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Crest Hill
ANIMAL HOSPITAL

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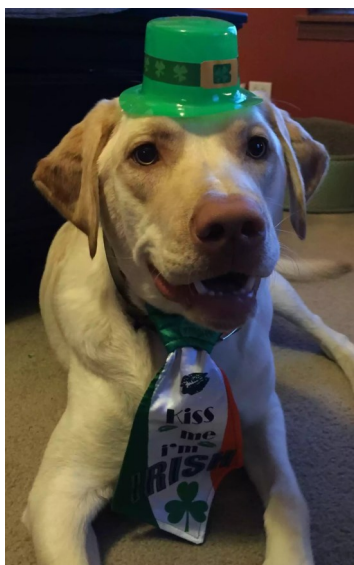
March Newsletter

Leptospirosis Dangers

Leptospirosis is a disease caused by infection with the *Leptospira* bacteria. The disease often causes serious damage to the kidney and liver, and may be fatal in severe cases. Bacteria are passed in the urine of infected animals and can survive in the environment for long periods of time in warm stagnant water or moist soil. Wild animals, including skunks, raccoons, opossums, rats, squirrels, and deer can spread the infection to dogs. Most dogs are infected by direct contact with urine from an infected animal. Others are infected by contact with water or soil contaminated with infected urine.

Leptospira can penetrate the soft lining of the nose, mouth, and eyelid, and can enter the body through open sores and scratches in the skin. After infection, bacteria multiply quickly in the bloodstream and then move into the tissues. They concentrate in the liver and kidneys causing extensive damage to these organs. The damage caused usually leads to liver and/or kidney failure. In severe infections the damage is irreversible and quickly becomes fatal. Dogs that have recovered can still carry *Leptospira* in their tissues and are called "carriers." Severely infected dogs show signs of lethargy, depression, loss of appetite, depression,

fever, vomiting, and increased thirst and urination. At this point, dogs need intensive antibiotic and hospitalization with IV fluid treatment. Recovery rates vary. It is important to know that this can be preventable. A vaccine is readily available for Leptospirosis and is given yearly. Getting this vaccine on a yearly basis and reducing exposure to possible sources will reduce chances of infection. Current vaccines protect dogs for 12 months. Another important note is that the *Leptospira* bacteria is zoonotic. This means that it can spread from animals to people. Extreme care should be taken if your dog is suspected of having *Leptospira*.



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Employee Pet Spotlight

Meet Gloria Kies! She is a 9 year old Boston Terrier who belongs to Sue, one of CHAH's long time managers. (20 YEARS!!) Gloria enjoys being outside, hiking, road trips, EATING, and soaking up the sun rays.



Canine & Feline Enrichment



The ASPCA defines canine enrichment as: “Additions to an animal’s environment with which the animal voluntarily interacts and, as a result experiences improved physical and or/psychological health.” This definition may sound complex but canine enrichment includes actions that are really quite simple.

Snuffle mats give an entirely unique experience. The mats engage the dogs powerful sense of smell as they snuffle, snort, and sniff their way through dinner or treat time. Built to stimulate a dog’s natural foraging instincts by mimicking the hunt for food in grass and fields, these mats feed both their belly and brain.



The muffin tin game is a fun and enriching activity to play with your dog. It stimulates the mind and encourages your dog to use its senses. Break your treats into a few small pieces and place them in some of the muffin cups. Place tennis balls in the muffin cups to hide the treats. Your dog will sniff around and discover yummy treats when it figures out how to knock the balls out of the tin.

Whether your dog is a canine Einstein or a bit of a slacker, he needs physical and mental stimulation. Many of the dogs today are tasked with nothing more challenging than taking a walk, pointing at the treat jar, or taking the best space on the sofa. Bored dogs can quickly become destructive dogs.

You can also energize, entertain, and stimulate your dog by offering interactive dog toys such as puzzles. Puzzles often have treats inside, and your dog’s challenge is to figure out how to get to the treat. A puzzle also requires him to remember how it works and what skills he needs to “win.” For your dog, solving a puzzle in order to get in order to get a reward puts him to work and engages his mind.



Enrichment is just as important to our feline family members. In order to be mentally and emotionally happy, cats need opportunities to express natural behaviors in appropriate ways. Meeting these needs will help them lead a fulfilling life with fewer behavioral issues. Some examples are battery operated self play toys, cat towers, catnip filled toys and puzzles, cardboard boxes, large paper bags, and laser pointers. Remember to supervise your cat with any new toys to be sure they are safe.



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Many of our employees and clients can attest to 4 M/E training with Patrick. Check out his classes for a way to get your pet out of a winter “rut.”



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