

# Petstravaganza

The Niles Animal Hospital and Bird Medical Center Newsletter

## Special Interest Articles:

- This issue is our "New Website" edition.
- We are introducing you to several of the new features of our website.
- Website address:  
[nilesanimalhospital.com](http://nilesanimalhospital.com)

*Be certain that we have your current email, updated information and the correct birthdates of your pets.*

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## Our New Newsletter

Welcome to the first edition of our relaunched newsletter. We will be using the newsletter to get you up to date as to what is happening at the hospital. In addition, we will also provide topical, informational articles as well as features giving you insights about our staff members and some of our hospital activities. With the wonder of modern technology we will be sending the newsletter via

email to our clients who have provided us with their email addresses, as well as having hard copies in the hospital. Be sure to provide the receptionists with your email address (or be sure the address we have on file is still current) so we can provide you with the newsletters on a regular basis.

In addition to the news and informational articles a regular feature will be a question and answer

section where we will publish responses to some of the questions that are submitted to us. So feel free to ask us questions. The questions can be submitted to the front desk, to staff members or through our website, using the email address:

[info@nilesanimalhospital.com](mailto:info@nilesanimalhospital.com)

We look forward to your questions or comments about the newsletter.

## Check Out Our New Website!

We are very excited about our newly updated website accessible at: [nilesanimalhospital.com](http://nilesanimalhospital.com) We have put in a great deal of time and effort to make the website informative as well as a great resource for our clients. It is still a work in progress as we are still in the process of adding more content articles to the site, but already there is so much to see and access. There are some very exciting features on the website that will enable you to better communicate with us at

the hospital virtually 24/7. We will be describing some of these features in some of the other articles in this newsletter. Through a feature called Pet Portal, you will be able to establish a page for you pets and in that way be able to check their vaccination status, order medications and food which can then be delivered right to your door! With the busy schedules we all seem to have and such limited time, conveniences such as these are well-appreciated. When we

were deciding how to upgrade our website, we recognized how valuable the services offered by our new provider could really improve our services, make life easier for our clients and offer the great opportunity for top notch client education, the decision was easy.

We hope you will enjoy our new website and will benefit from all the features provided. We would sincerely appreciate any feedback you have so we can continue to improve our level of care for you and your pets.

# Petstravaganza



*“What is exciting is that through our website we can arrange home delivery of various types of products, most medications and prescription pet foods.”*



## Pet Portal on Our Website

One of the features we have available on our website is something called the Pet Portal, which is a great addition. This enables you to be in contact with our hospital 24/7. You log in to the Pet Portal and set up a page for each of your pets. Once this is set up it opens up a vast array of services that become available to you.

The page is unique to

your pet and will display examination and vaccination status, which will then be available to you any time you need to access it. You can send us any updated contact information such as change of address, phone number changes and email changes. You can request appointments on line as well. Staff members will be checking the site several times daily and can accommodate

your request replying back to you verifying your appointment.

In addition, you can request prescription refills and order food online. You can also set up your portal to receive alerts about your pets' medications. What is also very exciting is that through our website we can arrange home delivery of various types of products, most medications and prescription pet foods!

## Automatic Email Reminders

Another added benefit to our new website is the ability to send out email reminders. We already send out reminder cards but some clients have told us that they would prefer email reminders, which we can now accomplish. We will continue sending out cards, however, but this is a nice adjunct service. The reminders will be sent out thirty days before services are due as well

as past due reminders.

We also have the capability to send out Ecards on your pets' birthdays; so be sure to check that we have the proper birthdates and if it is uncertain we can create an appropriate date with your help. No pet wants to miss out on a birthday card and it will also help YOU to remember your pets' special days.

Season specific health

care tips will also be sent automatically to keep you alert and prepared for any problems that may arise during the various times of the years.

With your Pet Portal you can also set up your own email alerts to stay on top of your pets' medications so that you will not suddenly find out that you have run out and then have to scramble to get more.

## Our Website Will Have an Online Store

Another convenient feature with our new website is the existence of our own online store. With the cooperation of our vendors we are able to offer certain products online so that you can order them from the comfort of your home and have them delivered right to your door. Our prices are competitive with other

online sources and depending upon the size of your order shipping may be free!

A big advantage of our online store, compared with the others, is that we are dealing with a known, quality source of the products (who provides medications to our hospital already) and

because they are bought through us they have the manufacturer's iron clad guarantees in place which will be honored.

We are pleased to offer this new service to you to make your lives easier, as well as providing the confidence that you are receiving quality products that are manufacturer guaranteed.

# Petstravaganza

## Pet Health Library and Client Education

Client education has always been one of the hallmarks of our practice and our website is geared up to provide a wealth of information for you. A complete pet health library developed by Veterinary learning Systems, publisher of Compendium, Veterinary Forum and Veterinary Technician magazines is readily accessible on our website for your use.

Your pets' pages on Pet

Portal will also contain articles geared towards the species and age of your pets. Seasonally appropriate articles will be added throughout the year.

Additionally, we have added numerous "Custom" articles. What this refers to are unique articles written by our hospital and placed on the website. As Doctor Sakas has done a great deal of lecturing throughout the years we

have all kinds of articles which are based on his lectures as well as articles excerpted from his book, *Essentials of Avian Medicine: A Practitioner's Guide*. The articles run the gamut, covering dog/cat issues, bird care/diseases, behavior, selecting the right type of pet, wildlife issues and many other topics. As time goes on we will continue to add more to the website.

In the spirit of education

we have a question and answer section on the website. You can submit questions and Dr. Sakas will provide answers. We will post some of the questions and answers so you can still benefit from this feature even if you do not submit a question. Who knows, a question that you were thinking of may be asked! We are trying to make our site as informative as we can.

## Question / Answer Section– Smelly Droppings in Female Macaws

*My female Macaws periodically have incredibly pungent feces. They can clear a room! The males do not do this. What causes this and can anything be done about the odor? V.W.*

There are several reasons why bird droppings can be odiferous. Typically bird droppings do not have much of a smell. However, if the cage is not cleaned regularly and droppings are allowed to accumulate then a definite smell does develop. As the droppings are organic matter, as they remain in the cage for a period of time the normal population of bacteria in the dropping will continue to multiply leading to an increase in odor. Additionally, environmental bacteria will also end up in the dropping, which will also multiply with resultant increase in the aroma. Obviously, the odor is one concern, but the critical consideration with increasing bacterial growth in the droppings is that your bird is being subjected to large amounts of bacteria which you can surmise puts the bird at greater risk to develop disease. Thus sanitation is of utmost importance to keep your bird free from disease, as well as having a better smelling cage. As long as I am on the subject of sanitation, filthy water cups are a main reason we see infections develop in birds. Change the water frequently as well as scrubbing out the cups to reduce bacterial populations.

Sometimes the diet of the bird can cause the droppings to smell. Certain foods as they are processed through the gastrointestinal tract can lead to odiferous droppings. If you notice your bird has a distinct odor to the droppings, review the diet to see if any recent foods provided may be responsible for the smell. We all know too well that this can happen to people as well. If a certain food is the culprit you can eliminate it from the diet or if you do not mind the periodic odor it is not harmful to continue feeding the food if odor is the only problem and the consistency of the dropping is normal.

One of the most frequent reasons that droppings smell is due to a gastrointestinal infection or disturbance (such as inflammatory bowel disease). Bacterial or fungal infections are often implicated as the cause of changes in droppings. If you notice a change in the consistency and smell in the droppings and there has been no dietary changes the bird should be taken to your veterinarian for a physical examination which would also include a fecal examination. If there have been abnormal droppings it would be a good idea to bring in 1-2 days of cage papers with the abnormal droppings present. Any testing would be done on a fresh dropping, but as it usually works out the bird is brought in a clean cage and the droppings the bird has on the way to the veterinarian and in the office are invariably normal!

After this long dissertation about smelly droppings we will get to your question. It is actually a pretty simple solution. First of all the males are not affected, an infection would obviously affect both sexes. The smell persists for a while then goes away. An infection typically would cause a worsening of symptoms. What is happening here is something that we see in female birds going through a reproductive cycle. When they go through the cycle their oviduct becomes quite large and the abdomen often noticeably swells as well as the vent enlarging. As the oviduct enlarges it crowds in on the intestinal tract and cloaca, which you can figure interferes with normal passage of the droppings. Thus they retain the droppings inside longer and they begin to accumulate until finally they are able to expel a large foisty dropping that smells bad enough to gag a maggot. It smells so bad as while it is retained in the body for a prolonged period of time the bacteria thrives in the nice warm environment hence leading to the smell. As they complete the cycle, the oviduct reduces to normal size, allowing regular passage of droppings.

But a word of caution. Do not automatically assume that the smell is due to the reproductive cycle only and will get better. Quite often secondary infections may develop, so an innocent change in the droppings due to hormonal cycle could lead into a serious intestinal tract infection. Be vigilant during these cycles as the birds are stressed and could be subject to secondary infections. A visit to your veterinarian may be in order if this problem persists. *Answered by Dr. Sakas*

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.nilesanimalhospital.com](http://www.nilesanimalhospital.com)

## Make Sure Your Information Is Up To Date

The only way that our website can be effective for our hospital as well as for you is if your information is up to date. All too often a phone number is changed or a move is made so that the information we have on file may be out of date. Our receptionists are trained to make sure the information we have on file is current...but as we know sometimes things happen or a move is made between visits. They will be trying hard to keep the information up to date, but double check to

be sure we have it right. Cell numbers have become so commonplace that we need to be sure we have that number as well. Especially important is making sure we have your email. That is how we can communicate through the website and enable you to have access to all the features on the site. Your email will be totally private and not used for any solicitations or third parties.

We respect your privacy and if you do not want any contact via email we will respect your wishes. If

you do not have access to email you will unfortunately miss out on the website, however, it will be business as usual as you will receive the reminders and communications from the hospital as in the past. But we still need to be sure your other information is up to date.

We are very excited about our new website and hope that you all can benefit from what it has to offer you and your pets. Any concerns please let us know.

## February is Spay and Neuter Month

With all the budget problems in government this year we were not too sure if the Cook County Spay/Neuter Discount Program was going to take place, but they came through for the animals once again. As has been in the past, February is the month for the program. Any dog or cat neutered/spayed in February, is UP TO DATE

on their RABIES vaccinations and a resident of Cook County is eligible to have a \$40 discount off the price of the surgery. There are many medical reasons why these surgeries should be performed (articles describing the benefits are on our website). In addition, we require pre-surgical blood work to be completed

before any procedure to minimize any risks.

Set up an appointment for the blood work and surgery soon, as the time slots fill up quickly. Having the surgery performed will enable your pet to live a long and healthy life avoiding disease conditions and cancers caused by hormones and the reproductive tract.

## January and February are Dental Special Months.



Let's Have a Look in There Big Guy! Time for a Cleaning!

February is Dental Health Month and we offer a dental special, however, as it coincides with Cook County Spay/Neuter Program we had trouble accommodating all the surgeries in the past so to ease the onslaught of surgeries we have extended our Dental Special for two months to include January as well as February. We offer up to a \$40 discount on any dental procedure

performed in those months. It can be applied to a dental being performed when another procedure is also being done. We do require pre-surgical blood work before any anesthetic procedure. These slots fill up fast so make your appointment for the bloodwork and dental soon.

Dental disease, in addition to causing gingivitis, dental tartar, loosened

and discolored teeth, can lead to serious systemic diseases affecting the heart, liver, kidney and other systems. It slowly sneaks up on your pets so do not let them suffer from a debilitating condition which can impact their quality of life. A dental cleaning will make them feel great and also get rid of "Dragon Breath" so you won't mind them licking your face once again.