

Mews & News

VOLUME I, ISSUE 4

SUMMER 2008



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Taking the Mystery Out of Anesthesia

How many of you have had a cat spayed or neutered in the past year? Or been told that your cat really needs to have his teeth cleaned? How many of you, in that situation, have been concerned about the anesthesia involved? You are not alone! Many people come to us in very similar situations, and are reluctant to follow recommendations that involve anesthesia. The reasons are varied. Some people have read information on the internet or elsewhere implying that anes-

thesia is unsafe. Some have had a pet that had an adverse "reaction" to anesthesia in the past, or even a pet that died under anesthesia. Whatever the cause for anxiety, a one-on-one discussion with your veterinarian can help to address most, if not all, of these common concerns.

Veterinary anesthesia has come a very long way since the "dark ages" of ether and chloroform! Even in the past 10 years, significant gains have been made in this area of medicine. New drugs and

monitors help to make anesthesia safer than ever. There are even veterinarians who become board certified specialists in anesthesia, just as in human medicine!

To begin, a basic understanding of what anesthesia involves is essential. Basically, drugs are used to render a pet unconscious so that the necessary procedures or surgery can be performed. These drugs are typically injectable or inhaled gas.

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Summertime Tips for Your Healthy Cat!

With warmer weather already on the way, it's time to think about preparing your cats for the summertime!

Some of you may ask "What could my cat possibly need to get ready for summer? He doesn't go to the beach, he won't be out mowing the lawn, and he never gets sunburned!" Well, it's time to think again! This time of year, it's good to get your cat prepared for fleas, heartworms, and other parasites (yes, even indoor

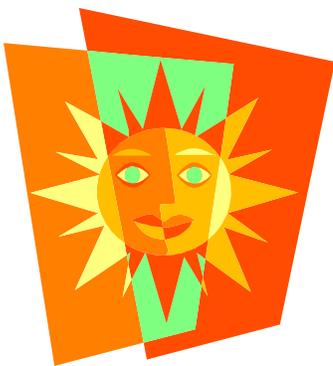
cats!), make sure he is up-to-date on necessary vaccinations, and make boarding reservations for your upcoming vacation.

The American Heartworm Society, www.heartwormsociety.org, recommends year-round parasite preventative for cats, to protect against heartworm, fleas, and intestinal worms. Summer is a crucial season to protect your cat, as the warm weather will find more fleas and heartworm-carrying

mosquitoes out and about. Even indoor cats are exposed to mosquitoes, and fleas are easy to carry indoors on your clothing. Not to mention that even the most faithful indoor kitty will get the urge to roam when the weather is nice!

Parasite preventatives are doubly important in households with young children, as they are most susceptible to zoonotic parasite infections (infections transmitted from animals to people).

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Taking the Mystery Out of Anesthesia, cont.



*Anesthesia has its origins with the Greek **Anaesthesia**, from an- 'without' and aesthesis- 'sensation'.*

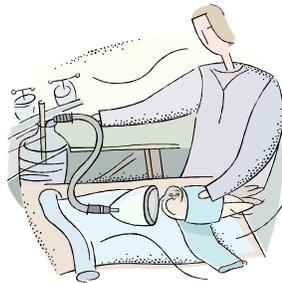
*The first medical use of **Chloroform** as an anesthetic was by James Young Simpson in 1847.*

Once the animal is unconscious, a breathing tube is typically placed and attached to an anesthetic machine, which delivers anesthetic gas and oxygen to keep the pet asleep for the entire procedure. When the procedure is finished, the flow of anesthetic gas is stopped, and the animal is allowed to wake up. Of course, there are many things that go on during this whole course of events in order to ensure a safe anesthetic experience, but those are the basic steps.

One of the more recent advances in veterinary anesthesia is the realization that a combination of several drugs, used in small doses, is often more safe than giving one larger dose of a single drug. With that in mind, we plan our anesthetic events in stages. First, the cat is sedated with a combination of 2-3 drugs, usually by injection. Once the cat is sleepy, an intravenous catheter is placed. This is a very important step, as it allows fluids and any necessary emergency drugs to be administered quickly during anesthesia. The cats do not typically mind having the catheter placed, as they are sleepy from the sedative. Once the catheter is in place, an induc-

tion drug is given to induce unconsciousness. This usually happens very quickly, and then the breathing tube is placed. At this point, the cat is hooked up to the anesthesia machine for the duration of the procedure. The anesthesia machine will deliver the desired amount of anesthetic gas and oxygen, and also allows us to breathe for the animal, if needed.

It is at this point that monitoring becomes critical. All the careful planning and dosing of drugs does not do

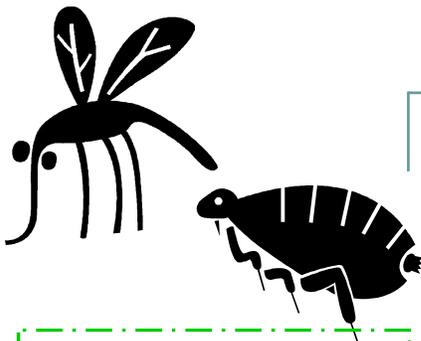


much good if a problem goes undetected! Most advanced veterinary practices will use a variety of monitors to keep track of a patient's vital signs under anesthesia. Levels that are typically monitored during anesthesia include blood pressure, pulse rate, breathing rate, carbon dioxide levels, blood oxygen levels, and body temperature. Anesthetic levels and fluids are adjusted accordingly to ensure that your pet remains safe. Of course, the most

important monitor of all is a live person, and we always have an assistant dedicated to monitoring patients under anesthesia.

Once the procedure is finished, the anesthetic gas on the machine is dialed down to "zero", and the patient is allowed to breathe 100% oxygen until recovery. Recovery usually takes between 5-15 minutes. Once the pet has started to regain consciousness, the breathing tube is removed. Again, the patient is monitored during this entire procedure, even after the anesthetic gas has been turned off. The IV catheter is removed, and in a couple of hours, your pet is ready to come home.

In the next issue of our newsletter, we'll address cases or conditions where anesthesia may be more risky, we'll discuss anesthesia monitoring, and we'll give you some questions to help discuss your anesthesia concerns with your veterinarian!



Fleas and mosquitoes are common summertime pests, even for indoor cats!

Summertime Tips, Cont.

Summer is also a cat's favorite time to sneak out of the house, roam out of the yard, and make "friends" with all the neighborhood cats. Vet clinics see a lot of cat fight wounds and hit-by-car victims this time of year. Make sure your cat is up-to-date on all recommended vaccinations, and make sure he

has a collar with a tag and identifying information.

If your family has a summer vacation planned this year, don't forget to make arrangements for "Fluffy" to board with us! Leaving her at home alone, with a bowl of stale water and a mountain of food that she will probably finish the first day

is not the best plan. She can stay here with us, in air conditioned comfort, and watch the squirrels and birds from the window seat in our playroom!

We hope you find these tips helpful. Have a great summer!

Ask Izzy

Dear Izzy,

When I visited the clinic last week for my checkup, I noticed that you are losing some hair, and looking rather bald! What is going on?

Signed, Concerned Kitty

Dear Concerned,

Thank you for your thoughtfulness! Unfortunately, you are not the only one to have noticed my thinning hair. I have been really itchy all

winter long, and I have managed to lick off a lot of hair on my rear legs and belly. We tried some tasty special food, in case it was a food allergy, but to no avail. Well, Dr. Lewis sent in a blood sample on me, and it turns out I do have allergies! I am allergic to a number of different pollens, trees, molds, and mites. So, I recently started getting allergy shots. I will try to be brave and not make too much of a fuss about the injections! And over the next several months, you will hopefully see

that my beautiful hair is coming back.

I'd like to say that if any of you cats out there are experiencing unbearable itchiness and hair loss like me, you don't have to suffer in silence! Get your people to bring you in for a talk with Dr. Lewis. Maybe you have allergies too!

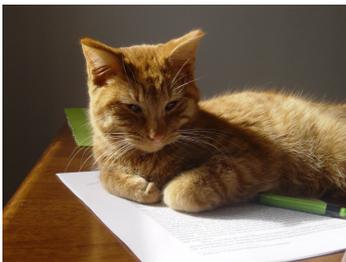
Signed, Izzy



Izzy, our Resident Cat, likes to help out around the clinic by answering questions from our patients and their families. If you have a question for Izzy, you can send it to her via mail, or e-mail from our website, www.RiversideCatHospital.com, and click on the *contact us* link.

In Memoriam

In memory of those kitties who have left us in the past 3 months— They give so much and demand so little in return.



*Klima Musiel
Lance Morey
Nemo Dufner
Chevy Burke*

*Malcolm
Kissling*

Just this side of heaven is a place called Rainbow Bridge.

When an animal dies that has been especially close to someone here, that pet goes to the Rainbow Bridge.

There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water and sunshine, and our friends are warm and comfortable. All the animals who had been ill and old are restored to health and vigor; those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them in our dreams of days and times gone by. The animals are happy and content, except for one small thing; they each miss someone very special to them, who had to be left behind.

They all run and play together, but the day comes when one suddenly stops and looks into the distance. His bright eyes are intent; his eager body quivers. Suddenly he begins to run from the group, flying over the green grass, his legs carrying him faster and faster.

You have been spotted, and when you and your special friend finally meet, you cling together in joyous reunion, never to be parted again. The happy kisses rain upon your face; your hands again caress the beloved head, and you look once more into the trusting eyes of your pet, so long gone from your life but never absent from your heart.

Then you cross Rainbow Bridge together....

Employee Spotlight

Claudia Ottinger grew up in Lansing and currently lives in Haslett with her husband Matt and their family of “fur kids”. She worked in TV broadcasting and real estate sales before deciding she liked working with animals, especially cats. She spent time at the

Humane Society and another cat clinic before coming to Riverside. Her other interests include crafty things like beading and polymer clay art, reading, crossword puzzles, and spending too much time on the computer.



RIVERSIDE CAT HOSPITAL

4632 Okemos Road
Okemos, MI 48864

Phone: 517-347-2287

Fax: 517-347-2787

www.RiversideCatHospital.com



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Riverside Cat Hospital was opened in 2006 by Dr. Kerry Lewis. She is a 1999 graduate of Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine, and lives in East Lansing with her husband, Andrew, and 3 children. They have 3 cats.

Our mission is to provide compassionate care to our feline friends, helping them to live longer, happier lives. We are cat people too! We understand the special bond that you have with your cats.

If you have friends or family with cats who might benefit from a more personalized, compassionate feline veterinary experience, please let them know about us! We are happy to provide a tour of our clinic anytime.

The Last Word...

Did you know that we offer dietary counseling for overweight cats? As with people, there is an epidemic of obesity in our pet population today. Many pet owners use treats as a way to bond with and reward their pets. Unfortunately, this can also lead to pet obesity. Many people do not even realize that their pet is carrying around extra weight.



Overweight cats face health problems, too, like an increased risk of diabetes, heart disease, and arthritis. But there is something you can do to prevent

these weight-related problems.

Admittedly, helping a cat to lose weight is not easy. They are not really motivated to exercise, and tend to over-eat out of boredom. We can help! We take pet obesity seriously. If you feel that your cat is a little too wide around the middle, or if your vet has recommended weight loss in the past, please give us a call. We will formulate an individual diet plan for your cat, taking into account overall physical health, exercise and lifestyle habits, goal weight, and necessary calories. We can also give you resources to find nutritional information, and

follow-up with you and your cat to check progress so you don't get discouraged.



You are your kitty's best advocate! Please call us today if you feel your cat could benefit from a specialized dietary plan. We are ready to help!