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Crest Hill
ANIMAL HOSPITAL

February Newsletter

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REMINDER:

Just a reminder that Will County is offering a discount to it's residents through the month of February. Residents can have up to 2 pets per household spayed or neutered and receive a \$40.00 discount at our hospital. Pets must have an updated exam and be current on age appropriate vaccines to qualify.

*You are
what
you eat!*



Exotic Pet Highlights



Since New Years means new “you” and new diets in some, it is important to touch on the diets of our Lagamorph, aka Rabbit friends. A lot of rabbit dental and gastrointestinal ailments can be prevented by feeding a proper diet. Rabbits are herbivores meaning they feed on plants. A rabbit's diet should be made up of good quality pellets, fresh hay (timothy or other grass hays), oat hay, water and fresh vegetables. Anything beyond that is a “treat” and should be given in limited quantities.

This issue of Crest Hill Animal Hospital's Newsletter will focus on the exotic pet. In the last decade more and more people are deciding to adopt family members that are not your average cat or dog. Pocket pets such as guinea pigs, hedgehogs, and sugar gliders have gained popularity for their ease of care. Snakes, reptiles, and tortoises are on the rise as well. Luckily, CHAH also has Dr. Bray, our resident Exotic vet, to help care for your companion. We will discuss signs to look for a when picking out a healthy pet, basic care and husbandry, common diseases associated with each species, and when to bring them in to see the veterinarian. Dr. Bray is available Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and select Saturdays.

Employee Pet Spotlight

This month's spotlight is on Tank, Veterinary Nurse, Shannon's Leopard Tortoise. Tank is 6 years old and has tons of personality. He has many friends that visit



him with treats such as cactus leaves, various fruits, and his favorite, dandelions. Tank loves his dog siblings, Addi, Finn and Gemma, and one of his favorite past times is being sprayed with a garden hose! He makes a statement wherever he goes.

Tortoise Sunbasking: The importance of UV lighting



Tortoises can be fun, hearty pets and are reasonably easy to care for. They can have playful, inquisitive personalities, as well, as be shy and reclusive. They do best in an outdoor environments, but are commonly kept as indoor pets. The environmental conditions of your tortoise are of utmost importance. Each species of tortoise has specific requirements, but housing tends to be similar. The humidity and temperature will be dependent on the type of tortoise. This is in the form of the temperature of the tank/heat lamps provided and how damp or dry the bedding should remain. They all do require at least 5% UVA/UVB lighting. These bulbs are especially important to the health of your pet and should be replaced every 6-9 months. The UV output will decrease before the bulb burns out. Without UVB tortoises are susceptible to Metabolic bone disease. They are also unable to metabolize Vitamin D which affects their calcium. In turn they become lethargic, unable to eat, and sick very quickly. It should be known that each bulb will have perimeters on how close it should be from the enclosure. These bulbs can actually cause burns similar to a tanning bed. On a final note, please remember that tortoises have very long life spans before taking one on as a pet. Many species live upward of 50+ years, with some even living until 100.

Scurvy Pigs

One of the most famous exotic pet that presents itself at CHAH is the guinea pig. These lovable, social, easy to care pets make wonderful companions. They often hide signs of diseases and are prone to respiratory infections. A healthy environment and diet can reduce this drastically. It is vital for the guinea pig owner to recognize that they cannot manufacture Vitamin C like other animals. Without this Vitamin a disease called Scurvy can develop in your pig. Scurvy can present as weakness, swollen joints, rough coat, irregular bleeding and wounds, and sudden death. A balance of timothy hay, and fruits and veggies high in Vitamin C are necessary. Oranges, kale, and dandelion greens are great options.



Snake housing requirements

Poor habitat conditions in snakes can be quite life threatening. Snakes require a warm temperature environment as well as humidity control. When



these requirements are not met, respiratory signs develop. Open mouth breathing, depressed appetite, mucous in the nasal openings can all lead to pneumonia. Many infections are bacterial, viral, or fungal, so be sure to research the exact cage conditions before purchasing your next snake. This will help your pet's immune system defeat these diseases.

Itchy Hedgies

Hedgehogs naturally lose some quills from time to time. If at any point you notice more quills than usual over a period of time, it is time to get them checked over. Hedgehogs commonly get mites on their skin that can be very uncomfortable and itchy. They can back off their food, become lethargic, and get very red, inflamed skin, even bald patches. This is something that can be treated by your veterinarian! Bedding and feed can harbor these mites. They can also be at risk for ticks, worms, and fleas. An itchy hedge is not normal.



Tumors in Rats

Rats by nature are very prone to developing tumors. These tumors can be malignant or benign and always warrant a vet visit. Females typically develop mammary and pituitary gland tumors, while males have testicular tumors. Your vet will likely recommend surgical removal before it spreads to other parts of the body. Chances of recurrence can be minimized if caught early enough.



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