Client communication
The importance of bringing pets to the veterinary office

Practice management
Going from survival to success in the pandemic

Client education
Providing tips for giving a dog medicine

Well-being
Combining motivation and inspiration

ON THE heels of success

Catherine Coloccia, practice manager of the year 2021
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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION: Do not use in dogs with central nervous system depression or seizures. Do not use in cases of ingestion of sharp foreign objects, corrosive agents (acids or alkalis), volatile substances or organic solvents. CLEVOR® should not be administered in cases with corneal ulceration, ocular irritation, or ocular injury. Do not use when there is a known sensitivity to ropinirole or the inactive ingredients. ADVERSE REACTIONS MAY INCLUDE: Transient mild or moderate hyperemia of the eye, ocular discharge, protrusion of the 3rd eyelid and blepharospasm, transient mild lethargy and increased heart rate. Not recommended for use in breeding, pregnant or lactating dogs. CLEVOR® has not been evaluated in dogs with heart or liver impairments or dogs younger than 4.5 months or less than 4 pounds. Dopamine antagonists, neuroleptics and other medicines with antiemetic properties may reduce the effectiveness of ropinirole. CLEVOR® should be administered by a veterinary professional. Gloves and protective eyewear should be worn when administering. Not for use in humans. Keep out of reach of children.

For additional product safety information, see brief on following page or visit: https://www.vetoquinolusa.com/clevor-info

CLEVOR® is a trademark of Orion Corporation Orion Pharma. It is developed and manufactured by Orion Corporation Orion Pharma and distributed by Vetoquinol USA, Inc. under license from Orion Corporation Orion Pharma.
The number of eye drops administered corresponding to body weight results in a dose of 3.75 mg/mL (dose band 2.7 - 5.4 mg/mL). If the dog does not vomit within 20 minutes of the first dose, then a second dose may be administered.

**Dose Administration**

- 4 - 11.1 lbs (1.8 - 5 kgs), 1 drop
- 11.2 - 22.1 lbs (5.1 - 10 kgs), 2 drops
- 22.2 - 44.1 lbs (10.1 - 20 kgs), 3 drops
- 44.2 - 77.2 lbs (20.1 - 35 kgs), 4 drops
- 77.3 - 132.3 lbs (35.1 - 60 kgs), 6 drops
- 132.4 - 220.5 lbs (60.1 - 100 kgs), 8 drops
- 221.6 - 331.4 lbs (101.1 - 150 kgs), 10 drops
- 332.5 lbs and over, 12 drops

**Dosing Instructions:**

Administer the appropriate number of eye drops topically according to Table 1. The number of eye drops administered corresponding to body weight results in a dose of 3.75 mg/mL (dose band 2.7 - 5.4 mg/mL). If the dog does not vomit within 20 minutes of the first dose, then a second dose may be administered.

**DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION:**

This product should be administered by veterinary personnel. Dosing Instructions:

- Administer the appropriate number of eye drops topically according to Table 1. The number of eye drops administered corresponding to body weight results in a dose of 3.75 mg/mL (dose band 2.7 - 5.4 mg/mL). If the dog does not vomit within 20 minutes of the first dose, then a second dose may be administered.

**Animal Safety Warnings:**

- Avoid contact with the product if animals are lactating or pregnant. Exposure to this drug may cause adverse reactions such as headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, orthostatic hypotension, and sleepiness. Avoid contact with the product if pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breast-feeding; as exposure has been shown to have adverse effects on embryo-fetal development based on rodent studies.

**Adverse Reactions Reported During the Study (all dogs):**

- Ocular organ system were conjunctival hyperemia, protrusion of the third eyelid, conjunctival irritation, blepharospasm, conjunctival swelling, scratching/rubbing of the eye, corneal ulceration and corneal fluorescein uptake without corneal ulceration. Systemic organ system were (lethargy, tachycardia (>160 beats per minute), vomiting duration longer than one hour, salivation, trembling, diarrhea or soft stool), anxious and borborygmi. Clinical pathology organ system were crystalluria, pycuria, increased liver enzymes, decreased blood glucose and increased prothrombin time.

**ADVERSE REACTIONS:**

- The safe use of CLEVOR has not been evaluated in dogs with cardiac disease or cardiovascular compromise. CLEVOR can cause transient tachycardia and transient decreased systolic blood pressure.

**DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION:**

- CLEVOR was administered as drops into the eyes at the dose as directed by the dosing table (see DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION). The following table shows the number of eye drops exhibiting ocular, systemic, and clinical pathology adverse reactions.

**Animal Safety Warnings:**

- Avoid contact with the product if animals are lactating or pregnant. Exposure to this drug may cause adverse reactions such as headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, orthostatic hypotension, and sleepiness. Avoid contact with the product if pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breast-feeding; as exposure has been shown to have adverse effects on embryo-fetal development based on rodent studies.

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EXTENDED-DURATION BRAVECTO CHEWS

BRAVECTO® CHEWS

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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:

BRAVECTO 1-MONTH Chews are for dogs 8 weeks of age and older. Side effects may include itching, diarrhea, vomiting, decreased appetite, elevated ALT, lethargy, and weight loss. Fluralaner is a member of the isoxazoline class. This class has been associated with neurologic adverse reactions including tremors, ataxia, and seizures. Seizures have been reported in dogs receiving isoxazoline class drugs, even in dogs without a history of seizures. Use with caution in dogs with a history of seizures or neurologic disorders. BRAVECTO 1-MONTH Chews are not effective against A. americanum in puppies less than 6 months of age. BRAVECTO Chews for Dogs: The most commonly reported adverse reactions include vomiting, decreased appetite, diarrhea, lethargy, polydipsia, and flatulence. BRAVECTO Chews have not been shown to be effective for 12-weeks’ duration in puppies less than 6 months of age. BRAVECTO Chews are not effective against lone star ticks beyond 8 weeks of dosing. Fluralaner is a member of the isoxazoline class. This class has been associated with neurologic adverse reactions including tremors, ataxia, and seizures. Seizures have been reported in dogs receiving isoxazoline class drugs, even in dogs without a history of seizures. Use with caution in dogs with a history of seizures or neurologic disorders. For complete product information refer to the product insert on page 4.
BRAVECTO® 1-Month Chews for Dogs

**BRIEF SUMMARY (For full Prescribing Information, see package insert)**

**Caution:**
Federal (USA) law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

**Indications:**
Bravecto kills adult fleas and is indicated for the treatment and prevention of flea infestations (Ctenocephalides felis) and the treatment and control of tick infestations (Ixodes scapularis [black-legged tick], Dermacentor variabilis [American dog tick], and Rhipicephalus sanguineus [brown dog tick]) for one month in dogs and puppies 8 weeks of age and older, and weighing 4.4 pounds or greater.

Bravecto is also indicated for the treatment and control of Amblyomma americanum (lone star tick) infestations for 8 weeks in dogs and puppies 6 months of age and older, and weighing 4.4 pounds or greater.

**Contraindications:**
There are no known contraindications for the use of this product.

**WARNINGS**

**Human Warnings:**
Not for human use. Keep this and all drugs out of the reach of children. Keep the product in the original packaging until use, in order to prevent children from getting direct access to the product. Do not eat, drink or smoke while handling the product. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water immediately after use of the product. Keep Bravecto in a secure location out of reach of dogs, cats, and other animals to prevent accidental ingestion or overdose.

**Precautions:**
Fluralaner is a member of the isoxazoline class. This class has been associated with neurologic adverse reactions including tremors, ataxia, and seizures. Seizures have been reported in dogs receiving isoxazoline class drugs, even in dogs without a history of seizures. Use with caution in dogs with a history of seizures or neurologic disorders.

Bravecto 1-Month is not effective against A. americanum in puppies less than 6 months of age.

The safety of Bravecto 1-Month has not been evaluated in breeding, pregnant and lactating dogs.

**Adverse Reactions:**
In a well-controlled U.S. field study, which included 271 dogs (201 dogs were administered Bravecto 1-Month every 30 days and 70 dogs were administered an oral active control [an isoxazoline] every 30 days), there were no serious adverse reactions associated with treatment. Over the 90-day study period, all observations of potential adverse reactions were recorded.

**Dogs with Adverse Reactions in the Field Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adverse Reaction</th>
<th>Bravecto Group: Percent of Dogs with the AR During the 90-Day Study (n=201 dogs)</th>
<th>Active Control Group: Percent of Dogs with the AR During the 90-Day Study (n=70 dogs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pruritus</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diarrhea</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vomiting</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased Appetite</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liver enzymes (ALT or ALP) greater than twice the upper reference value*</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lethargy</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight loss (&gt;15%)</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Alkaline phosphatase (ALP), alkaline phosphatase (AKP)

One dog in the Bravecto 1-Month group with a history of seizures managed with anticonvulsant medication had seizures within 28 days after its first dose; the dog received its second dose later the same day. No additional seizures occurred during the study. One dog in the control group with no history of seizures had seizures 12 days after its second dose. The dog was started on anticonvulsant medication and no additional seizures occurred during the study.

During the 90-day study, four dogs coughed within one hour of dosing with Bravecto 1-Month. Lethargy was not assessed in the control group.

In well-controlled laboratory effectiveness studies, one dog and three puppies administered Bravecto 1-Month had dermatitis (with or without blood).

**Post Approval Experience (2019):**
The following adverse events are based on post-approval adverse drug experience reporting for fluralaner. Not all adverse events are reported to FDA/IVIMP. It is not always possible to reliably estimate the adverse event frequency or establish a causal relationship to product exposure using these data.

The following adverse events reported for dogs are listed in decreasing order of reporting frequency: Vomiting, lethargy, diarrhea (with or without blood), anorexia, pruritus, polydipsia, seizure, allergic reactions (including hives, swelling, erythema), dermatitis (including crusts, pustules, rash), tremors and ataxia.

**Contact Information:**
To report suspected adverse events, for technical assistance or to obtain a copy of the Safety Data Sheet (SDS), contact Merck Animal Health at 1-800-204-5318. Additional information can be found at www.bravecto.com. For additional information about adverse drug experience reporting for animal drugs, contact FDA at 1-888-FDA-VETS or online at http://www.fda.gov/vets. For more information go to www.fda.gov/reportmedsafety.

**How Supplied:**
Bravecto 1-Month is available in five strengths (45, 100, 200, 400, and 560 mg fluralaner per chew). Each chew is packaged individually into aluminum foil blister packs sealed with a peelable paper backed foil lid stock. Product may be packaged in 1, 3, or 4 chews per package.

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Rev. 03/20

Approved by FDA under NADA # 141-326
Lately, veterinary clinics are getting more calls from pet owners asking for prescriptions and other treatments for their pets without an exam. The request may be for an antianxiety medication for travel for a pet we’ve never seen, or for a refill of an antibiotic or anti-inflammatory for a pet that hasn’t been to the clinic in over a year. When we correctly answer “no,” we face disappointed clients who may accuse us of just wanting to make money. They sometimes even imply that we all have luxury cars in the parking lot (spoiler alert: we don’t).

Although clients don’t generally like to be told they have to bring their pet to the clinic, explaining the value of a physical examination—a vital part of the veterinary-client-patient relationship—can help.

Physical exams are vital to the veterinary-client-patient relationship. Learn how to explain their value to pet owners.

By Sara Beth Speziok, MPH

Yes, your pet must visit the veterinary office

More than any blood test or radiograph, a physical exam makes use of the veterinarian’s and veterinary technician’s extensive education and knowledge. So what does our training help us notice that clients may not? What is the purpose of the various parts of a physical examination? Let’s go through the process and look at how veterinary staff could explain each step and convince a pet owner of the value of a trip to the clinic.
A complete health history and observation from a distance

The veterinary technician and veterinarian walk into the room to learn and observe the health history. This may seem like just a conversation—one that could have happened on the phone—but while this process is happening, the technician and the doctor are observing the animal and allowing them to grow more comfortable with the unfamiliar surroundings. The fact that your pet sees you talking to the scary people in scrubs instead of running away helps them feel more confident. We look at how they are standing, resting, and moving, looking for signs of pain and other abnormalities. We look at their coats, noticing any pattern of baldness and whether the fur is dull or shiny. Are they squinting 1 or both eyes? Holding their ears down? When they pant, can we see tartar on their teeth or gum inflammation? Do they have what we call a “pendulous” abdomen—a potbelly appearance?

Temperature, pulse rate, respiration rate, and weight

If the technician has not already, the doctor will likely take a rectal temperature at this point. Although this may seem rude, it is important to know if a fever is developing. It is also essential for us to measure your pet’s pulse and respiration rates and to get an accurate and current weight.

The physical exam: The head and neck

Now the veterinarian starts the hands-on physical exam. Every doctor has a slightly different approach, but many start at the front of the animal and work their way back. The doctor examines the eyes and nose, looking for discharge, noting its color and consistency. Using an ophthalmoscope, we shine a light into the eyes, looking at the pupillary light reflex or whether the animal’s pupils contract equally and normally. The doctor may also test a palpebral reflex—touching around the eye and watching for a quick blink in response. We look for redness of the conjunctiva and sclera and for any evidence of problems affecting the cornea or deeper structures within the eye. Then the doctor will often switch the head on their tool and examine the ear canals.

Now that we’re through with examining the eyes and ears, the veterinarian will look in your pet’s mouth. They’ll examine the teeth for tartar, the gums for gingivitis, and the entire oral cavity for any inflammation, wounds, or masses. We’ll evaluate the mucous membranes for dehydration and cardiovascular function. Pale, brick red, or blue tinged mucous membranes are all signs of severe disease and require immediate attention. A full oral exam is impossible on an awake animal (they just won’t listen when we tell them to say “ahh”), but the veterinarian or technician can determine if a dental cleaning or full oral exam under sedation is needed.

Next, most doctors will palpate the submandibular lymph nodes, located just behind the jaw. These nodes are not often visible and can be hard to locate, but swelling or changes in texture can indicate the need for further diagnostics to rule out inflammation or cancer. During the exam, the veterinarian will typically palpate numerous lymph nodes throughout the animal’s body.

The physical exam: The chest and abdomen

After examining the head and neck, many veterinarians will then use their stethoscope to auscultate the heart and lungs. They will listen to the rate, rhythm, and character of the heartbeat. Simultaneous palpation of pulses alerts the doctor to abnormalities in blood circulation. They may move the stethoscope bell to the trachea to listen to referred upper airway noise and may palpate the trachea to elicit a cough (a collapsing trachea can often be diagnosed this way).

While they are examining the midsection of your pet, the doctor will likely move their hands over the entire body. Although doing this may look like normal petting, we’re feeling for masses, skin problems, and overall body condition.

Abdominal palpation is an important next step in the physical exam. Veterinarians are trained to feel for swelling, thickening, and masses in the abdomen. If your animal is relaxed enough to allow it, most doctors will spend a minute or 2 performing a deep abdominal palpation. They can feel the intestines, bladder, kidneys, and sometimes the liver and spleen. This is a skill that takes years to perfect but is invaluable at determining if further diagnostics, such as radiographs or ultrasonography, are necessary. The technician will watch the reactions of the pet during this palpation and alert the doctor if any twinges of pain are noted.
The doctor will likely palpate your pet’s spine. Again, the veterinary technician watches the patient’s face carefully, looking for subtle indications of pain. The doctor may do a quick neurologic exam, flipping the feet over and watching how quickly they are moved back into a normal position. This tests proprioception, or the ability to know where one’s limbs are.

The physical exam: The hind end

Now that the doctor has reached your pet’s hind end, they will likely run their hands or a comb through the fur in front of the tail as this is a favorite spot for fleas. It’s also important to look under the tail for masses and evidence of abnormal stools and urinary or reproductive abnormalities. Older, intact male dogs should undergo a rectal exam to check for prostate enlargement, and intact female dogs may receive a more thorough reproductive exam.

The veterinarian will palpate your pet’s legs and perform a thorough musculoskeletal examination when needed. They may test the range of motion of the hips and watch for any signs of pain or stiffness. Additionally, the doctor may ask the technician to walk or jog the animal in straight lines or circles to perform a gait evaluation at the end of the stationary physical exam. Typically, this will only be done if lameness is reported.

The physical exam guides diagnostic and treatment recommendations

We will discuss any findings with you during or after the physical exam and recommend appropriate diagnostic testing or treatment. For example, if an ear canal is inflamed, we may need to swab your pet’s ear and perform a cytologic examination on the sample to determine what types of microorganisms are present. This is essential information before we can recommend the right medication.

Conclude your discussion with the client with a reminder that it is the clinic’s goal to partner with them in the care of their animal and we can only do this safely, effectively, and legally after a physical examination.
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Meet Catherine Coloccia, the 2021 Practice Manager of the Year and profound leader with a passion for providing the best medicine and top-of-the-line customer service.

By Julia Burke, Assistant Editor

Catherine Coloccia, practice manager at Bridgewater Veterinary Hospital in New Jersey, says she first fell in love with the veterinary industry after working as an overnight receptionist at a 24-hour emergency animal clinic over 10 years ago.

“The industry itself was so fitting to who I was as a person that I knew this is where I wanted to be permanently,” Coloccia said. “We work in this industry because we all love animals and animal health, but there is a huge component of human emotion and communication that I’ve always had a passion for...so I knew this was what I wanted to do, excel in and advance in even more as I spent time in the field.”

Over the course of her 4 years as a practice manager at the Bridgewater Veterinary Hospital, Coloccia has achieved numerous noteworthy goals, such as enhancing client communication, advancing hospital services, acknowledging employees’ progress, and helping them reach new heights. One of her most impressive accomplishments is transitioning from outsourced to in-house dental services.

“We were using a certified dental technician to perform...
all our dentals for many years. They were very good, however, it had several negative impacts on the practice: We were very limited on the dentals that we could perform, and it was definitely a financial burden to hospital profits,” Coloccia said. “Then on the employee side, it was very limiting because I had senior employees who had never performed a dental, which is a huge component to their career. I felt their education and skill development was lacking.”

The conversion to in-house dental services was no easy feat. Coloccia’s team initially expressed a concerning lack of confidence in this project, education and training had to be implemented and the hospital had to invest in new dental equipment. Despite these hindrances, the outcome was well worth it, she notes. “In September of 2019, we finally completed our goal and started doing in-house [dentals], and we saw the value almost immediately. It was a [huge] hurdle to climb and [we faced] a lot of challenges...but now we have significantly increased the volume of dentals we can do per week. We’ve seen tremendous growth in profit,” Coloccia said, adding that the dental services are now used as a training and career growth platform for technicians.

Heel collection obsession
Coloccia is known for wearing heels to work daily. This trend started years ago when she was a young tour guide in Washington, DC. She recalls wearing heels while walking up and down the monument stairs when giving tours to school children. “I had calves like rocks,” she said with a chuckle.

A lover of nature and a history buff
Coloccia, her fiancée, stepson, and sister are all avid kayakers who enjoy the outdoors. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, she considered herself a big traveler. She is also quite the history buff. “I’m actually a huge history fan or even self-taught history nerd...I’m a pretty big fan of medieval history, the Tudor era, and the American Revolution.”

Along with feeling comfortable in heels—and enjoying shopping for them—Coloccia says wearing them contributes to her professional presentation and displays her authority. “Walking into work with heels [on] sort of commands an aura of leadership without speaking, so if I have to address a client or a team member...there’s already a noncommunicated aura of leadership.”

Coloccia is known for sporting her signature pair of red heels. However, it’s not the bold color that captures her team’s attention, it’s the clicking that allows them to locate her throughout the hospital.

Pros of being a practice manager
“I absolutely love pets, but I love the people equally, if not more. I love the communication, the client and staff education, and cheering on the staff’s accomplishments. I love being able to make decisions based on EQ [emotional quotient] and really connecting with my staff and clients.”

— CATHERINE COLOCCIA

2021 Practice Manager of the Year
Hover your phone over this smart code to learn more about Catherine Coloccia.
Coloccia is passionate about working with pet parents and their beloved companions.

Coloccia makes it a point to always be present for her staff and lead by example.

able to make decisions based on EQ [emotional quotient] and really connecting with my staff and clients,” she said. “My other favorite part about this job is bringing pets back up to owners after they’ve been with us for a period of time. They’re always so happy and I love to see the joy on the owner’s face as well. It’s one of the rawest expressions of joy, and it always makes me smile.”

**Short and long-term goals**

In the short to medium term, Coloccia says she will prioritize promoting well-being and happiness among staff during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We’re focusing on first and foremost the mental well-being, the work-life balance of my employees—that is 100% first. Then trying to continue to provide the best medicine and client experience possible with the way things are right now,” she said.

For the long term, Coloccia will strive to continue to enhance staff education and development by offering her team new career advancement opportunities and will remain dedicated to amplifying the overall client experience.

Meet Mooney, the blue-eyed cat

Coloccia has a white-haired, sapphire blue-eyed cat named Mooney that was born in Cairo, Egypt. When Coloccia worked at another animal hospital, her client who ran a rescue organization flew in a large number of animals from Egypt. The clinic closed that morning to focus strictly on performing exams on these pets.

“I didn’t have any pets at that particular time, so I [said], ‘You know what? I’ll take 1 animal, and that’s it... but let me know if she has a potential adopter.’ Then 3 [to 4] weeks went by [and] they had a potential adopter, but by that time—of course, like anybody else—I’d fallen absolutely in love with her,” she said. “They called me and I [said], ‘No, I’m her adopter.’”
4 ways to honor your veterinary technicians

National Veterinary Technician Month is this month. Check out these methods for demonstrating appreciation for all the hard work and commitment veterinary technicians contribute to the practice.

By Kelsey Gustafson, Associate Editor; and Julia Burke, Assistant Editor

Veterinary technicians are integral to a practice’s success, especially amid pandemic times. From delivering the highest quality of care to patients to providing exceptional customer service—it’s no question that these team members deserve recognition for the work they curate each and every day. Here are a few ways to thank your technician staff for the vital role they play in keeping your practice thriving.

#1 Gift cards
After a long day at the clinic, it’s common to seek out ways to decompress. Pay attention to how each staff member destresses. Maybe they prefer to unwind and order food or maybe they’re more inclined to treat themselves to a shopping spree. Make sure to take note of each member’s favorite restaurant or store and reward them with a gift card. The personal touch will go a long way.

#2 Customized gifts
Who doesn’t love their very own personalized gift? There is a plethora of veterinary technician-themed items available for purchase on the web including coffee mugs, apparel, stethoscope name tags, tote bags, key chains, and even face masks to sport. You can also stray away from veterinary medicine-specific gifts and buy them a present based on their personality. For example, if they love Star Wars, maybe get them a name tag featuring Yoda or if they are a fan of tie-dye, gift them an item with this design.

#3 Supplemental paid time off
It’s no secret COVID-19 has made veterinary technicians’ jobs challenging and overwhelming at times. Your team will be grateful for the additional time off to spend with their family and friends or to participate in activities and hobbies they enjoy during their leisure. In turn, this will strengthen your relationship with them by prioritizing their mental health and personal goals.

#4 Practical items
Veterinary tools are always useful around the clinic and help your technicians achieve their daily tasks. This can consist of providing your team members new stethoscopes, bandage scissors, surgical and suture emergency kits, pouches and toolbelts, and more. Offering updated materials for patient care will also help lessen veterinary technicians’ stress by streamlining appointments while displaying they deserve the best equipment.

Finally, what’s the No.1 way to show appreciation to your technicians that doesn’t come with a price tag and can be instilled daily? Reminding them just how grateful you are for their efforts and reinforcing that you are proud of their accomplishments. Words of encouragement not only make a difference, but can also help nourish a cohesive and healthy workplace for everyone.
Pyoderma is defined as skin disease characterized by neutrophilic inflammation and most commonly refers to bacterial skin infection. It is classified according to depth of tissue involvement from surface (upper epidermal layers), to superficial (epidermis and/or hair follicle epithelium), to deep (dermis and/or subcutis). While pyodermas may be primary, secondary origin is more common and is a sequela of conditions that impair normal skin defenses (e.g. allergic skin disease, autoimmune disorders, keratinization disorders, immunological dysfunction, trauma). Proper treatment necessitates that any contributing cause be identified and concurrently addressed along with instituting antimicrobial therapy. Depending on the severity and extent of infection, antimicrobials may be administered topically and/or systemically. \(^1\)

As antimicrobial resistance increases, recommended approaches to treatment of infections have evolved to emphasize focused intervention for the organism(s) and inclusion of alternative therapies less likely to contribute to the development of resistance. \(^2, 3\) Topical antimicrobial therapies are an excellent example with benefits including significantly higher drug concentrations at the target site, reduced expense, and fewer monitoring concerns compared to systemic therapies. \(^4\) In the case of shampoos and bathing for dermatological conditions, additional benefits include mechanical removal of organisms and debris, and restoration of the skin barrier through hydrotherapy and specialized active ingredients. \(^5\) However, topical therapies such as bathing are not without associated disadvantages – primarily, the increased effort and time commitment on behalf of the pet-owner. In human dermatology, treatment duration, complexity, and tolerability have been associated with non-adherence to treatment and resultant therapeutic failure. \(^6\) Consequently, development of topical treatment modalities that require less owner effort may improve outcomes for veterinary pyoderma patients. An example of such a recent development is low-energy light therapy. Low-energy light therapy, or photobiomodulation, is a recent addition to the veterinary clinical repertoire. Using a light-emitting energy source, light therapy devices are applied to target tissues to provide in-clinic treatment regimens. Early applications employed laser light emitters commonly described as “cold laser” or “low-level laser therapy”. \(^7\) These laser devices, however, have demonstrated limited efficacy in veterinary dermatology, with recent studies of atopic dermatitis patients, post-surgical wound healing models, and open wound healing models showing no advantage over treated dogs versus control. \(^8\) However, a novel low-energy light therapy system employing LED-based light emission combined with a topically-applied fluorescence biomodulation gel substrate (Phovia™; KLOX Technologies Limited, Dublin, Ireland) addresses shortcomings of the conventional approach by improving tissue penetration and tailoring energy transmission to the tissue and depth of clinical interest. \(^9\) Application of the Phovia™ system in the treatment of canine superficial pyoderma, interdigital pyoderma, otitis externa, and deep pyoderma has demonstrated significant improvement in outcomes as defined by metrics evaluating lesion severity and response with a 50% reduction in time to lesion resolution. \(^10, 11, 12, 13\) These results demonstrate the advantage that KLOX’s Phovia™ provides in the treatment of a variety of canine dermatological diseases, especially pyoderma.

Similar benefits are observed in patients treated at our referral dermatology practice. An excellent case example here demonstrates the efficacy of this therapy and convenience it provides pet-owners. This 11-year-old male castrated Labrador retriever presented for severe osteoarthritis and numerous callouses with deep pyoderma. Several rounds of antibiotics failed to improve the infection over the preceding three years, and culture revealed multdrug-resistant Staphylococcus pseudintermedius with very limited antibiotic options. The painful nature of these lesions further complicated the ease of topical therapy application at home. Phovia™ was implemented in the treatment of the patient without the use of antibiotic therapy, and within 35 days the lesions were completely resolved and have not returned over three months later. This pain free and easy-to-apply therapy eliminated the need for aggressive at home care and provided a successful outcome without the use of antibiotics despite the presence of a drug-resistant bacteria. As the battle against super infections rages ahead, innovative, safe and effective therapies like Phovia™ will become the future of the therapeutic approach to pyoderma.

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steps that bring you from survival to success in the pandemic
Taylor Miller, DVM, breaks down the step-by-step process for resisting fight-or-flight and confronting conflict head-on in the troubling times of the pandemic.

By Erica Soya

With all the obstacles this pandemic has thrown at us, it’s no secret that our stress levels have increased, and everyday challenges have become much more difficult. “When we’re stressed, our decisions become reactionary...and we might try to avoid the situations that require decision-making,” said Taylor Miller, DVM. “But you need to move out of this survival mode in order to take action in a positive and deliberate manner—and the steps to doing so are very accessible.”

At the 2021 Veterinary Meeting and Expo, Miller explained the necessity of self-care and organization to eliminate the perilous pandemic panics.

Assess your mental state
What do your thoughts look like when you’re stressed? What behaviors do you exhibit? Simply evaluating your stress level and emotions can play a large role in pushing you through and beyond your current situation. “You have to recognize the ways in which stress is impacting your decision-making and your ability to cope, so you can start correcting those effects,” Miller said.

Recognize your mental state and what roadblocks are keeping you from moving forward. Are you afraid? Anxious? Tired? Understanding where your feelings are coming from can help you determine the best approach to take.

Use deliberate self-care strategies
Miller listed specific activities that aid in stimulating the mind, relaxing the body, and reducing stress.

• Movement. Something as simple as a short walk or a few minutes of stretching releases tension and clears your mind. Don’t choose an activity based on its intensity or how many calories it burns; instead, prioritize how it will positively influence your mental state.

• Sleep. Getting enough rest each night decreases our stress levels and strengthens our willpower, patience, and energy. Sticking to a consistent bedtime in your daily schedule is ideal.

• Breathing. Not only is breathing easy and accessible, but it also helps release tension from both the mind and muscles. “By slowing down your breathing, you are signaling to your body that you are calm, which means that there is no threat. By tricking your body, you, in turn, get yourself to relax,” Miller said.

• The natural world. Immersing ourselves in nature has both physical and mental benefits. Circadian rhythms (processes that regulate our sleep-wake cycle) stabilize with consistent nature exposure, ultimately making us feel both grounded and energized.

• Mindfulness. When we cultivate an awareness of our thoughts and our bodies, we become fully engaged in the present. Connecting to our surroundings allows us to be alert and aware of the decisions we make.

• Self-care illusions. The benefits of some activities cease as soon as the activity itself ends. Examples, such as a glass of wine or screen time, may be a temporary distraction, but should not be used excessively.

Although these self-care strategies may sound easy to implement, “they should still require energy and focus to accomplish,” Miller said.
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Survey and catalog your available resources
Identifying our resources gives us a foundation to keep us grounded and is mentally reassuring. It can be hard to remember that we aren’t alone when we subject ourselves to negative thoughts, but reaching out to reliable resources automatically reduces the intensity of the situation. These resources may include the following:
- Friends and family
- Personal skills and strengths
- Self-care options and strategies
- Counselors, support groups, community groups, and professional groups
- Books, webinars, YouTube videos, blogs, forums, Ted Talks, and podcasts
- Formal time management and decision-making tools
- Paid-for services, like housekeeping, meal kits, and childcare

“Tessful we can be just by listening to ourselves and accessing our own skills and strengths,” Miller said. Because we know ourselves best, we know what we need in times of stress.

Identify where action needs to be taken and make deliberate decisions
A key ingredient to solving a problem is focusing on the factors that need the most attention. “Times of crisis can be an unlooked-for opportunity to reevaluate your values and priorities, as crisis has a way of sharpening our focus,” Miller said. As we pay attention to what matters most, we’re not wasting our energy on trivial things. By being forced to act, we recognize where our priorities lie.

Miller recommended several approaches, such as decluttering your brain with a mind map, Eisenhower Matrix, or a values and priorities assessment. You can also create decision strategies using a pro and con list, a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, or a decision matrix.

Formulate and execute a plan
Forming a thoughtful plan provides us with structure that will ensure success when it is executed. Although creating this step-by-step plan doesn’t necessarily make reaching your goal easy, it does make it more achievable. Create a broad, overarching goal and objectives that specify the steps needed to accomplish it. Miller recommended stating your decision in the form of a SMART goal, that is:
- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-bound

Because a SMART goal revolves around balance and achievability, it brings stress to a minimum and provides us with the tools we need to move forward. “For the decision to truly make a difference, you need to make a careful plan for it to become an action,” Miller said. “And the easiest way to make your decision is through a goal that defines its boundaries.”

Evaluate your results
“The end is never really the end,” Miller said. “The most important step might be to reflect on your results.” Reflection helps us understand which points in the process should be tweaked. Did you achieve your goal? What went well? What worked and what didn’t?

Noting the results after executing the plan is important. It closes the loop and finishes the project just as deliberately as it was started. It can be tempting to skip this step once the plan is executed. However, reflecting on the process offers a better chance for future success and instills a sense of satisfaction and positivity after the goal is finally achieved.

After you have results:
- Welcome feedback. Learning how others view your progress can help not only in revision for a better second run but also in future projects.
- Make necessary changes. We must be willing to adapt and revise accordingly. Don’t be afraid to ask for assistance.
- Celebrate the wins. Success is sweet, and too often we fail to celebrate so we can quickly move onto a new project. However, successes need to be acknowledged so we know what works, and we must be willing to put in the necessary effort the next time around.
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San Diego, CA | Dec. 2-5, 2021
Deciphering feline behavior has always been somewhat challenging, and that may be particularly true when it comes to identifying pain-related behavior in cats. “Behavioral medicine links emotional and physical health, and pain is probably one of the best examples of this interplay,” said Sarah Heath, BVSc PgCertVetEd, DipECAWBM(BM), CCAB, FHEA, FRCVS, at a Fetch dvm360® conference.

Pain is multifaceted, said Heath, who owns Behavioural Referrals Veterinary Practice in Chester, England, and includes sensory and motor components as well as emotional and cognitive components.

Acute pain

Acute pain, which typically stems from either accidental or surgical damage, “is going to have some short-term consequences in terms of behavioral change,” Heath said. The initial manifestation of pain may be an overt confrontational response (also known as a repulsion response) from the cat when the painful area is touched or manipulated. Other signs may include vocalization and changes in mobility.

The emotional component of pain can also lead to a more passive pain response. These so-called non-repulsion behaviors can include avoidance (eg, moving to the back of the cage or carrier, hiding, or simply looking away from the caregiver) and inhibition (the cat is gathering information through visual, olfactory or auditory input but giving very little away about its own emotional state). These inhibited cats can appear to be very “co-operative” and this is especially true during examinations in the veterinary practice setting—a situation in which most cats already alter their behavior due to fear, anxiety, and stress.

That’s why, Heath said, “accurate history taking, precise observation, and good clinical examination are all essential to recognizing and monitoring acute pain.” A number of pain scales, which evaluate various combinations of facial expression, body language, and/or behavior, are useful in clinical practice to measure and monitor pain.

Because they are more familiar with their pets, caregivers are vital in uncovering subtle manifestations of pain. A client may bring their cat to the veterinary practice due to the “unacceptable behavior” of eliminating outside the litter box, for example, when in reality the cat
may be avoiding the litter box as a result of lower urinary tract pain.

One of the reasons it’s so important to manage acute pain is because untreated acute pain can lead to chronic pain in our patients, Heath said. Inadequate pre-, peri-, and postoperative pain control is one risk factor for chronic postsurgical pain, so appropriate premedication is vital. In addition, the emotional state of an animal can influence the perception and therefore the significance of pain to that individual, so handling and restraint should be as minimal as possible.

“What we’re trying to do is create a situation where…we minimize negative emotional bias as much as possible while also ensuring adequate analgesic regimens before, during and after surgery,” she said.

**Chronic pain**

When behavioral issues bring cats to the veterinary hospital and it is found that pain is involved in the aetiology of the behavior changes, chronic pain is often at play. Chronic pain can stem from a number of sources: orthopedic pain (e.g., degenerative joint disease), ear pain (e.g., infection, mite infestation), dental pain, abdominal pain, dermatologic pain, and neuropathic pain.

Recognizing chronic pain in cats can also be challenging, said Heath. “When chronic pain is mentioned, there is a tendency to look for a locomotory effect, like lameness or alternation in mobility,” she explained. But other signs of chronic pain may be overlooked, such as excessive licking, grooming, and other repetitive behaviors, as well as changes in toileting behavior and posture when eating.”

The absence of behavior is also a great indicator in detecting chronic pain, so it’s important to ask the caregiver if they have noticed the cat withdrawing from usual behavior. For example, if the cat usually prefers the bed, but has been lying on the floor more frequently. As well as asking what the cat is doing, it is also important to ask what the cat is not doing.

Pain assessment during a typical appointment in a general practice is extremely difficult, Heath noted. Even after a behaviorist has had a 2 to 3-hour in-home visit with a patient, they often ask the caregiver to send a video of the cat so they can further review its behavior for signs of pain.

“One of the silver linings of COVID-19 is that we have been forced into doing more remote consulting,” she said. “And one of the massive advantages of this is the ability to see our feline patients in their own home.” Chronic pain, she said, is one of those areas where this type of consulting is particularly helpful.

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Exploring the role of omega-3 supplementation in cats and dogs

By Laura Gaylord, DVM, DACVN

Omega-3 fatty acids such as alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), eicosapentanoic acid (EPA), and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) are needed for proper growth and development. In fact, studies have revealed that omega-3s have anti-inflammatory properties in many species and can be used to help manage canine osteoarthritis.

ALA can be considered an "essential" fatty acid as several of its long chain derivatives such as EPA and DHA have important metabolic consequences. Essential fatty acids are those the body cannot make in sufficient amounts—they must be provided through diet. EPA and DHA can be synthesized from ALA, however the conversion process is inefficient in dogs and nearly nonexistent in cats. Therefore, they both require and benefit from foods containing EPA and DHA.
This article will take a closer look at omega-3s including some key dietary sources, their mechanism of action, and much more! Let’s start with sources.

**Key dietary sources of omega-3s**

Sources of omega-3s include fish, krill, calamari, green-lipped mussel, and algae. Fish do not produce omega-3 oils directly—omega-3s accumulate from their foods, either plant material or smaller prey. Active omega-3s in marine sources are DHA and EPA. Nuts and seeds also contain omega-3 fatty acids; however, they have a higher content of ALA. Only about 10% of ALA converts to the more active EPA and DHA; therefore, using marine sources is preferred.1,4

**Understanding omega-3’s mechanism of action**

After digestion and absorption, omega-3s incorporate into body tissue and organ system cell membranes altering metabolic pathways and result in “inflammation resolving” activity.5

**How much is enough? A closer look at dosing and dietary plans**

The Association of the American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) sets minimal requirements for DHA content in pet foods for growth (.08% ALA and .05% EPA/DHA, Dry Matter Basis) and the ratio of total PUFAs to ALA, EPA, and DHA in adult maintenance diets (maximum 30:1). Typical over-the-counter pet foods have minimal amounts of EPA and DHA. Veterinary therapeutic diets for disease conditions offer higher levels and should be evaluated for the type and amount of omega-3 (ALA, EPA, and/or DHA).

Since each patient may have multiple and varying concerns, identifying a range of omega-3 intake for each pet and monitoring for adverse effects is highly recommended. Treatment may include both a therapeutic diet and a specific supplementation dose. Experts consider the combination of all supplements and medications given and the potential for interactions and dosing can be modified according to each pet’s tolerance and concerns. This plan will safely achieve the maximal benefits of omega-3s for pets to support their health.

**Omega-3 supplementation: What you need to know**

While optimal dosing has not been determined for pets, general guidelines have been offered from a compilation of studies for many health conditions. Supplementation is considered safe when given at appropriate levels under veterinary supervision. Safe upper limits have also been established as higher dosing may infrequently cause adverse effects. Veterinary input is recommended to determine the optimal omega-3 fatty acid supplementation plan for your pet’s unique needs.

**REFERENCES**


DHA and EPA in softgel form to bridge the nutritional gap and help support:
- The pathways that regulate joint health
- Heart health
- Canine healthy skin and coat
- The central nervous system
- Brain development of puppies and kittens

As each patient is a unique individual and may have a combination of concerns, identifying a specific range of omega-3 intake for each dog or cat is best. This might include a combination of a therapeutic diet and a specific supplementation dose. Monitoring for adverse effects is very important. Experts recommend considering the combination of all supplements and/or medications being given and the potential for interactions. Dosing can be modified according to each pet’s tolerance and individual concerns. This plan will safely achieve maximal benefits of omega-3s for pets and support their health.
No, you didn’t read that wrong, you’re now a part of 1 of my favorite things—combining thoughts and words to create something new and impactful.

“Inspirotivation” is my latest creation: a combination of inspiration and motivation. What’s the difference? Think internal vs external stimuli. Inspiration stems from the internal forces that give you the ability to push yourself, whereas motivation is what you perceive around you that kicks your brain into gear to get things done.

Although many people consider these to be mutually exclusive, to me, it makes more sense to meld them. Depending on the situation you’re in, the inner feeling could be stronger, or the environmental factors and people surrounding you may take precedence. What if choosing one or the other, you take a bit of that inner strength and some of the external, and merge them into a self-empowering mantra? Congrats, you just became inspirotivated!

Inspiration and motivation aren’t all that different conceptually. Other professions blend them. For music lovers, this is how songs are created. For the visual artists out there, here’s where color blending starts. Take it on the athletic field, and this is where the real game begins—where offense and defense meet.

Yes, it’s a different concept, and no, the word doesn’t roll off the tongue, but finding a path of inspiration or winding through a motivational maze isn’t always an easy feat either. It’s not often that just 1 thing gets us up and moving, and determining what factors are important to us is hard. This is a process that evolves throughout our lives.

This linguistic journey has helped me define my own inspirotivation. To put it simply, I am inspirotivated by and for my family. I want to do and be my best because it’s what is needed. It’s what feels and what is right. I want to make a positive impact for change in my own life and in the lives of those around me.

What’s your inspirotivation? How can you use it to make your reality better? That isn’t something I or anyone else can answer for you, but I would love for you to reflect on the matter. You may just find that you become someone’s inspirotivation in turn.
Giving a dog medicine can be tricky:

Tips for clients to make the process easier

Help your clients give their pets the medicine they need without the hassle.

By dvm360® Staff

1. Make it a game

First, encase the pill in a tasty treat, like a small piece of cheese, a cooked meatball, some peanut butter, or a pill pocket. Don’t make it too big. The goal is for the dog to gulp it down, not to chew it. Put this aside and give the dog the same treat without the pill. Then give the dog a second “empty” treat. Now pick up the treat-encased pill and hold it right next to the dog’s nose, but don’t let the dog eat it! Pull it away. For a second time, move it within an inch of the dog’s nose and take it away. Finally, hand the dog the treat-covered pill. After it’s eaten, quickly follow up with a fourth treat without a pill. The hope is for the game and all the treats to be so engrossing that the dog barely notices the pill.

2. Crush it and mix it into food

Mixing crushed medication with food can work if the pill doesn’t have a strong, unpleasant taste. Use soft food with an enticing odor, like a canned diet or cooked, ground meat. Do not mix medication into the pet’s regular diet as this can lead to food refusal if a dog starts associating the bad taste of the medication with their food. It’s not a good idea to crush some types of pills or open certain capsules, so ask a veterinarian before making this recommendation if you are unsure.

3. Use gelatin capsules

Empty gelatin capsules are available through many drug stores. Your client can put less-than-tasty pills inside to hide their flavor while they are in the dog’s mouth.

4. Learn how to physically give a pill

Sometimes your clients don’t have the time or inclination to go through the suggestions above, or perhaps they have tried them all and they haven’t worked. Don’t give up! You can teach your client how we give pills in the veterinary clinic.

It’s easy to safely open a dog’s mouth and drop pills in if you know the tricks of the trade. You can refer owners to a helpful photo series on Washington State University’s website that shows exactly how to do it. Dogs should always get a lot of praise and a treat after a successful pilling session.

Practice makes perfect. Soon your client will wonder why giving pills was once so difficult.
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