

Oakwood Veterinary Hospital

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Canine Influenza Virus

Dr. Drew Henshaw

Dog “flu” is a highly contagious respiratory disease called the Canine Influenza Virus (CIV). There are currently two *strains* in the United States:

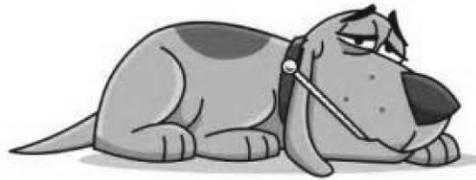
H3N8: First reported in greyhounds in 2003 in Florida. Since then it has spread to and been identified in dogs in 43 states! The virus is of equine (horse) origin.

H2N2: Recently found in the U.S. This virus is of avian (bird) origin. It has been spread to at least 31 states.

Any dog can be at risk for dog flu regardless of age or breed. However, certain activities can raise the risk of infection in your pet. Primarily these are activities or places where your dog will contact other unvaccinated pets: Doggie Day Care, Boarding, Grooming, Dog Parks, Training Classes, Dog Shows, local pet stores, greeting other dogs during a walk or through a fence, drinking from communal water bowls (such as outside area businesses).

Transmission is by inhaling or ingesting the virus that may be expelled by an infected dog coughing or sneezing, or exchange of saliva. The virus can live for hours in the environment, especially on fabric.

Most unvaccinated dogs are susceptible to infection by either or both strains. Neither virus is infectious to humans. The best protection against Influenza is vaccination. The vaccine should cover both strains of the virus and is given as a series of 2, given 2-4 weeks



apart, then annually if risk of exposure persists.

Infection can be mild (rare cough/sneeze, low-grade fever) to severe (pneumonia, difficulty breathing, high fever, not eating). Treatment is often supportive: Fluid therapy to keep an ill pet hydrated, antibiotics to prevent secondary bacterial infections, anti-inflammatories to lower fever, appetite stimulants if not eating, and cough suppressants. If your pet has mild symptoms, we may not recommend an exam at all for fear of exposing other animals at the hospital. Home monitoring and supportive care should be sufficient as long as your pet is eating and drinking normally and the cough is not often or severe. Dogs who are severely ill may need to be hospitalized and should be seen by a veterinarian. In any case, your pet should be isolated from other dogs to limit the spread of disease regardless of the severity of symptoms.

As of the writing of this article, there have been no confirmed cases in Traverse City. However, there have been many cases diagnosed in both Detroit and Grand Rapids

Signs & Symptoms

- Persistent cough
- Nasal discharge
- Ocular discharge
- Reduced appetite
- Lethargy
- Fever
- Rapid or difficulty breathing

in the past several weeks. If Canine Influenza is confirmed by laboratory testing, this is a reportable disease (meaning we alert Michigan State’s Veterinary school for tracking of disease progress across the state and region). What complicates diagnosis and reporting is that the signs of dog flu mimic other causes of canine “kennel cough,” so not every coughing dog has the flu. Many of our local boarding, grooming and pet day care facilities are now requiring the Influenza vaccine in addition to the routine vaccinations. Please call to discuss any concerns you may have with our doctors or technicians and discuss the flu vaccine with your other pet care providers to see if they recommend or require vaccination!

From Hefty To Healthy: Understanding Pet Obesity

Article taken from: American Veterinarian

Pet obesity is a growing problem (no pun intended) in the United States. Data from Nationwide, the largest provider of pet health insurance in the country, reveals that the number of obese pets has increased every year for the past 6 years, and this trend shows no signs of abating. The Association for Pet Obesity Prevention notes that nearly 59% of cats (that's about 50.5 million) and 54% of dogs (nearly 42 million) in America are too heavy for their own good.

What harm can pudginess in a pet cause? Quite a bit, it turns out. Excess weight can lead to a number of diseases, including arthritis, liver disease, and diabetes, among others. As the health of our overweight pets declines, the cost of veterinary care increases and quality of life decreases. So, why are so many pets overweight, and what can pet owners do about it?

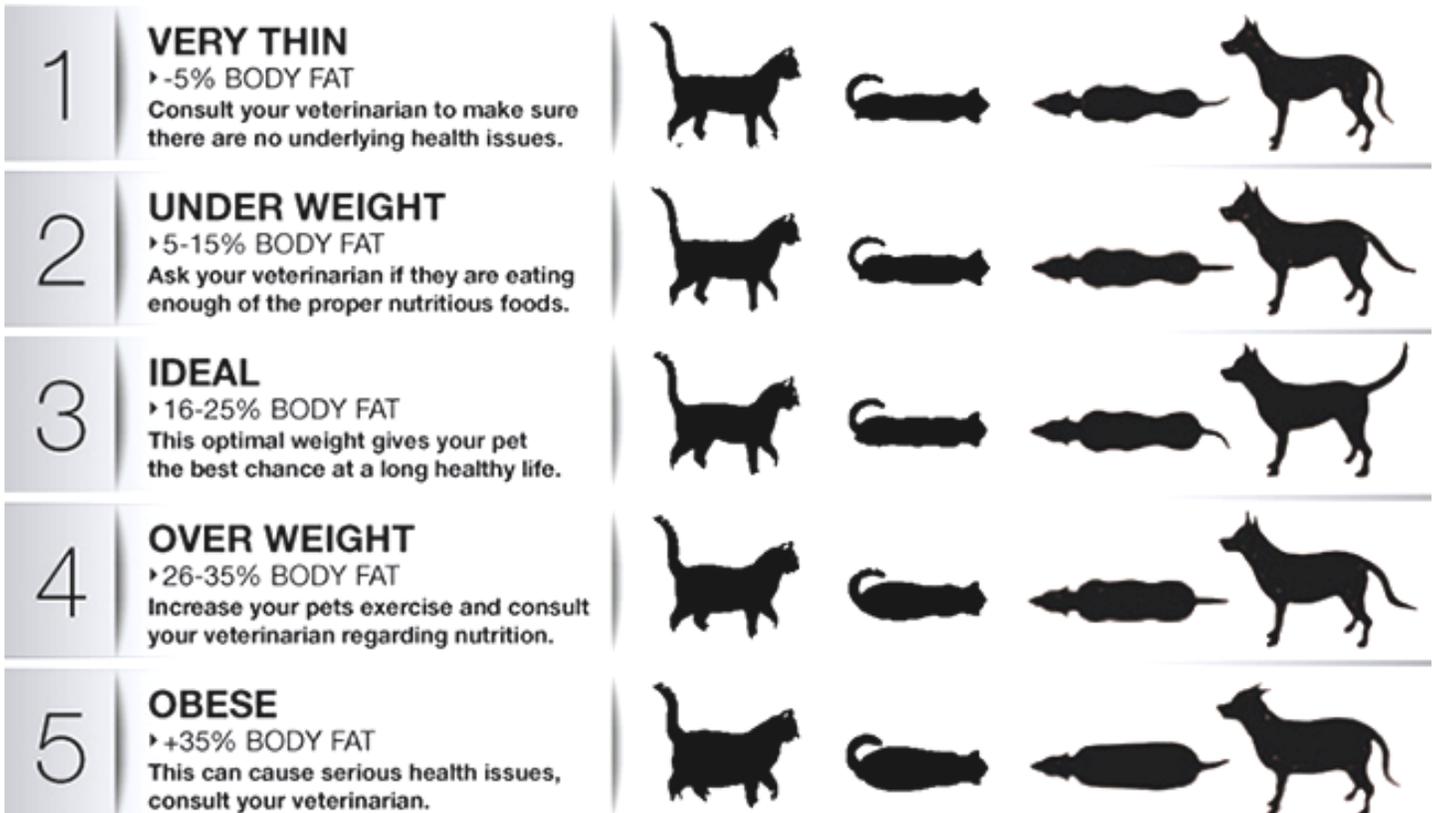
WHY ARE PETS PUTTING ON THE POUNDS?

Just like in people, overfeeding and lack of exercise are the 2 biggest culprits when it comes to weight gain in pets. Many

pet owners love to show their affection by showering Fluffy and Fido with love in the form of treats, but this generosity often leads to obesity. Treats should make up only 10% of your pet's recommended caloric intake. Likewise, your pet relies on you for exercise. If you don't take your pet for regular walks, play games of fetch, and participate in other forms of physical activity, it will be difficult for him to maintain a healthy weight. Just as weight gain can lead to the onset of disease in dogs and cats, certain diseases can also contribute to pet weight gain. Animals with arthritis or asthma, for example, likely find it difficult to exercise for any sustained period. Because these diseases can deter pets from being active, they need to be treated properly. Obese and overweight pets are now so common that many pet owners think having a plump pet is normal. And, because they don't see the potential harm, they often don't take any steps to help their pet lose weight.

DID YOU KNOW?

Veterinarians typically use a 1-5 or 1-9 numbering scale to record your pet's body condition score. Check out the chart below to get an idea of what to look for in your pet's "ideal weight".



HOW CAN YOU TELL IF YOUR PET IS OVERWEIGHT?

Veterinarians visually grade a pet's weight using body condition scoring. While these scores are subjective, they can help you understand whether your pet is overweight and whether a modified diet and exercise plan are in order (see details below). Certain breeds of cats and dogs are more predisposed to obesity as well, simply due to their genetic makeup. Dog breeds that are prone to weight gain include Labrador retrievers, Cairn terriers, cocker spaniels, pugs, Pekingese, and bulldogs. Feline breeds that easily put on the pounds include Maine coons, Manx cats, and Russian blues.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you think your pet is too plump or may be predisposed to obesity, talk to your veterinarian about diet and nutrition. A modified nutritional plan should

DID YOU KNOW?

October 12th is National Pet Obesity Awareness Day!

Do your pets a favor and educate yourself on animal obesity and what it means for your furry friends! Then take them on an extra long walk today, or throw a toy around the house!

be used in conjunction with an overall plan to give fewer treats and get your pet more active. Try to incorporate these tips and tricks into your pet's daily routine.

- Reward your pet with scratches

or belly rubs instead of treats. You can also reward with fun instead of food, such as a game of fetch or a trip to the dog park.

- When it comes to exercising a sedentary pet, the goal should be 15 minutes of strenuous activity twice daily. But, you'll need to work up to this slowly. Start by adding a few minutes to your morning and evening walks, or pick up the pace of the walk over a few weeks.

- Try swimming as an alternative to walking. Low-impact exercise such as swimming might be an easier option for obese pets. Ask your veterinarian about hydrotherapy or underwater treadmills and whether they might be a good option for your pet.

- Provide climbing structures for your indoor cat. Cats enjoy being elevated, and these structures offer an easy way for them to get moving. It's easier to get your pet up and moving if you get yourself up and moving right by her side. When you make a plan and stick to it, life will be healthier and happier for both of you.

THE MOST COMMON OBESITY-RELATED CONDITIONS

DOGS

- * Arthritis
- * Bladder/urinary tract disease
- * Low thyroid hormone production
- * Liver disease
- * Torn knee ligaments
- * Diseased disk in the spine
- * Chronic kidney disease
- * Heart failure
- * Fatty growth

CATS

- * Bladder/urinary tract disease
- * Chronic kidney disease
- * Diabetes
- * Asthma
- * Liver disease
- * Arthritis
- * Heart failure
- * Gallbladder disorder
- * Immobility of the spine

Tell The Ticks To Take A Hike!

Anna Pavlik, LVT

As many of you know, living in Northern Michigan means being surrounded by an abundance of wildlife, hiking trails, and wooded areas. In many of those areas, there are ticks present that can attach to both us and our furry friends, transmitting several different types of diseases.

Tick-Borne Diseases

The most common, and most well known tick-borne disease is Lyme disease, which can be transmitted to both humans and animals. However, Anaplasma sp. and Ehrlichia sp. are also well known in our area. The lone star tick transmits Ehrlichia sp. while the deer tick transmits Lyme and Anaplasma sp. There are several diseases around the U.S. that ticks can carry, but these three are ones we see most commonly. Transmission would require the tick to have a blood meal from your pet, which may be anywhere from 24 hours to a few days.

Testing For Tick-Borne Diseases

When your dog comes in for their annual heartworm test, the same test we run actually checks for all three of these diseases! If you find a tick on your animal and want to test for these three diseases, we typically have to wait

between 6-8 weeks before a pet would show up positive for a disease. If they do show positive, there are other steps to take, based on if your pet is showing any symptoms or depending on the results of a few simple blood tests.

DID YOU KNOW?

If your pet shows positive for one of the 3 tick-borne diseases that we test for, they may show positive for several years down the road, even if tests show that there is no need to treat!

How To Prevent Ticks

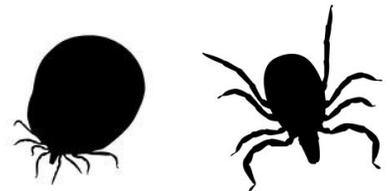
Preventing ticks can be difficult to do in certain areas, but keeping them on a year-round flea and tick preventative is one of the best ways to ensure that diseases will not be transmitted to your animal. One of my favorite products that we carry is NexGard, which is an oral monthly preventative.

Another great tip is to always check your animals over after a walk or being outside. Be sure to check behind the ears, armpits, head, and under their collar, since those are some of the most common places that ticks like to hide. Don't forget to check yourself, too!

Removal Of A Tick

If you choose to remove a tick at home, use tweezers and grab at the base of the tick by the skin. Pull the tick out slowly, which will help ensure that you remove all of the tick without crushing it. Examine the tick to make sure that you were able to remove the head as well. Afterwards, wash the area with some warm soap and water.

You can always stop into the clinic to have a technician check to see if your animal has a tick on them! If you know that your animal has a tick and you're not comfortable removing it at home, we are happy to do it here at the clinic!



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Tell Us What You Want!

Is there a certain topic that you want to know more about?

Email us at info@oakwoodvethospital.com and let us know what topics you'd like to see in upcoming newsletters!

Oakwood Needs Your Help!

We always accept and appreciate donations of your old blankets and towels you're no longer using! We use them to keep our patients comfortable and cozy while here in the hospital.



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