. For humans, caring for our teeth is something we do almost automatically. Cats however, don't have a built in way to keep their teeth clean and the responsibility falls on the cat owner. Although diet can contribute to dental health, genetics plays the larger part in how often cats need dental intervention. Because of the variance in frequency for dental care in cats, our veterinarians recommend having your cat's teeth examined once a year. This is usually done as part of the annual physical, however, if you notice symptoms such as decreased appetite, bad breath, vomiting, drooling, greasy coat, food falling from your cat's mouth or "head shaking" while eating we recommend scheduling a dental exam sooner rather than later. Your veterinarian will check for plaque, tartar build-up, oral resorptive lesions (ORL's), gingivitis, periodontal disease, stomatitis, and oral cancers. *(cont. pg. 2)*

Summer Care Tips For Your Cat

Summers in western Washington have always been unpredictable with cold and rain followed by dry hot scorches, and it can happen all in the same day! Following are some tips to remember to keep your cat safe and healthy during the summer seasons:

- If your cat goes outside and is unable to come back in via a cat door or window, make sure there is a covered, well-shaded area where your cat can avoid the mid-day sun, as well as the unexpected downpour.
- Provide plenty of fresh drinking water at all times. Dehydration is not uncommon in cats, especially in older kitties and leads to a variety of health problems. If your cat likes to drink running water (ex. from faucets or bathtubs), consider purchasing a fountain water bowl sold at most pet supply stores. Maintaining adequate hydration is imperative, especially for cats with a history of developing urinary crystals. *(cont. pg 2)*



Drinkwell Pet Fountain

Favorites Corner



Get to know us as we get to know you and your cats. When we're not working with kitties, we're reading our favorite books/authors:

- Dr. Marshall:** Hermux Tantamoq Adventures
Dr. Monahan: James Herriot
Dr. Gross: The Time Traveler's Wife
Amy: Life of Pi, Book of Flying
Cheryl: Dune, Jane Austen
Cindy: Jennifer Weiner, Marian Keyes
Dana: The Inferno, The Odyssey
Hayla: Prayer for Owen Meany, John Irving
Biscuit: Skippy Jon Jones, Lillian J. Braun
Blue Sky: Where The Wild Things Are
 See more favorites on our Staff page at www.islandcatsvet.com

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Cat Travel Arrangements

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condition that causes blockage in the urinary tract) and within days if not eating. Cats may go hungry even with a large bowl of food nearby—cat's will choose to starve before eating a food they have become averse to. When away from home, we recommend having a friend, or pet sitter check on your cat daily to monitor food and water intake, litterbox production, general well-being (bright, alert, "normal"), and give needed loving attention. Also, an unscooped box can cause your cat to go outside the box which can be a difficult habit to change. If a pet sitter is not available, we recommend boarding as the next best option, especially for cats with special medical needs. Although cats tend to prefer to stay in their own environment, often a home-away-from-home is the next best alternative to keep your kitty safe. The peace of mind while you are away is worth every penny, not to mention the savings in medical bills. If you would like a referral for a pet sitter or to make boarding arrangements for your cat, please call us. Remember to book early for the holidays!



Summer Care Tips For Your Cat

(continued from pg. 1)

- Keep your cat well-groomed. Mats are painful, decrease your cat's ability to keep cool and contribute to skin disease. Also, the hot weather can cause excessive shedding which increases the incidence of hairballs in cats. Hairballs can upset your cat's stomach and cause anorexia. Hairballs can be prevented with regular comb-outs using a comb with long enough teeth to reach through your cat's undercoat (the very fine fur on the underside of your cat's coat). You can also administer an oral hairball remedy such as Cat Lax or Laxatone (available at Island Cats and most pet stores) that helps hair pass through your cat's digestive system.
- Make sure your cat is up-to-date on vaccines to prevent infectious diseases. Cats usually have more contact with other cats outside than during winter months. We frequently see an increase in abscesses and fight wounds throughout the summer.
- Use monthly flea and heartworm prevention. If your cat has outdoor exposure, preventives should be used at least from March to October due to parasite exposure from fleas & mosquitoes, possibly longer depending on how cold it gets.
- The poisons that kill common pests like rodents, snails, and slugs can be lethal to cats if consumed. Limit your cat's access to places where these poisons exist in and around your home.
- Lawn herbicides can also poison pets. Keep your cat out of the yard when spraying herbicides, and keep off the grass for 3 days afterward. Washing your cats paws or wiping with pet wipes will minimize herbicidal residue.
- The temperature inside a car easily climbs to 120 degrees when a car is parked in the summer sun. *Never* leave any pet unattended in a vehicle.



If you feel your cat is dehydrated, overheated, has been exposed to toxins, or has developed chronic symptoms, call your veterinarian right away.

Protecting Your Cat's Mouth (continued from pg. 1)

These are examples of different stages of dental health that you and your veterinarian are looking for during a dental exam. Sometimes lesions and damaged teeth aren't discovered until after the tartar is cleaned from your cat's teeth, showing what lies beneath:



Stage 1: Note tartar build-up around teeth. May also see mild tissue loss.



Stage 2: Moderate tissue loss around tooth.



Stage 3: Deep dental tissue loss. Gum has grown over an ORL. Tooth is intact.



Stage 4: Extensive tissue loss. Most of tooth has lost its integrity.

While gingivitis is reversible, late stage periodontal disease is not and may cause further dental problems that can be very painful for your cat. If diagnosed and treated in the early stages, this process can be slowed or stopped. If your cat requires dentistry we will work with you to schedule a convenient day to bring your cat in to the hospital. Dental prophylaxis (cleaning & polishing) is the most common dental procedure done on cats. Your kitty comes in first thing in the morning, and returns home the same afternoon. General anesthesia is required for any kind of veterinary dental work, and the risks are minimal. Anesthetic risk can be minimized with pre-anesthetic screening tests, and is required for all cats over the age of 7 years. Dental radiographs may be taken to assess the extent of any damage. If any extractions are necessary due to resorptive lesions or damaged teeth, they will be performed under anesthesia after the prophylaxis. The suture used for extraction sites is absorbable and does not require removal at a later date. Pain medication is provided throughout the process to minimize all discomfort to your cat. It is our goal to provide treatment that prevents pain or discomfort and eases stress so that your cat can live a healthy, happy life for years to come.