

## Most dogs get ear infections



### Vets answer pet questions

Do you have a question about how to raise that Christmas puppy? Or how to take care of an older dog's aging problems? A group of veterinarians from Oakland County will answer your questions in their new "Pet Care" column, beginning in today's edition.

Future columns, for example, will deal with books to consult when training a dog because many books on the market give conflicting advice.

Another column advises when to give a dog vitamins, the same way human diets are supplemented.

Will candy really cause a pet to get worms? They have the answer.

Is heartworm really a danger to city pets? A good question.

Coordinating the work will be Dr. Cody Jones, DVM, of Rochester.

The most important ingredient will be your questions. The columns will be based on what readers want to know.

One hint: Your children's questions might be excellent material for the column. We will use only initials of writers.

Send your question to: Pet Care, 2905 Walton, Rochester 48063.

And if your family is owned by a pet, you might make "Pet Care" required reading. Your pet, in his or her own way, will thank you for it.

**QUESTION:** I heard on one of your past TV programs that cocker spaniels are subject to ear infections. Well, I heard exactly the same thing about my poodle — he is subject to ear infections because a poodle's ear canal is so deep, and fungus can develop there when the ear gets wet.

Which breed is more subject to ear infections? Or is all of this a story?

**REPLY:** Most breeds of dogs suffer from ear problems. Some breeds, such as cocker spaniels and poodles, are more predisposed than others. This is because of their floppy ears and excessive hair growth in the ear canals.

Ear canals in dogs are deeper than human's and have a unique "L" shape which does not allow for proper air circulation and drainage.

If moisture gets down the ear canal, which might be the case when your dog swims a lot, it provides a warm, moist environment for an infection to start. Bacterial infections are the most common cause of ear infections, although ear mites and fungal infections can also be a cause.

Symptoms of an ear infection are: a brown waxy discharge, pawing at one or both ears, a sour odor around the head, or excessive shaking of the head. Excessive shaking of the head sometimes can lead to swollen ears.

Remember that those breeds with excessive hair growth in the ear canals should have their ears plucked. This is often done by the groomer when your dog is groomed.

An important point to remember is to follow the plucking procedure with ear medication because the ear canal has been irritated. This way, you do not allow an infection to start.

Trimming around the ear canal opening is also important in those floppy, long-haired ears because it allows for better air circulation and keeps the ear canal dry.

Gentle and thorough cleansing of your dog's ears is the best way to prevent an ear infection. This can be accomplished by putting a couple of drops of mineral oil or commercial ear wash solution into the ear and removing the waxy debris with a cotton swab and a cotton ball. Your veterinarian will be glad to show you this procedure.

If symptoms of an ear infection appear, consult your veterinarian, whose treatment may vary with the severity and cause of the infection. In severe infections which fail to respond to medication, your veterinarian may suggest a surgical treatment.

This column is written by a group of Oakland County veterinarians. Send your questions to: Pet Care, 2905 Walton Blvd., Rochester, MI 48063.

## Save a life before 1980

Since 1974, the Southeastern Michigan Chapter of the American Red Cross has sponsored the Save-A-Life Sunday program in an effort to prevent a potentially critical blood shortage.

This year the program has been expanded to two days, Save-A-Life, LSunday, Dec. 29 and Monday, Dec. 31.

"Our blood centers will be open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on both days," said A.W. Shafer, M.D., director, Southeastern Michigan Red Cross Blood Services.

"We urge everyone between the ages of 17 (with parental permission) and 65

and in general good health to visit their local blood center, Oak Park Donor Center, on one of the Save-A-Life days and make a donation of blood."

Blood donations, said Shafer, are traditionally reduced during the holiday season because many industries and businesses which supply much of the blood collected for patient needs are closed during the week between Christmas and New Year's Day.

THE DECREASE in donations, combined with the fact that just after New Year's Day there is a dramatic in-

crease in elective surgery, could lead to a major shortage of blood.

"Our Save-A-Life program has been successful in the past and has helped avert a potentially serious problem," related Shafer.

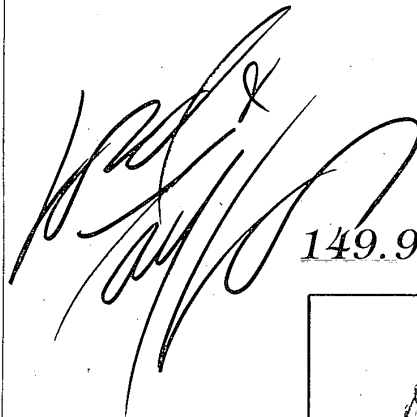
The goal this year is to collect 1,000 units of blood each day for patients in approximately 75 area hospitals in the five county area which includes Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, St. Clair and Washtenaw counties.

"Last year, on Save-A-Life Sunday, the response was excellent. We feel

sure that this year the number of donations will far exceed previous contributions as more people respond to the appeal to give a unit of blood to help supply the sick and injured," said Shafer.

To make an appointment to donate blood at the Oak Park Donor Center, call 988-2255. The Detroit Blood Center, 100 Mack Avenue, will also be open both days from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The phone number is 833-4440.

"I can't think of a more heartwarming way to start the new year than with a donation of blood, the very gift of life," Shafer concluded.



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## Furnace vents investigated

A report offering consumer information on furnace vent dampers is available from the Better Business Bureau of Metropolitan Detroit.

"With the rising costs of energy, it is more important than ever for consumers to become familiar with this type of energy conservation device which is being marketed locally for residential heating systems," said C. Lane Breidenstein, president of the Better Business Bureau of Metropolitan Detroit.

"The addition of a vent damper to existing equipment (retrofit installation) may pose certain safety problems, and homeowners should follow the recommendations contained in this report when a retrofit installation is contemplated," added Breidenstein.

For a copy of the vent damper report, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the Better Business Bureau of Metropolitan Detroit, 150 Michigan Ave., Detroit, Mich. 48226.

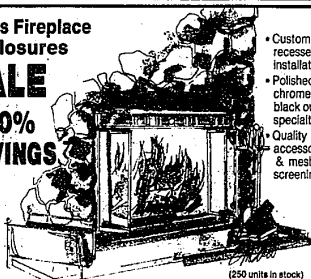
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