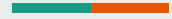




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Internal medicine

What is Internal Medicine?

- An internal medicine specialist, veterinary internist, are like **pet detectives**. They gather clues like your pet's medical history, lab results, and specialized diagnostic tools to diagnose a problem/disease.
- Internal medicine is a **non-surgical specialty** that works very closely with all departments such as Soft Tissue Surgery, Dermatology, Oncology, Neurology, and Cardiology.
- Internists treat a **wide variety of diseases that affect organs** such as the kidneys, liver, GI tract, endocrine system (hormones), lungs, and bone marrow. (Some disease may even involve more than one!)
- Common diseases in cats and dogs that an internist may help your pet with are: diabetes, tick borne diseases and fungal diseases, blood disorders, inflammatory bowel disease and many more!





Sounds great! How do I become a Veterinary Internist?!

Step 1: Graduate from Veterinary School

Step 2: Complete a one-year rotating veterinary internship

Step 3: Complete a three-year internal medicine residency

Veterinary internist may also complete a masters degree and publish scientific articles!!



Let's learn about some cases you might see in the Internal Medicine department!

Have you heard of Leptospirosis?

It is a disease caused by the bacteria *Leptospira spp.* that can be found in worldwide soil and water and can cause kidney failure and sometimes liver failure in dogs. It can be transmitted to people too!

“Is my dog at risk for contracting this disease?!”

If your dog is:

- Exposed to or drinking from rivers, lakes, or streams
- Roaming on rural property (where there may be a lot of wildlife)
- In contact with wild rodents

Then, your dog may be at higher risk!

**But good news! There is a vaccine.
Ask your dog’s primary care veterinarian about it at
your next visit!**





Some myths about Leptospirosis

Myth: Leptospirosis is not common.

Leptospirosis is more common than people think! Although, with high vaccination among community dogs we see the numbers decrease.

Myth: Leptospirosis is not a threat.

Leptospirosis is easily transmissible to dogs if they are exposed to the urine of an animal carrying it. Wild animals infected with it will urinate on soil and bodies of water allowing your dog to be exposed.

Myth: The vaccine for leptospirosis is unsafe.

Untrue! It has been proven to be as safe as other vaccines. And as a bonus it provides your pet protection against a nasty disease.

Lyme Disease

A disease caused by a spirochete bacteria known as *Borrelia burgdorferi*. It is transmitted by the bite of an infected tick species, specifically the Black Legged or Deer tick. Tick species such as these vary based on location, but lyme disease can be found all across the US.



Myth: Lyme Disease only affects people so I don't need to worry about it when it comes to my animals.

- Dogs, cats, horses, cows, deer, and small rodents can all contract Lyme disease!

Symptoms

HUMANS	ANIMALS
Classic bull's eye lesion, lethargy, fever, flu-like symptoms	Limping, swollen joints, enlarged lymph nodes, lethargy, and fever

Myth: If my pet isn't showing any symptoms then they must not have it.

- Close to ~90% of people infected with Lyme disease will exhibit symptoms, where as only a fraction of infected animals develop clinical signs. This stresses the importance of annual blood tests that screen for diseases like Lyme disease. Once detected we can use medication to treat and manage the disease to keep our pets safe.

Myth: The only way for my pets to avoid Lyme disease is to avoid going to areas where ticks are known to inhabit, like those with tall grasses and lots of vegetation.

- There are several options we as pet owners can utilize to help minimize the risk of our pets contracting this disease. One of the main ways is through monthly preventatives, administered either by mouth or placed onto the skin.
- A Lyme disease vaccine also exists for dogs and can be used in addition to a monthly preventative for better protection.



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Canine Parvovirus



CPV, also called Parvo or CPV2, is a virus that causes fever, lethargy, vomiting, and diarrhea (that often contains blood). A diagnosis is made through tests conducted by your veterinarian.

“How would my dog get this?!”

Dogs can be at risk through contact with fecal matter from an infected dog.

- Other creatures such as foxes, wolves, skunks and cats can be carriers
- Humans, clothing, and other objects can carry the virus for months

“How can I protect my furry family member!?”

A vaccine is available in a series for puppies beginning at 6-8 weeks of age with boosters every 3 weeks until your they reach 16 weeks of age. For adult dogs, an annual booster is necessary to protect your buddy.



Canine Parvovirus Myths

Myth: “It isn’t in my area”

-Parvovirus can be found in almost any environment! In the outdoors parvo can live on objects for months or years if it is in an area that is protected from the sun.

Myth: “If I disinfect my floors and my shoes, parvovirus won’t live on!”

-Parvovirus is INCREDIBLY resilient! It can survive in room temperature environments for at least 2 months. Parvo is also resistant to many cleaners and disinfectants.

Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV)



Feline Leukemia Virus (commonly abbreviated FeLV) is one of the most common infectious diseases of cats. Even some wild cat species are capable of getting this disease!

Common Symptoms: Non-specific signs include anorexia (lack of appetite), weight loss, lethargy (less energy) and fever.

Is my cat at risk of getting FeLV? Cats can easily spread this virus through most bodily fluids, most common is saliva and nasal secretions. It is important to keep positive FeLV cats away from negative cats to prevent the spread of the disease.

How do I know if a cat is positive for FeLV? There are many diagnostic tests that your veterinarian can do to determine if your cat has FeLV. Before introducing any new cats to the family, be sure to ask your veterinarian about what tests should be completed!



Feline Leukemia Myths

“If I have a FeLV positive cat, they can still live outside with other cats, since they already have the infection there is no risk.”

This is FALSE! Cats that are positive for FeLV should be kept inside, and only housed with other FeLV positive cats. This prevents the spread of the disease to other cats who may be at risk.

“There is nothing that can be done to prevent FeLV if my cat is negative, but likes to go outside.”

There is a vaccination that can be given to your cat by your veterinarian. This vaccine is recommended for at risk cats (any cat that is not an indoor only cat). Ask your veterinarian if this vaccine is the right choice for your feline family member!