Cornell University
College of Veterinary Medicine

DOG Watch

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Expert information on medicine, behavior and health from a world leader in veterinary medicine

INSIDE

IN THE NEWS ...

Rapidly Dissolving Drugs for Dogs

New Jersey-based Animal health company NewMarket Pharmaceuticals LLC of Princeton, and drug delivery technology company Catalent Pharma Solutions of Somerset, are combining their technologies to develop a group of fast-dissolve drugs for the animal health market. The initial drugs under development include NSAIDs, beta agonists, proton pump inhibitors and behavior modifiers for several species, including dogs, horses and cattle. The companies plan to eventually expand into other classes, as well.

The drugs are absorbed directly into an animal's system, bypassing gastric absorption and metabolism and providing a greater amount of drug to the animal at a faster rate than conventional formulations, according to David Rock, vice-president for research and development at NewMarket. Rapidly dissolving tablets provide treatment without the use of needles. ❖

The Zoonotic Diseases to Beware

Owners with poor hygiene habits or a compromised immune system are at greatest risk. Here's what you should know.

You adore your faithful dog and, as far as you can tell, the affection is mutual. But the lovable creature that you've always considered to be your best friend can quickly become your worst enemy if it transmits a serious, and perhaps death-dealing illness to you.

Many diseases stemming from bacterial, fungal and parasitic infections can assail human as well as canine systems. And some of these diseases — collectively known as "zoonoses" — can be readily passed from a dog to its master, mistress and other members of the family.

Zoonotic diseases have several modes of transmission, notes William Miller, VMD, medical director at Cornell University's Companion Animal Hospital. The most common, he says, is direct physical contact with an infected animal's coat, mouth or, inadvertently, its feces or urine.

Infection can also be caused by a dog's bite. "Dogs have all sorts of flora in their mouths," he explains, "so when they bite an individual and crush the person's tissue, anything that is in their mouths will be inoculated into the human skin — and that can be a big problem. The extent to which this is dangerous

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Company Coming Over Tonight?

You have the house sparkling clean and a delicious dinner in the oven. Here's how to get your dog to participate nicely.

It feels like fewer people are coming over to visit you these days. Could it be the food you serve? The ambience of your home? Or worse, your own conversational skills? How about your dog — who barks wildly and pounces on guests as they enter the door, noses them incessantly and then begs for food at the dinner table?

"It's normal for your dog to bark one or two times when he hears someone approach your door," says Katherine Houpt, VMD, PhD, the emeritus James Law Professdirector of the Animal Behavior Clinic at Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine. "He's alerting you, and that's good. But then he should settle down. He should be friendly when guests arrive, but certainly not jump on them."

A dog that frightens people at the door and annoys them at dinner can definitely discourage guests from coming over, and may even dampen your desire to have people visit. But there's a lot you can do to make a visit more pleasant for your guests and your dog as well.

Visitors Can Create Stress. Dogs can become very anxious when there is any change or disruption in your household. This is especially true when you're rushing around preparing for guests. And when the

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DOGWatch

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For information on pet health, visit the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine website at www.vet.cornell.edu.

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Battling Lymphoma

According to a research project funded by the AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF), an innovative cancer treatment process improving survival rates for dogs could soon take the phrase "man's best friend" to a different level.

With the support of the CHF, Texas A&M University is continuing a ground-breaking lymphoma treatment therapy research project that uses laboratory expanded T-cells to help extend the lives of dogs that develop cancer. Lymphoma is the most common form of canine cancer, accounting for up to 24 percent of all cancer cases diagnosed. It is rarely curable, and eighty percent of dogs typically live only 12 months or less after being diagnosed with lymphoma.

The pioneering process — designed by a team of scientists at Texas A & M and the University of Texas MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital in Houston — starts with taking a blood sample from the dog in order to expand T-cells, which are white blood cells critical for fighting off infection and controlling cancer. The T-cells are then infused back into the same dog following chemotherapy treatments to help rebuild the dog's immune system. The hypothesis of these investigators was that the infused T-cells would wipe out any remaining cancer cells not eliminated during typical chemotherapy treatments. Early results have been encouraging to the researchers.

"Our [T-cell] treated dogs had a tumor-free survival (first remission) almost five times longer [than dogs that received only chemotherapy treatments]," said Texas A&M's Heather Wilson, DVM, leader in the next phase of the canine T-cell project that is being funded by CHF.

Dogs are genetically closer to humans than humans are to mice, which have commonly been used for pre-clinical studies. In companion dogs, the tumors develop spontaneously in the presence of an intact immune system due to the same environmental etiologies and genetic abnormalities as human cancer. Thus, what is learned in dogs with cancer may also be applied to humans with cancer. Given the promising results with dogs, a similar innovative immunotherapy process is currently in clinical trials to help treat human cancer patients at MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital, under the direction of Dr. Laurence Cooper.

In the canine studies, "We followed the same rigid standards we practice for human clinical trials at MD Anderson to ensure the safety of each dog," said Dr. Cooper, professor and section chief of cell therapy at the children's hospital. "It's a win-win for dog and human patients. While these pets are benefiting from the T-cell infusions, this collaboration with Texas A&M is a driving force for undertaking similar clinical trials in humans."

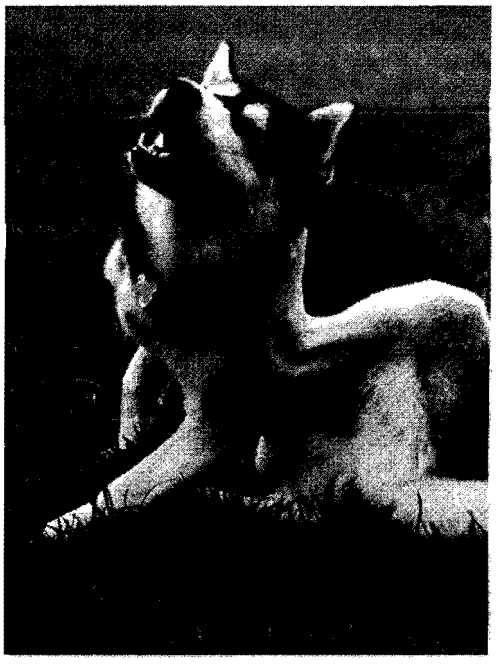
The outlook for using the process to treat humans is promising. The U.S. Food & Drug Administration has approved trials using T-cell immunotherapy to treat humans for lymphoma. New trials stemming from this research are forthcoming.

Sublingual Therapy for Allergies

Heska Corp. plans to manufacture and market a proprietary, sublingual therapy treatment for pets suffering with allergies, and it hopes to introduce the new product at the onset of allergy season this year. Dr. Mary Morris and Associates LLC of La Crosse, Wis., developed the therapy treatment to expand treatment options for allergic diseases in people and animals, and partnered with Heska Corp. to manufacture and market the technology to the pet market.

"Sublingual therapy offers a convenient alternative to subcutaneous injection, thereby enhancing the likelihood of pet owner compliance," said Michael McGinley, president and chief operating officer of Heska.

Heska will manufacture the new allergy treatment product at its Des Moines, Iowa, facility, where the company moved its allergy immunotherapy manufacturing in 2011. According to Heska, the product has undergone substantial testing over the past three years. ❖



CREATE A NICE BEDTIME FOR ALL. If your dog is keeping you up at night, it may be time to investigate his snoring.

Does Your Dog Snore and Wake You?

Your dog's snoring may be annoying, but it's also something you should get checked out. Here's why.

You know the saying: After a number of years, a dog and his partner begin to look alike. That may or may not be true, but many a woman would say that her husband and the dog have begun to snore alike. (And yes, men complain about their female partners snoring, too.) Snoring pets may bring just as many laughs as snoring spouses, but neither is funny. As with humans, snoring in dogs can cause sleep deprivation for those who hear it — and is sometimes a sign of serious illness for the snorer.

Stats on Snoring Dogs. According to a study conducted by the Sleep Disorders Center of the Mayo Clinic, a majority of people allow their pets — dogs and cats — to sleep with them in bed at night. Those bed-sharing patients surveyed reported that 21 percent of their dogs and seven percent of their cats snored. About 53 percent of them considered their sleep to be disturbed by their pet's snoring. The researchers suspect that the number of people disturbed is probably higher than reported.

Causes of Snoring. Snoring in dogs can be caused by a variety of conditions. First, you need to consider the breed. "Brachycephalic dogs — those with snub or flat noses [Shih Tzus, English Boxers, French Bulldogs, Pekingese, Pugs and Boston Terriers] often snore because their nasal tissue vibrates when the air goes out," says Ursula Krotscheck, DVD, an assistant professor in the Department of Clinical Sciences at Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine. "If these breeds are overweight, this condition worsens. Dogs with normal facial structure may snore if there is an underlying medical problem."

Overweight dogs — just like humans — are candidates for snoring because the tissue in the back of the throat becomes enlarged. When air passes over this tissue, it makes a rattling sound — which you hear as snoring.

Keep in mind, too, that second-hand smoke is unhealthy for our pets. Dogs can be sensitive to tobacco smoke, which can irritate their airways. For your own health of you and also your pets, you should consider giving up the habit.

Snoring can also be caused by laryngeal paralysis (loss of function or feeling in one or both of the vocal folds) in large-breed dogs. Other structural anomalies that may occur in short-nosed dogs include:

- an elongated soft palate whose tip protrudes into the airway;
- everted laryngeal saccules: tissue within the airway that is pulled into the windpipe, partially obstructing airflow;
- aaryngeal collapse: collapse of the larynx, the cartilage that opens and closes the upper airway.

In any dog that snores, you must also consider that nasal tumors — benign or malignant — may be the cause of the problem. How do you know if snoring is just an annoyance or a symptom of a serious condition? Call your veterinarian if your dog:

- gasps and wheezes while awake;
- has a change in voice;
- is obese;
- pants, coughs, wheezes, sneezes or gags;
- takes rapid breaths or heaves her belly while breathing;
- is snoring worse than before;
- has a discharge from the nose or mouth for two or more days;
- has a pale or blue tongue or gums, indicating that she may not be getting enough oxygen;
- starts retching.

What Your Vet Can Do. Your veterinarian will first do a general examination and take a medical history of your dog's symptoms to rule out respiratory conditions such as asthma or bronchitis.

Next she will examine inside your dog's nose and mouth to see if nasal polyps or other obstructions are causing the noise. If your dog has very tiny or flat nostrils, the veterinarian can perform minor surgery to widen them, thereby allowing air to pass through more easily. Laryngeal collapse also requires surgery. "If a tumor is suspected, your veterinarian will order an MRI or CT scan," says Dr. Krotscheck.

If your dog's obesity could be contrib-

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LIVER PROBLEMS ARE COMMON. Early diagnosis is the best prevention, so regular veterinary examinations are very important.

The Liver: Versatile Yet Vulnerable

Inflammation, poisoning, infection or cancer can present a life-threatening challenge to your dog.

Because of the hundreds of life-sustaining tasks that it performs, the liver is an indispensable component of your dog's anatomy. Among this large, hard-working organ's many important functions is its vital role in filtering blood from the digestive tract and thereby preventing potentially harmful ingested substances from flowing freely throughout an animal's system.

Despite its size and capacity, however, the liver is by no means invulnerable. Indeed, says Sharon Center, DVM, a board-certified professor of internal medicine at Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine, the Cornell University Hospital for Animals (CUHA) sees many cases of liver disease. While she attributes this frequency of cases largely to the fact that CUHA is a referral hospital, she also notes that liver disease is very common in the general canine population.

Form and Function. Among all the organs of the body, the liver is exceeded in size only by the lungs and skin. Situated in close proximity to the stomach, spleen, pancreas and intestines, it is a heavy organ, its spongy tissue densely packed with vessels that receive blood through two major conduits. Most blood flows to the liver directly from the heart via the hepatic artery. It also receives blood from the spleen and gastrointestinal tract through the portal vein, returning it to the heart through a large vessel — the vena cava — for recirculation throughout the body.

The liver is divided into several sections (lobes), each of which contains thousands of tiny units called lobules. Every portion of the liver is able to carry out all of the organ's seemingly countless chores. These include, for example, the production of blood components that enable clotting; the metabolism of proteins, fats and carbohydrates as well as of drugs and hormones; the storage of vitamins and other nutrients and of blood that can be rushed into circulation if needed in an emergency; the conversion of ammonia — a potentially harmful byproduct of digestion — into a less toxic substance called urea; and the secretion of bile, a fluid that is discharged into the small intestine to aid in the digestive processes.

The liver also plays a vital role in detoxification — the mitigation of harmful substances that have entered the bloodstream. After blood has moved through the intestines, it passes through the portal vein to the liver and then to the rest of the body. In a healthy animal's body, these substances are either gotten rid of or are rendered harmless, after which the cleansed blood flows back to the heart and is then safely recirculated.

Lethal Threats. Given its proximity to other organs and its involvement in innumerable processes, the liver is subject to several disorders, all of which must be considered lethally dangerous. The most frequently observed liver disorders may be classified as inflammatory, toxic, infectious or neoplastic (cancerous). In addition, Dr. Center points out, the liver — sturdy as it is — can also suffer serious injury. "Whenever a dog is hit by a car," she says, "there's a chance for liver trauma."

Among all canine liver conditions, she notes, the most frequently observed at CUHA is chronic hepatitis, an inflammatory disorder that is most often diagnosed in middle-aged dogs (about six to eight years of age) but is also seen occasionally in young dogs. In the majority of cases, the initial source of tissue-damaging inflammation is unknown, although it is often presumed to be a consequence of an immune-mediated response to an infectious agent, such as a virus, or to a toxin or perhaps a drug.

Chronic hepatitis is particularly dangerous, Dr. Center points out, because affected dogs do not show clinical signs of illness, such as loss of appetite and weight loss, until the disease has reached an advanced stage. "Dogs tend to remain asymptomatic for long periods of time," she says, "before they become seriously ill." As a result, some animals with chronic hepatitis die within a short time following veterinary diagnosis.

Toxic insult to the liver results from the ingestion of harmful substances. These substances range widely and include, for example, poisonous plants,

mushrooms, polluted water, spoiled food or garbage and human medications, such as Tylenol. "It's often difficult for us to identify the specific toxin that has caused the damage," says Dr. Center, "but these substances are probably at the source of more liver problems than we realize."

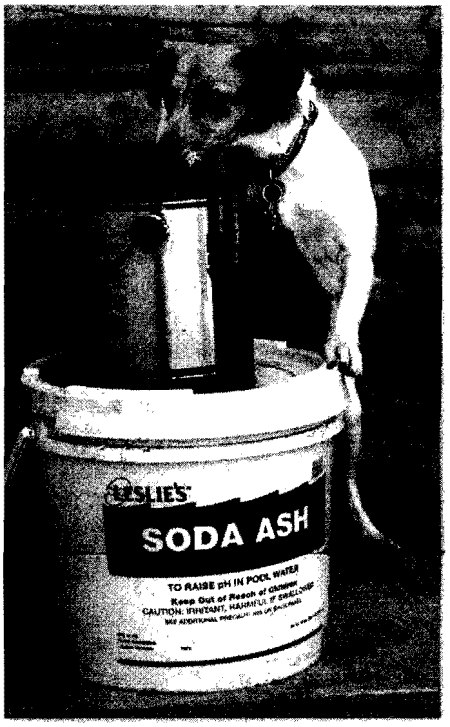
In some cases, the toxins are present in unlikely substances. In the recent past, for example, it was discovered that dogs can become deathly ill with liver disease by eating the leaves of a cycad, an exotic, palm-like plant often used as a bonsai. And only last year, owners and veterinarians were stunned to discover that canine liver failure was being caused by ingestion of dog food tainted with highly poisonous substances called aflatoxins.

Among infectious liver diseases, leptospirosis — a condition resulting from a bacterial infection — is a leading example. "Since the liver is in the middle of an animal's blood flow," says Dr. Center, "it is very often involved with and affected by a wide variety of infectious diseases. Fortunately, we have a very effective vaccine [originally developed at Cornell] for the major viral disease in dogs, which is canine infectious hepatitis."

Dogs are also vulnerable to the development of liver tumors, which can either arise in the organ or metastasize to the liver from elsewhere in the body. However, says Dr. Center, liver cancer is far less common than inflammatory problems that affect the organ.

Other notable liver problems in dogs include vacuolar hepatopathy (a degenerative disorder that develops secondary to high cortisone levels, stress or a systemic inflammatory condition) and portosystemic shunt, a congenital malformation that causes blood from the intestines to bypass the liver, thus sending uncleansed blood directly into systemic circulation. A liver disease called hepatic lipidosis, which is marked by the collection of fat within the organ, may occur in dogs but is far more common in cats.

Among all canine liver diseases, those with the poorest prognoses are end-stage cirrhosis, a condition in which functioning liver cells are replaced by scar tissue, and toxic insult caused by the ingestion of certain poisonous substances, such as the bonsai cycad plant or antifreeze.



LOCK UP DANGEROUS TOXINS. They can spell a serious health emergency, or even death, for a curious pet.

Clinical Signs. To a great extent, says Dr. Center, the clinical signs are similar for all types of advanced liver disease. These include food avoidance, weight loss, vomiting, lethargy, a noticeable buildup of abdominal fluid and jaundice — a condition marked by yellowish discoloration of the skin, whites of the eyes and mucous membranes.

Early diagnosis of liver disease relies largely on a thorough physical examination, blood chemistry analysis, urinalysis, liver function tests, ultrasound imaging of the abdomen and, in some cases, chest X-rays. Treatment methods and their outcomes will depend on the type of liver disease that is diagnosed and the stage of its progression.

Although there may be no way to protect your dog from some types of liver disease, says Dr. Center, early diagnosis and treatment are likely to improve the prognosis should any disorder be present. Thus, she advises, owners should certainly have their animals undergo a thorough physical examination at least once a year that includes a blood chemistry panel and urinalysis. Furthermore, she urges, make sure that your dog does not have access to poisonous substances that it might ingest accidentally or out of curiosity. ❖

SNORING ... *(continued from page 3)*

uting to breathing and snoring problems, your veterinarian will prescribe a diet and exercise program for your dog, because weight loss is essential to ease the dog's breathing.

What You Can Do. "Nothing is guaranteed to stop snoring," says Dr. Krotscheck. But if you have ruled out underlying medical causes for your dog's snoring, here are some things you can do to get some sleep:

◆ If you smoke, you should take steps to try to quit the habit. Smoking can irritate your dog's throat, nasal passages and respiratory system, leading to coughing and possibly snoring.

◆ Even though it may make you feel guilty, put your dogs to bed in another room and close your bedroom door.

◆ Take a nap with them during the day, if possible, so that you don't feel you're depriving them of your company.

◆ If your dog absolutely must sleep with you, give him his own little bed next to yours. Or give him a box he can stretch out in. Some people find that adding a pillow for your dog can also help curb the snoring. These changes of position — from curled up to more elongated — may ease the snoring.

◆ Get out the ear plugs. This may help you get through a night of dog snoring. (And it just might help with your husband's snoring, as well!) ❖

THE 'SNORING' BREEDS. Brachycephalic dogs are those with snug or flat noses, like Shih Tzus, Boxers, Bulldogs, Pekingese and Pugs.

ZOONOTIC DISEASES ...

(continued from cover)

depends on what the dog has been eating. Some dogs, for instance, like to eat horse manure, so the flora from that will become part of the dog's flora."

In addition, he says, some zoonotic disease agents can be airborne. A dog can harbor a pathogen in its lungs and, if showing signs of respiratory distress, can pass it to a nearby person by coughing or sneezing into their shared airspace.

Elevated Risk. Anyone can pick up a zoonotic disease, says Dr. Miller, but some people are more susceptible than others. Children are at elevated risk because of their typically closer physical contact with household pets. Youngsters are also more likely to put their hands into their mouths after cavorting with an animal or to play in a sandbox that has been contaminated by a dog.

Adults who are inattentive to their own personal hygiene are also at increased risk, Dr. Miller points out, since habitual negligence about washing one's hands after touching a dog will increase the likelihood of disease transmission through direct contact. And, he adds, people with impaired immune systems — such as those with HIV/AIDS or those who have undergone an organ transplant — are more susceptible because their bodies' defense mechanisms are less equipped to counter the assault of an invasive pathogen.

A Wide Variety. Although more than 150 zoonotic diseases have been identified, only a small percentage of them are known to be transmissible from domestic animals to humans. Following are examples of the wide-ranging bacterial, viral, fungal and parasitic zoonoses that are associated with dogs. Some are rarely observed; others are relatively common.

Rabies, the only viral zoonosis known to pose a threat to human beings, is perhaps the most serious of all zoonotic diseases. Onset of the disease, which is caused by a virus present in an infected dog's saliva, begins with the passage of the saliva — most often through a bite wound — into a human's body and its subsequent migration to the victim's central nervous system. Without prompt diagnosis and treatment with a rabies vaccine, the infection will prove fatal. Thanks to programs requiring owners to have their animals vaccinated against the disease, rabies cases resulting from dog bites are now extremely rare in the U.S. According to statistics gathered in the mid-1990s, more than 90 percent of human rabies cases resulted from bites by wild animals, while less than 10 percent were associated with domestic animal bites.

Tuberculosis, says Dr. Miller, is a rare zoonotic disease in domestic animals. Humans with the condition shed the causal bacterium (*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*) in their sputum and other respiratory secretions. Dogs acquire the infection through contact with those secretions; once the bacteria lodge in their lungs, dogs can pass the disease on to humans as well as other animals in the same manner.

Leptosporosis, a bacterial disease that causes severe flu-like symptoms in humans, is spread primarily through contact with an infected dog's urine. A dog that has recovered from the disease can continue to shed the bacterium in its urine for months or years afterward. "Veterinarians sometimes get it through accidental spraying of urine by a canine patient," says Dr. Miller.

Salmonellosis, a bacterial disease of the gastrointestinal system in both dogs and humans, causes severe abdominal pain, fever, nausea, vomiting and watery diarrhea. Humans usually are stricken with this disorder as the result of consuming contaminated water or uncooked food. However, they can also contract the disease by coming in close contact with infected dogs and by failing to wash their hands thoroughly afterward. Once infected, dogs may even continue to shed the offending bacteria for several weeks following successful treatment.

Ringworm, or dermatophytosis, is a skin infection caused by a fungal organism (*Microsporum canis*) that results in skin lesions and itching. "You get it by petting and stroking an infected dog," says Dr. Miller, "and not washing your hands afterward." In humans, ringworm can affect the scalp, beginning as a small pimple-like eruption and progressing so that the surrounding hair becomes brittle and falls out, leaving small patches of baldness.

According to Dr. Miller, this condition is far more prevalent in warmer, moister areas of the U.S. than it is in cooler, drier areas of the country.

Larval migrans is a condition associated with the ingestion by humans of roundworm eggs from the soil or penetration of the skin by hookworm larvae residing in the soil. The soil becomes contaminated when an infected dog defecates and its fecal matter is not promptly removed. The symptoms may include inflammation of the lungs, abdominal pain, impaired vision, seizures, itchy skin and blindness. Children who have access to areas that are heavily contaminated with dog feces are at especially high risk.

Canine scabies is a condition caused by infestation with a tiny mite that burrows into the skin of its host. When humans pick it up from their dogs, small, intensely itchy blisters develop on affected areas of the skin. As is frequently the case with zoonotic diseases, children whose playful activities with their animals include close physical contact for extended periods are at elevated risk.

In addition to the foregoing examples of zoonotic disease, owners should be aware of a number of vector-borne conditions — those in which a dog may or may not be ill but is nevertheless hosting a disease-causing organism on the surface of its body. In this regard, the most prominent examples are the ticks that cause Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever, conditions that, if not treated promptly, can lead to chronic neurologic and arthritic illness, critically high fever, paralysis and death.

Avoiding the Problem. What are the chances that you'll pick up a zoonotic disease from your dog? Dr. Miller offers these observations:

"If you don't wash your hands thoroughly after handling your dog, you're taking a risk. If you have a healthy dog and a normal, healthy immune system, *the risk is trivial. But if you* have a compromised immune system, the normal bacteria that are on the animal's skin surface — and all dogs have them there — can put you at increased risk. Coming in contact with a few little pimples on the animal can become a big issue for you."

Dr. Miller urges dog owners to observe good hygiene habits, ensure that their children's sandboxes or other playing areas are clean, provide their animals with year-round medication to control parasites, be vigilant about the signs of canine illness and take their dogs for regular veterinary exams. ❖

COMPANY AND YOUR DOG ...

(continued from cover)

doorbell rings, anything can happen. No visitor likes to ring the bell, hear ferocious barking and then see you dragging off your dog as they try to greet you. It doesn't exactly create the welcoming atmosphere you'd like.

The idea is to reduce your dog's stress level before your guests even walk up the driveway. First, keep your dog's schedule — feeding, going out, playing — as close to normal as possible. Exercise your dog before guests are due. A tired dog may be less rambunctious when guests arrive.

Training Your Guests. We're so used to thinking about what the dog will do to guests that we often fail to anticipate what the guests might do to the dog. Make sure your dog won't bound out the door when guests arrive. To prevent escape, you may need to keep your dog in a secure room when guests first arrive. (Or you may need to tether the dog so he doesn't even get close to the door.) Tell visitors beforehand the rules about not letting the dog out. As a safety precaution, make sure your dog is wearing the proper identification in case he does bolt.

Some guests are afraid of dogs, while others love to roughhouse with them. If your pooch is very excitable, advise your guests not to start some game or rough behavior that might get your dog all fired up.

Training Your Dog. There are a couple of ways in which you can train your dog to behave well when guests arrive. The first way is to train your dog to sit and stay. This involves repetitive trials of having your dog remain quiet and still while being approached by another person. As soon as your dog starts to get up, walk your dog away from the person and have him sit and stay again. When your dog begins to sit still when approached by an individual, reward him with lots of praise and some treats. When he gets really good at it, let the other person gently pet him — as long as he stays calm.

Ultimately, your dog will learn to associate calm behavior with attention from you and from visitors. "There's no reason why any dog can't learn to sit and stay," says Dr. Houpt. "The big test is to see if your dog will sit and stay when you're outside. If he does it, then he's really learned the command."

According to Dr. Houpt, it's usually easier to teach your dog not to jump on you than it is to teach him not to pounce on other people. So it is best if you practice with someone who will be a "pretend" visitor.

The second method you can try is to put your dog in his place — literally. This is actually more difficult than sit-and-stay. But if you don't want to worry about your dog escaping and jumping when you open the door for quests, designate a spot where he can see but not easily reach the front door. Make his spot comfortable and easily identifiable with a mat or rug. Then train your dog to go there when you say "place." Use lots of praise and treats as reinforcements. When your dog has learned to go to his place, he will be able to observe everything that is going on without getting in the way. If he is not perfect, you can simply tether him there. Then you can release him when everyone is inside.

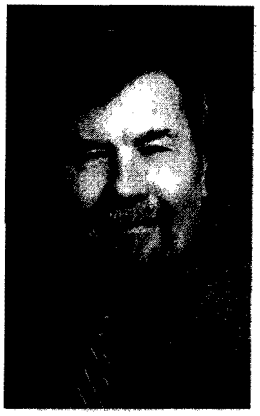
"Feed your dog before you have dinner with your guests," says Dr. Houpt. "That way she will be somewhat satiated. And then while guests are eating, you can give your dog a Buster Cube or some other toy that she can play with or chew on to distract her from the table."

Advise your guests not to feed the dog anything unless they receive permission first. Some visitors can't resist, so keep some healthy pet treats on hand. Be very assertive about not feeding table scraps (especially fatty foods, which can be harmful) to the dog. If you do allow a holiday treat from the table, let your guest add some turkey or some other defatted tidbit to your dog's bowl. You don't want your guests getting your dog started on the very bad habit of begging at the dinner table.

Begin Process Early. Says Dr. Houpt, "Most people learn the necessity to train their dogs the hard way — after he's misbehaved with guests." Don't be one of those people. Start early before you even invite anyone over. And remember, it's very important — and a lot easier — to tell your guests what not to do with your dog before they arrive than when they're already at the door. Then you're free to go back to fretting over the food, conversation and ambience of your home! ❖

THE OVERZEALOUS WELCOME. It may be fun for children, but most people won't enjoy a big, rambunctious dog jumping on them.

TEACH HIM HIS PLACE. Choose a spot where he can see but not reach the front door. Train him to go there when you say "place."



William H. Miller, VMD, Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Dermatology

Send your behavior or health questions to:

Dr. Miller, Box 7, Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, Ithaca, New York 14854

We regret that we cannot respond to individual inquiries about canine health or behavior matters.

Q I have a Pembroke Welsh Corgi, Princess, who has always been very good, never showing aggression toward other dogs or people until recently, when a German Shepherd jumped her from behind. Since then, she has shown more aggression to certain dogs and also has a great fear of loud noises such as leaf blowers, UPS trucks, motorcycles, etc. I started training her with a private trainer, who suggested that I take her to noisy places such as parking areas in malls. I took her to a very busy intersection where there were motorcycles, cars, an ambulance and a helicopter. When I put her down, she quivered more than ever before. I feel so bad about her fears. Any advice you could provide would be greatly appreciated.

A *It is very unfortunate that your little Corgi was the victim of aggression by another dog. From your letter, it sounds as if Princess never showed any aggressive behaviors before the Shepherd attack, and now displays them in the presence of other dogs (not towards family members, human visitors, children, etc.). It seems she is also fearful of loud noises.*

It is not unusual for a dog that has been the victim of another dog's aggression to become fearful and react aggressively toward dogs herself. The dog has valid reason to fear the approach of strange dogs after having been attacked. That said, aggressive behavior is always inappropriate when it can put other dogs, people and your own dog at risk.

Two techniques are common for dealing with fear in dogs. One, called flooding, involves exposing the dog to all of the things it is afraid of at high levels all at once, in the hopes that the dog will stop responding to the fearsome stimuli. This seems to be the approach your trainer recommended when suggesting you take Princess to noisy areas for extended periods of time. Sometimes this can work, but it can also run the risk of being very overwhelming for the animal and even exacerbating its fear. That is what happened to Princess because she was still responding fearfully to the noises when you took her out of the situation.

Other mistakes that people make with a fearful dog include reassuring, talking to and petting the dog when it is exhibiting fearful behavior. This simply rewards the behavior and can strengthen it. Conversely, physical discipline should be avoided at all costs since it can make a fearfully aggressive dog worse. Another technique relies on training the dog to obey simple commands (sit/stay, down/stay, etc.) and associating those commands and training sessions with relaxation. Once this is accomplished, a second phase of slow desensitization to the fear-inducing stimuli can begin. The new obedience skills serve as a source of focus and control for the dog (instead of focusing on the scary dog/noise/etc. being introduced) and also help the dog to associate its skills with relaxed, safe time spent with you.

Depending on your dog's current obedience level, start by working for five to 10 minutes each morning and evening, teaching the dog a sit-stay or down-stay series of commands. Training should always focus on positive rewards (very small food treats work well) and not punishment, which can add to the animal's anxiety.

In order to foster an attitude of relaxation, training should be conducted calmly, in a quiet voice, without any frustration or reprimands from you, and in an area free of distractions. Once your dog can be reliably expected to follow your command 100 percent of the time (even with only random food treats), you can begin slowly to add distractions (another person walking by, etc.), but try to maintain a calm, relaxed attitude yourself. Once your dog can be expected to follow your command even in the face of environmental distractions, it is time to move on to the desensitization phase.

The key to this phase is to move slowly; and in this case, which involves fear of other dogs, as soon as you see another dog, begin to give her tiny treats. Try to walk around the dog at an angle so she is not directly facing the other dog because that is threatening. Stay as far away as you can. If she takes her treats, you can begin to walk a little closer to the other dog. If she misbehaves, ask her to sit and let the other dog go past her. Pet or praise her if she sits. To deal with her noise phobia, you might try to use a tape recording or a video while you train. Gradually increase the volume day by day if she remains calm and obeys. If she is frightened or *won't obey, stop, ignore her for at least five minutes and begin again (or the next day) with a lower volume.*

Through this process, Princess will learn to redirect her focus from the frightening stimulus to you and to your command, both of which should be associated with calmness, safety and treats. ❖

COMING UP ...

CUSHING'S DISEASE

❖

FINDING A GOOD DOG WALKER

❖

ADDISON'S DISEASE

❖

HEALTHY TREATS

❖

SEPARATION ANXIETY

❖

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