



River Heights  
Veterinary Hospital

# THE PAW STREET JOURNAL

A PET-LOVING PUBLICATION FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT RIVER HEIGHTS VETERINARY HOSPITAL • FALL 2011



## DEFINING THE BOND

**THE HUMAN—ANIMAL BOND IS A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL AND DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEOPLE AND PETS. IT IS INFLUENCED BY BEHAVIORS THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE HEALTH AND WELL—BEING OF BOTH.**

**THEY INCLUDE EMOTIONAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL INTERACTIONS OF PEOPLE, OTHER ANIMALS AND THE ENVIRONMENT. OUR ROLE IN THE HUMAN—ANIMAL BOND IS TO MAXIMIZE THE POTENTIAL OF THIS RELATIONSHIP.**



## The Good, The Bad and The Furry

Our primary responsibility at **River Heights Veterinary Hospital** is to provide your pet with compassionate medical care.

We also consider it vitally important to support efforts to protect and strengthen the bond between humans and their animal companions.

This commitment includes educating people about responsible pet ownership, adopting animals, preventing dog bites, and providing a safe, loving environment for our own pets and our wildlife neighbors.

Sometimes, however, we have to address



heartbreaking issues like the loss of a pet, animal cruelty, or how we all can help end the crisis of pet overpopulation.

Through the good and bad that are a part of life, you can rely on **River Heights Veterinary Hospital** to help you enjoy the love and companionship that pets bring to our lives.

To that end, we can all count on one thing – the companionship of our pets. They are always there for us, helping to celebrate good times with laughter and love, and offering a soft shoulder to cry on during the bad times.



## We Remember

Our hairy heroes of *September 11, 2001*



Riley, a Golden Retriever, in his most memorable moment. In order to search the top of what was left of the North Tower, a Stokes basket was set up to transport Riley over a canyon 60 to 70 feet deep. At first he seemed nervous, but then just lay down and waited while he was transported over the void to his waiting handler.



Brittany, a Golden Retriever and her handler, Denise Cortiss. Utilizing their noses for recovery of fallen victims and offering their furry presence for comfort of the workers, all of the Search and Rescue dogs were America's unsung heroes.



Louie, a Boxer, was the only Boxer to work Search and Rescue during the September 11 tragedy. Louie was able to make numerous finds very quickly, using his nose to locate 14 finds in about 20 minutes. A dog's sense of smell is highly developed. We humans have approximately five million sensory cells in our noses; dogs have about 125 - 200 million sensory cells.

We know that cats that are well-socialized will likely be more sociable than those who haven't been around many other cats.

# Curbing Aggression between cats

Many people adopt a second cat, thinking that the resident cat will be happy. This is a risky move. Just because your cat is sweet and loving with you doesn't mean he's going to be sweet to another cat. But we're here to help negotiate a truce.



## Types of aggressive behaviors

**Territorial aggression:** This occurs when a cat feels that an intruder has invaded her territory.

A cat may be aggressive toward one cat (usually the most passive),

yet friendly and tolerant with another. Female cats can be just as territorial as males.

**Inter-male aggression:** Adult male cats may threaten, and sometimes fight with, other males.

This is more common among unneutered cats. They may fight over a female, for a higher place on the totem pole, or to defend territory.

**Defensive aggression:** Defensive aggression occurs when a cat tries to protect himself from an animal or human attacker he believes he can't escape.

This can occur in response to punishment or a threat from a person, an attack or attempted attack from another cat, or any incident that makes the animal feel threatened or afraid.

Defensive postures include:

- Crouching with the legs and tail pulled in under the body
- Flattening the ears against the head
- Rolling slightly to the side

Continuing to approach a cat in this posture is likely to cause an attack.

**Redirected aggression:** Cats direct this type of aggression

toward another animal, or even a person, who didn't initially provoke the behavior.

For example, your cat is sitting in the window and sees an outdoor cat walk across the front yard. He gets very agitated because that cat is in his territory. You pet him; he turns and bites you. He doesn't even know who you are at that point – he's so worked up about the cat outside that he attacks the first thing that crosses his path.

## Smoothing ruffled feathers

Your first step should always be to contact your veterinarian for a thorough health examination. Cats often hide symptoms of illness until they're seriously ill; your aggressive cat may be feeling sick and taking out his misery on others.

If your cat gets a clean bill of health, consult your vet or an animal behavior specialist for help. They will advise you on what can be done. You may need to start the introduction process all over again, keep the cats in separate areas of your home, or even find one of the cats a new home if the aggression is extreme and can't be resolved.

Consult with your veterinarian about a short course of anti-anxiety medication for your cats while

you're working on changing their behavior. Never medicate your cat on your own.

## Spay or neuter your pets.

The behavior of one intact animal can negatively affect all of your pets. See article below.

Don't count on the cats to "work things out." The more they fight, the worse the problem is likely to become. If you see signs that a fight may occur, distract the cats by clapping loudly, tossing a pillow nearby, or squirting them with water. These actions can also be used to break up a fight.

Don't touch them, or you might get seriously scratched or bitten. Seek medical attention if you're injured.

Don't punish the cats involved. Punishment could cause further aggression and fearful responses, which will only make the problem worse.

We do know that cats that are well-socialized will likely be more sociable than those who haven't been around many other cats.

On the other hand, "street cats," already in the habit of fighting with other cats to defend their territory and food, might not do well in a multi-cat household. 🐾

# The benefits of spay & neuter

It's very sad. Many people are surprised to learn that, nationwide, close to four million cats and dogs are euthanized in shelters – about one every eight seconds. Often these animals are the offspring of cherished family pets. Spay/neuter is a proven way to reduce pet overpopulation, ensuring that every pet has a family to love them.

Many cats and dogs that die as a result of pet overpopulation could have made wonderful pets. A solution is possible and starts with each of us taking one small step: getting our own pets spayed or neutered. To help stop pet overpopulation further, consider adopting your next pet from an animal shelter.

The reality is that every time the dog finds his way under the fence to visit the neighbor's female dog, or the indoor/outdoor cat comes back home pregnant again, the result is a litter of dogs or cats. Even if they are placed into homes, it is still possible for them to end up in shelters once they become "hard to handle," or for them to reproduce further and for the next generation of puppies or kittens to wind up homeless.

Spay/neuter is the only permanent, 100-percent effective method of birth control for dogs and cats.

## Not just for dogs and cats

When being conscientious about pet over-

population, don't forget to spay or neuter your pet rabbit. Rabbits reproduce faster than dogs or cats, and often end up in shelters where they must be euthanized. Spaying or neutering rabbits can reduce hormone-driven behavior such as lunging, mounting, spraying and boxing. Spaying females can prevent ovarian, mammary and uterine cancers, which can be prevalent in mature females.

Millions of pet deaths each year are a needless tragedy. By spaying and neutering your pet, you can be an important part of the solution. Contact your veterinarian today and let your family and friends know that they should do the same. 🐾

Shelters have a great selection of adult animals, and many of them also offer kittens, puppies, and purebred pets.

# I Want You To Want Me!



Many pets at your local shelter are waiting for new homes because they were obtained by people with unrealistic expectations of the time, effort, and money required to sustain a lifelong relationship with their pet. Animals at your local shelter are just waiting for someone like you to give them a new home.

You can depend on responsible shelters to assess the animals' health and temperament in order to make the best adoption matches possible. When animals are relinquished by owners, the shelter staff makes every attempt to collect a thorough history of that pet.

## Advantages of a shelter adoption

In an effort to make good matches between people and animals, and to place pets in lifelong homes, many shelters provide adoption counseling and follow-up assistance, such as pet-parenting and dog-training classes, medical services, and behavior counseling. Or they may be able to refer you to providers of these services.

Another advantage to shelter adoptions is that the fees are usually much less than the purchase price of an animal from a pet store or breeder. And your new pet is more likely to be vaccinated, de-wormed, and spayed

or neutered.

To locate your local animal shelter, check under "animal shelter," "animal control," or "humane society." Or go online—many shelters have websites that feature animals available for adoption. Some sites even allow you to download adoption forms and plan ahead by providing tips on responsible pet care.

## About purebred rescue groups

Purebred rescue groups are usually run by people with in-depth knowledge of a specific breed. Rescue groups keep adoptable animals until they can be placed in loving, permanent homes. These animals may come from failed breeding operations; arrive from boarding kennels and veterinarians, where they were abandoned; be rescued as strays living on the streets; or be obtained through the cooperation of local animal shelters. Adoption fees vary, depending on veterinary and other costs that have been incurred. Follow-up counseling is usually available.

When you contact a breed rescue group, be sure to find out as much as you can about the group: how it cares for its animals, how it decides which animals are adoptable, and what other adoption and post-adoption services are available. 🐾

**National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week Nov. 6 – 12, 2011**

# We can work it out

**Look at your pet. Better yet, lift him. Is Fluffy a bit too fluffy? Has King become Kong?**

An extra five pounds on a dog whose ideal weight is 15 pounds is like an extra 50 pounds on a person who should tip the scales at 150.

Watching his weight is as important as watching yours. But counting canine calories or kitty carbs is not likely to happen. Better to get the both of you off your respective rumps and work it off together.

Different pets need different amounts and kinds of exercise, so talk to your veterinarian be-

fore beginning any program. It's easy to start a work-out program with your pet. Ten or fifteen minutes of walking or swimming will build cardiovascular strength without putting stress on joints. Faster walks and jogging will come later. The "ball" seems to be a dog's best friend - try running after it with him once in a while.

With cats you may need to be more creative, but anything she can safely chase, scratch, bat or climb will burn off the pounds. It's up to you to get things moving. Cats are designed for short, intense bursts of energy, followed by a good nap. Initiate a daily game of hide and seek, and since you're also involved in the activity, you've doubled the benefits.

For the ultimate, automatic workout, bring home another pet. Everyone will get more exercise - guaranteed. Consider exercise as important as food and water. In the long run, it is. 🐾

# Animal Attraction



**It's taking off.** Websites that allow you to sniff out a friend who loves animals as much as you do.

**Another online service allows owners to register domain names for their pets. And what cat, dog, ferret, bird or iguana wouldn't want its own website?**

**Whether you need some quick information about behavior, health, or just some fur-friendly fun, click on these reputable websites for great information on animal-related topics:**

**AVMA.org**

**HSUS.org**

**mustlovethepets.com**

**animalpeople.com**

**petpeoplemeet.com**

**petsdating.com**

**domainsforyourpet.com**

**petfinder.com**

**pets911.com**

**americanhumane.org**



## Buyer Beware:

**Please don't buy your pet medications on the Internet**

**Although medicines are available on the Internet, they may have been purchased illegally from other countries, or may be expired medicines that have been re-packaged. Be aware that medicines obtained from foreign countries may not meet FDA standards for safety and quality. These products are not backed by the manufacturer, who will not take responsibility for any adverse effects your pet may experience.**

**Consult your veterinarian for advice. Prescriptions from your veterinarian allow him or her to monitor the administration of medications in the correct amounts, at the correct intervals, and for the correct duration.**



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Paws in the Park

Oct. 2 from 12-4pm

Lincoln Dog Park, Aurora

*Pictures with Santa*

Our Annual Holiday Open House

will be held on Dec. 3, 2011

Proceeds from pictures benefits  
our local shelters.



*"Hey! Even we're getting sick  
of your barking."*



facebook.com/riverheightsvet



## Ask Your Paw

*Dear Paw,*

*We are adopting an adult cat from our local shelter.  
Can we expect her to still be active and playful?*

*- Her Majesty*

Your Majesty,

Play is a vital activity, not only for kittens, but for adult cats, too.

Cats are athletic creatures with amazing strength and agility. Nature made them into perfect machines for leaping, jumping, and dashing. Just because your house kitty doesn't have real prey to chase doesn't mean she can't act out her inner predator.

Toys and regular playtime are part of providing your cat with a stimulating environment, which

makes for a happy and healthy cat. Play gives them an outlet for their energy, mental and physical stimulation, the opportunity to satisfy their instinctual hunting drive, and a chance to bond with you.

Cats are experts at amusing themselves. It takes very little—a crumpled ball of paper, a pen left on a desktop, a newspaper spread open on the floor—to engage your kitty in what, to her, is the most fascinating of games.

*- Your Paw*