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## Bend Veterinary Clinic – Glossary of Terms & Definitions

### **Arthritis**

Arthritis is one of the most common ailments affecting pets is arthritis. As dogs and cats age, it is very common for them to suffer from painful joints. Very rarely do we see a geriatric dog that does not have at least a mild degree of arthritic disease. Unfortunately, arthritis and the pain that results from it, is probably the most common reason that older dogs are euthanized.

The most common symptoms an owner will notice in an arthritic animal are difficulty in rising from a laying position and decreased activity. Unfortunately for the animal, many people see the symptoms of arthritic pain and simply assume that their dog is just "slowing down as a result of old age."

Due to recent advances in anti-inflammatory medicines, the pain of arthritis can now be dramatically decreased. There is a new class of medicine that is making a dramatic difference in many animals with arthritis. Drugs that have all the pain alleviating properties of a very potent aspirin but none of the gastrointestinal side effects and there are drugs that help repair and build up the damaged cartilage associated with arthritis and can make a wonderful difference for a painful pet.

If your animal seems to be "slowing down with age," please don't assume this is normal or unmanageable. If your pet could speak they would tell us that the pain of arthritis is often times excruciating. Never give your pet or people medication without checking with your veterinarian first. Some drugs are dangerous to pets even in small doses.

### **Bordetella**

*Bordetella bronchiseptica* is the name of the specific germ most commonly associated with the disease "Kennel Cough." Kennel Cough is a severe infection and inflammation of the trachea (wind-pipe) and bronchi (the tubes leading to the lungs).

The symptoms of Kennel Cough are a raspy, loud, cough and sometimes a production of phlegm, which is usually swallowed by the dog. This can be very irritating and debilitating for the dog and a noisy nuisance for the owner.

Kennel Cough is a contagious disease that is spread from dog to dog and is very common where dogs are housed together in large groups, thus the name. Some recent evidence indicates that cats may be involved in the transmission of Kennel Cough and may even suffer from the disease on occasion.

Kennel Cough is prevented by vaccination and most kennels require proof that an animal has been vaccinated before they will agree to board an animal.

We recommend Bordetella vaccines for any dog that has any risk of coming in contact with another animal. This means virtually every dog that goes for walks or has routine annual check-ups at the veterinarian. It is much easier and less expensive to prevent the disease than to treat the disease.

Kennel cough is very rarely deadly unless the dog is suffering from a pre-existing condition and is usually treated successfully with appropriate medicines, although it may take as long as two weeks for the alleviation of symptoms.

### **Cushing's Disease**

Cushing's Disease is the common name for hyperadrenocorticism. This is a disease in which too much cortisone is secreted from the adrenal glands and results in a number of serious symptoms. The most common symptoms that occur in pets are increased thirst and urination, increased appetite, development of a "pot-bellied" appearance and lethargy

Cushing's Disease is a very serious disease that if left untreated can lead to the death of your pet. Cushing's Disease is a fairly simple disease to diagnose with blood tests and there are treatments available that can control this terrible disease and sometimes even cure it.

### **Declaw**

The declaw procedure is for cats and involves amputation of the first digit of every toe on both front feet. This procedure is especially painful and prone to infection since the cat must walk on his/her feet during the entire recovery period, including standing in the litter box. If performed, your cat will need to be on pain medication during and for up to 7 days following the surgery

We do not recommend declaw surgeries as a routine matter and they are only approved following consultation with a doctor. Cats are born with claws, and most can be trained to use their claws appropriately. Try using a variety of scratching materials (carpet, cardboard, rope) and playing with your cat on and around the posts. Keep the posts near areas where your cat sleeps so he/she can stretch right after waking up. Praise him/her heartily whenever your cat uses the posts. Because cats are very particular about textures, placing tape (sticky-side up) and tin foil over problem areas will discourage them from walking or scratching there. Trimming nails will also minimize the damage your cat is able to perform. Ask us, at your next visit, for a demonstration on how to trim your cat's nails and for information on "Soft Paws" rubber nail tips.

### **Euthanasia**

It is a very unfortunate fact that at some point in our lives we will have to say good-bye to a beloved pet that has meant so much to us. This is not an easy time for anyone and we realize this. Therefore we try to make this experience as comfortable and compassionate as possible for both you and your pet.

The medicine that we use for euthanasia allows the pet to fall asleep peacefully. In most cases the pet feels no pain or suffering whatsoever. This is why we allow owners to be present at the

time of euthanasia if they desire. After euthanasia owners are encouraged to take as much time as they feel necessary to say good-bye to their pet.

### **FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus)**

F.I.V. (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus) is a deadly virus that affects cats. Often referred to as "kitty AIDS," this virus destroys the immune system of cats and makes them very susceptible to infection from other germs that their bodies could normally fight off.

In addition, In an attempt to try to eliminate the disease from the cat population, it is recommended that all kittens be tested for F.I.V.

### **FeLV (Feline Leukemia Virus)**

Fe.L.V. (Feline Leukemia Virus) is a very deadly virus affecting cats. This germ is an oncogenic virus (oncogenic means cancer causing) that is spread from cat to cat by intimate contact or fighting.

There is a vaccine currently available to protect your cat against this disease. At our clinic we recommend all cats receive their leukemia vaccine unless there is 100% certainty that she will never come in contact with another cat. We also recommend that all kittens are tested for the FeLV disease so that we can control the amount of exposure infected cats have with non-infected cats.

### **Heartworm Disease**

Heartworms are parasites that live in the hearts of dogs and cats. They are transmitted by mosquitoes from one animal to another. If a dog or cat develops heartworm disease and they are not treated, there is a very good chance the animal will die from the infection.

It is much easier, safer, and less expensive to prevent the disease rather than treat the disease. This is why we stress the importance of yearly heartworm prevention.

### **Heart Murmur**

When a veterinarian listens to your pet's heart, there are two specific abnormalities that they are listening for, (1) Heart Murmurs and (2) Arrhythmias. A heart murmur is an abnormal heart sound that usually is the result of a heart valve not closing like it normally should. An arrhythmia is an abnormal heart beat.

Both of these conditions can be congenital (the pet is born with the condition) or acquired (the pet develops the condition with age). One of the surprising facts about heart murmurs is that they are often related to poor dental health. What happens so often, is that the bacteria that grow on the teeth of dogs and cats after years of not brushing actually get into the blood stream from the gums and lodge on the heart valves. Eventually this results in a bad heart that may ultimately fail. This is one very important reason for regular dental care of your pet.

### **Hip Dysplasia**

Hip dysplasia is a disease that affects the "ball and socket" joint of the hip (where the back leg attaches to the pelvis). Symptoms of hip dysplasia are usually related to the arthritic changes that occur as a result of the bad joint. Pain and sometimes a strange walking or running posture will be evident. Diagnosis is made with the aid of x-rays.

Hip dysplasia is an inherited disease that can affect any dog, large or small, pure breed or mix. However, certain breeds such as the German Shepherd and Rottweiler, are especially susceptible to this disease.

Surgery is the only cure for this dreaded disease. The arthritis can be controlled with some of the new anti-inflammatories and joint strengthening medicines now available.

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### **Neuter**

The neuter procedure will prevent your male dog or cat from impregnating a female dog or cat. Intact male animals have a tendency to roam looking for a female in heat and are more likely to be hit by cars or get into trouble. They may also display more aggressive and dominant behavior due to the hormones their bodies produce. The neuter surgery involves complete removal of both testicles. If both testicles are in the scrotum, it is not necessary to enter the abdomen. These animals need pain control during the surgery and for a short time afterwards.

We recommend neutering all male animals that are not being bred by an experienced breeder. Every year hundreds of thousands of animals are euthanized in shelters because there are not enough good homes available. You can do your part to lower this number by preventing your male animal from producing more litters.

### **Parvo Virus**

Canine Parvo Virus is one of the saddest diseases that veterinarians must treat. This deadly disease affects unvaccinated dogs, especially puppies. The Parvo germ destroys the intestinal

lining of affected dogs and causes them to vomit severely and have bloody diarrhea. If not treated appropriately with I.V. fluids and medicines most of these puppies will die a horrible death due to dehydration.

There is a very effective vaccine available to prevent this disease. If puppies receive their Parvo vaccines on an appropriate schedule (every 2-3 weeks depending on the vaccine used and area in which the dog lives) there is virtual certainty that they will not develop the disease.

Unfortunately many pet owners do not stick to the schedule recommended by their veterinarian and as a result they and their puppy must endure the very painful and expensive treatment procedures to fight off the disease.

If your puppy develops diarrhea or begins vomiting please seek veterinary assistance immediately. Prompt diagnosis and treatment is essential to maximize the chances of survival for your puppy.

### **Spay**

The spay procedure will prevent your female dog or cat from being able to come into heat or bear puppies and kittens. Research shows that female dogs that are spayed before their first heat cycle are 95.5% less likely to develop mammary cancer later in life. With every single heat cycle, the chances of mammary cancer increase until your dog has reached her fourth cycle. The surgery involves removal of both ovaries and the uterus. These animals need pain control during and following the surgical procedure. We recommend spaying for all female dogs and cats unless they are registered pure-bred animals and you are an experienced breeder.

Breeding is complicated and should be done by someone who knows the breed. You will need to understand genetics and how to prevent problems from being passed from one generation to the next. You will also need to know how to care properly for the mother in case of an emergency and how to raise the babies until they are old enough to go to a new home. Responsible breeding is expensive and time-consuming, and should be viewed as a hobby rather than a good way to make money. Every year hundreds of thousands of animals are euthanized in shelters because there are not enough good homes available. You can do your part to lower this number by preventing your female animal from producing more litters.

For more information, contact Bend Veterinary Clinic at (541) 382-0741 or visit us on the web at <http://www.bendveterinaryclinic.com>