



Here or There? Things we learn – *or should learn* – from our Pets Part II

As the days of summer begin to become a reality, my mind seems to always wander back to my first days of practice as a family practitioner in the Central Valley. As I also consider our series this year, in 'What we can, or should, learn from our Pets' – there are so many anecdotes from this small town experience, I'm hard pressed to choose only one of them to share!

Well, as I consider our theme, one particular feline I consulted with has me thinking along these lines. Barnabus was a stately Burmese cat of geriatric proportions and belonged to a couple that I suppose were in their late 50's – Mr. & Mrs. – were both in attendance for Barnabus' examination. After discussing a number of his health details I commenced my examination of him. He purred and seemed to enjoy the attention.

Gathering my thoughts, and collating the details of my examination, I began to discuss my findings with his pet owners. I mentioned my concerns and used these to advocate for some basic blood work and a urinalysis. Mrs. seemed to be in agreement as she politely nodded. Then, as I glanced over at Mr. I could sense that there might be a fly in the ointment. Mr. was staring at the ground, arms crossed, and what appeared to me to be scowl on his face. At this point he looked up and met my gaze, cleared his throat and interrupted my plan with a question of his own, "so what is this rotten cat gonna cost me this year doc?" I was clearly shaken as I began to answer his fair, yet seemingly adversarial query. He seemed to nod as he began a diatribe related to all things feline he seemed to find fault with. He mentioned the fur about the house, the occasional kernel of kitty litter stuck in the shag carpet and the vocal, nocturnal tours about the house while others needed their sleep. As he began to close his little soliloquy he seemed to do so with a question, said more as a statement, "so what good is a cat anyway?"

Although these ideas were not foreign to me, as I did grow up with relatives who exposed similar views, Mr. certainly did catch me off-guard and a little flat-footed. Mrs. seemed to seize this opportunity and, although I originally assessed her to be rather diminutive, she launched into a fairly contrite and provocative argument. Although I was witness to it all, and as I tell it here, I must admit I am certain that the power of her facial expressions, proper tisk-tisk of her body language and the very clear – don't push me on this buddy – of her manners simply may not do justice to the schooling that Mr. and I were treated to.

She reminded Mr. that she was the home-maker and that Barnabus was not the only one leaving fur about the house, or unmentionables from potty habits, nor was his nocturnal meows any more annoying to her than was his snoring. And, in my opinion, the absolute coup de gras, was her answer to his query, "and as far as what good is he...he is particularly excellent at pointing out the absolute best spot on the sun-porch to read an afternoon novel and he has no trouble warming my lap while I enjoy a little peace and quiet before having to cook you dinner".

No joke. Mr. looked up at me, and said, "Can we do all those tests today doc?"

Well, not only did Barnabus seem to know where best to read an afternoon novel, he seemed teach us all that whether two or four legs seems to matter not, we are all animals after all!

Sincerely,

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THE SURGEONS OF VSC



FEATURED MEDICAL CASE

UPDATES ON TREATMENT OF URETERAL OBSTRUCTION IN CATS AND DOGS

Ureteral obstruction is a common condition encountered, especially in cats. The ureters are tubular structures connecting the kidneys to the urinary bladder. If there is an obstruction at any level of the urinary tract this can have rapid and sometimes irreversible effects on other body systems. The narrowest and one of the most susceptible portions of the urinary tract to obstruction are the ureters. The distal portion of the ureter measures as little as 0.4mm in cats and 2-2.5mm in dogs. The most common cause of obstruction are calculi/stones that have been formed in the kidney and then become lodged in the ureter. Other causes include ureteral neoplasia, trauma, and bladder neoplasia causing obstruction of the ureteral opening into the bladder. Regardless of the cause of the obstruction a partial or full obstruction of the ureter can lead to irreversible damage to the kidney. If the ureter is obstructed for 1 week a permanent loss of 35% of the kidney's function occurs. If the ureter is obstructed for 2 weeks a permanent loss of 54% of the kidney's function occurs. For this reason, rapid resolution of the obstruction is indicated to preserve maximal kidney function. Following diagnosis of a ureteral obstruction (usually by abdominal ultrasound) medical management is instigated and consists mostly of intravenous fluid therapy, amitriptyline, and recheck abdominal ultrasounds to assess for movement of the stone/s. Surgical treatment has classically been limited either to ureterotomy (opening of the ureter) for surgical removal of the stone, or ureteral resection and re-implantation if the position of the stone is distal enough to allow this. These procedures have been associated with a high incidence of complications including urine leakage and ureteral stricture/re-obstruction. Recently two new techniques have been developed for the treatment of these cases and include ureteral stenting and subcutaneous ureteral bypass (SUB).

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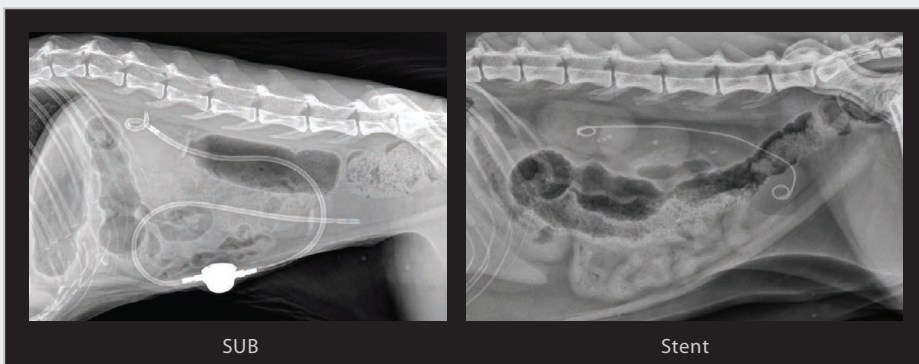
...Featured Medical Case continued

Ureteral stenting involves placing a double-pigtail ureteral stent within the ureter, spanning the obstruction and entire length of the ureter (including the obstruction) to provide drainage of the kidney directly into the urinary bladder. These stents can be placed fluoroscopically and surgically in dogs, or surgically in cats. Approximately 70% of ureteral stents in dogs are unable to be successfully passed fluoroscopically and so surgery is utilized as a back-up in these cases. The stents are manufactured in a large variety of sizes and produced from a material that softens at body temperature to minimize irritation and improve patient comfort. The stents are designed to remain in-situ for the entirety of the patient's life. We recently placed bilateral ureteral stents in a 7year old female spayed domestic shorthair cat that was suffering from obstructions of both ureters due to multiple stones. The stents were placed at surgery and immediately provided ureteral patency and a path for unobstructed flow of urine. The patient recovered well from the procedure, was discharged from the hospital 3 days post-operatively, and continues to do well at home 3 months post-surgery.

An alternative to ureteral stenting is the SUB (subcutaneous ureteral bypass) procedure. This system is the implantation of a system that can drain urine from the renal pelvis as it is produced and transport it directly to the urinary bladder therefore bypassing the ureter completely. The SUB system consists of a locking-loop nephrostomy catheter, a subcutaneous access port, and a locking-loop cystostomy catheter. These systems have been implanted in a limited number of veterinary university teaching hospitals around the USA and the world and are gaining popularity due to their high success rate, low incidence of complications and ease of implantation. Candidates for the SUB system include animals with ureteral obstruction secondary to stricture, stones whereby a ureteral stent cannot be advanced past the obstruction, cases of iatrogenic trauma to the ureter e.g. ureteral ligation following ovariohysterectomy, and those animals that react or cannot tolerate a ureteral stent.

Both procedures are gaining popularity quickly due to limited treatment options for those cases that do not respond to medical management, and provide a source of hope for owners and clients who's pets suffer from this condition.

Veterinary Surgical Centers is pleased to offer both of these procedures to our clients and referring veterinarians and should you have any questions regarding the treatment of ureteral obstruction please do not hesitate to contact us.



NEWSROOM FEATURES

Welcome Back and Congrats to Erin Wettstein!!!

Veterinary Surgical Centers Berkeley is extremely pleased to welcome Erin Wettstein back to the team. After a brief period away, Erin rejoins us as our Lead Technician. Erin is a California licensed RVT, and has been working in the veterinary field since 2007. Over the last year Erin has gone through some very exciting life changes. Last August she was married to her best friend Tobi, after being together for five years, and their first child is due this September! Tobi and Erin share their lives with their two short dogs Thor and Ripley, and in her free time Erin enjoys roller skating/roller derby, bike riding, hiking with her dogs, and cruising around town on her scooter. All of us at VSC extend our heartfelt congratulations to the young couple and are sincerely glad to have Erin back as part of our team!



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NOTABLE NEWS

*AMBER MCALISTER, DVM, DACVIM
JOINS THE PETS REFERRAL CENTER TEAM*

Everyone at Veterinary Surgical Centers: Berkeley would like to extend a warm welcome to Dr. Amber McAlister, the newest specialty internist at PETS Referral Center. Dr. McAlister grew up in Oregon with a huge variety and number of pets. She attended the University of Oregon where she graduated with a BS in molecular biology, initially intending to pursue a career as an MD. Following graduation, she moved to Seattle where she was fortunate enough to meet a veterinarian who introduced her to the field of veterinary medicine.

Dr. McAlister went on to obtain her veterinary degree from Tufts School of Veterinary Medicine in 2006, and immediately pursued a small animal internship at Georgia Veterinary Specialists in Atlanta. She then completed a three year residency in internal medicine at Texas Gulf Coast Veterinary Specialists. At the completion of her residency in 2010, she worked at Sage Centers for Veterinary Specialty and Emergency Care for nearly three years prior to joining the PETS team.

Dr. McAlister finds her passion in sick patients, tricky cases and management of chronic diseases. In her free time she enjoys traveling, cooking, gardening, and spending time with her two black kitties, Pika and Mystery, her pitbull/lab mix, River, and her partner Erika.

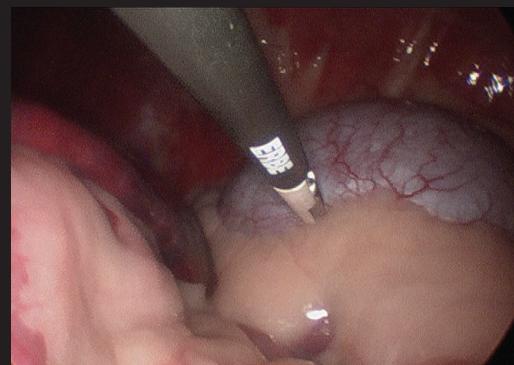
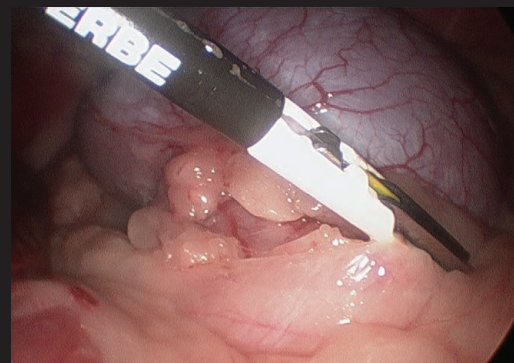


PROFESSIONAL INTEREST ARTICLE

ERBE VIO Electrosurgical Vessel Sealing System

Veterinary Surgical Centers is proud to announce our acquisition of the latest and greatest in electrosurgical vessel sealing systems, the ERBE VIO, for endoscopic and open procedures. This system is manufactured by ERBE USA Inc. and distributed in the veterinary market by Infiniti Medical. The unit is a highly specialized bipolar system developed for the specific purpose of vessel sealing utilizing a unique combination of tissue compression and low voltage energy to melt vessel collagen and elastin to form a translucent seal. Advantages of this system include a seal that has been shown to withstand three times the systolic pressure, vessels that don't need to be isolated from tissue bundles, and no requirement for intravascular clotting to effectively seal.

The system utilizes specialized hand pieces, including one that consist of spring tension grasping forceps which contain a trigger activated knife blade and sensory technology that delivers the correct amount of energy to arrive at a predetermined impedance that coincides with the sealing cycle end point. The system then notifies the surgeon that the end point has been reached, at which point a knife blade is advanced using a non-tactile finger trigger. Other hand pieces resemble conventional hemostatic forceps and come in various lengths and jaw configurations.



NEWSOOM FEATURE



HYPERBARIC OXYGEN CHAMBER

Holistic Veterinary Care and Rehabilitation Center Announces the Addition of the First Hyperbaric Oxygen Chamber for Pets in the Bay Area.

Holistic Veterinary Care in Oakland, California is pleased to announce it is most recent addition to its cutting-edge medical treatments for pets by offering Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT). Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy is a safe, painless and often life-changing treatment used for pets recovering from surgery and wounds in

addition to other illnesses. Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy is the practice of treating patients with pressurized 100% pure oxygen. The immediate effect of the treatment is to increase blood oxygen levels by more than 400%.

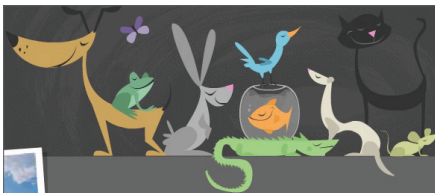
Increased oxygen levels lead to improved tissue healing and the mobilization of stem cells that further encourage healing. There is a very long list of treatment indication for HBOT including wound healing, arthritis, bone infection, spinal cord compression, trauma, stroke, sepsis, etc.

To Learn more or schedule a consult, visit www.holisticvetcare.com, email info@holisticvetcare.com, or call 510-339-2600.



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www.animal.discovery.com/pets/pet-picker-quiz.htm

Animal Planet's "Pet Picker" - Which pet is right for you? It's true that a pet can make your life better, and even less stressful. But you have to make sure you pick the right pet. Take this quiz to find out which pet might be best for you.



www.k9dogtreats.com/index.html

Shows dog owners how to make home-baked dog treats, dog gift baskets, and custom collars.



www.petinsurancereview.com/index.asp

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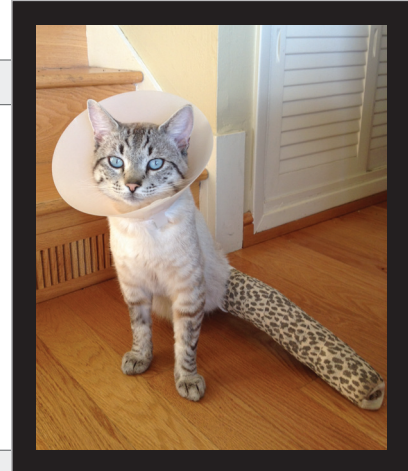
FEATURED BROCHURE



NEW! - FIBER OPTIC VET: MINIMALLY INVASIVE VETERINARY SURGERY BROCHURE

This Month's highlighted pamphlet is our newly revamped Minimally Invasive Veterinary Surgery brochure, and we are excited to have you take a look. This brochure, in conjunction with our Minimally Invasive Veterinary Surgery website, www.fiberopticvet.com, is a great tool for staff and clientele alike to gain a familiarity with these procedures and cultivate a common language to use with one another. Learn about the minimally invasive procedures we offer, as well as the benefits of these alternatives compared to traditional "open approach" surgeries. This and all our brochures can be found and downloaded from our websites at www.fiberopticvet.com or www.vscdsurgerycenters.com. We are also happy to send you hard copies of this or any of our brochures.

This newsletter is dedicated to the Muffin Man, who was recently brought to the PETS emergency service with a fractured tibia and fibula. Unfortunately his owners were unable to pursue treatment of the fracture and were faced with the difficult decision of possibly putting him to sleep. Dr. Grange and the VSCB team adopted The Muffin Man, gave him a much needed blood transfusion, and performed surgery to fix the fracture. Muffin Man now lives happily at home with Dr. Grange and his three new sibling cats, Twiglet, Piglet, Blackjack and Abby the golden retriever.



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