Bichon Bits & Bytes
July 2012 Bichon FurKids Rescue

We Dined With our Dogs and Learned between Bites!

On Saturday, July 14, a crowd of people and their canine friends got together at Cafe St. Germain, 1010 S Coast Highway, in Encinitas to benefit BFK and to learn more about everyone's favorite topic: FOOD! While both humans and canines dined on meals created especially for their unique tastes, Karen Scoggins, Founder of My Perfect Pet (http://myperfectpet.net) delivered an informative presentation on canine nutrition.

The doggie menu contained complete and balanced food made with all-natural restaurant-grade ingredients without preservatives. St. Germain's Cafe is now serving a doggie menu based on My Perfect Pet Foods and is one of 10 restaurants in San Diego where you can dine with your dog and order their food. They expect 25 restaurants by next month.

The gathering was sponsored by the San Diego Positive Pet Professional (SD3P) group, founded by Linda Michaels -- Certified Victoria Stilwell Dog Trainer -- and Pupologie Pet Boutique (http://pupologie.com).

Contents

St. Germain's Event Update 1

Unnecessary Vaccinations 2

Calendar Photo Contest 3

Don't Judge A Book By its Cover (Bichons before and after) 4

Other Important News 5

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Avoid Unnecessary Vaccinations with Titer Tests (Part One)

Editor's note: There are few issues in veterinary medicine as controversial as the debate about administering annual vaccinations for our dogs. For many of us an annual titer test, to check a dog's level of immunity, has replaced the annual 'booster' shots that have been a traditional part of veterinary care. The article that follows is the first in a two-part series – and is an important topic for you to read and consider.

Enlightened veterinarians and pet parents have become increasingly wary of the health risks, and lack of benefits, associated with repeatedly vaccinating dogs after their initial "puppy shots." Is titer testing the solution to the over-vaccination problem? Here's a crash course to help you muddle through the mire of misinformation surrounding this simple blood test, and to help you decide whether or not to test your dog's antibody titers.

What is titer testing?

A titer test (pronounced TIGHT er) is a laboratory test measuring the existence and level of antibodies in blood. Antibodies are produced when an antigen (like a virus or bacteria) provokes an immune response. This response can come from natural exposure or from vaccination. (Note: titering is also called serum vaccine antibody titering and serologic vaccine titering.)

How is the test performed?

First, one mL of blood is drawn. The sample is then diluted. Titer levels, expressed as ratios, indicate how many times blood can be diluted before no antibodies are detected. If blood can be diluted a 1000 times and still show antibodies, the ratio would be 1:1000. This is a "strong" titer. A titer of 1:2 would be weak. Confused? Don't worry. Your test result will have an explanation of what your animal's test result means.

Should I test for all diseases?

The most recommended test examines antibodies for both parvovirus and distemper, the two most important viruses. Rabies titers are also often tested. Usually, for most dogs, tests for other diseases are generally not considered useful or necessary.

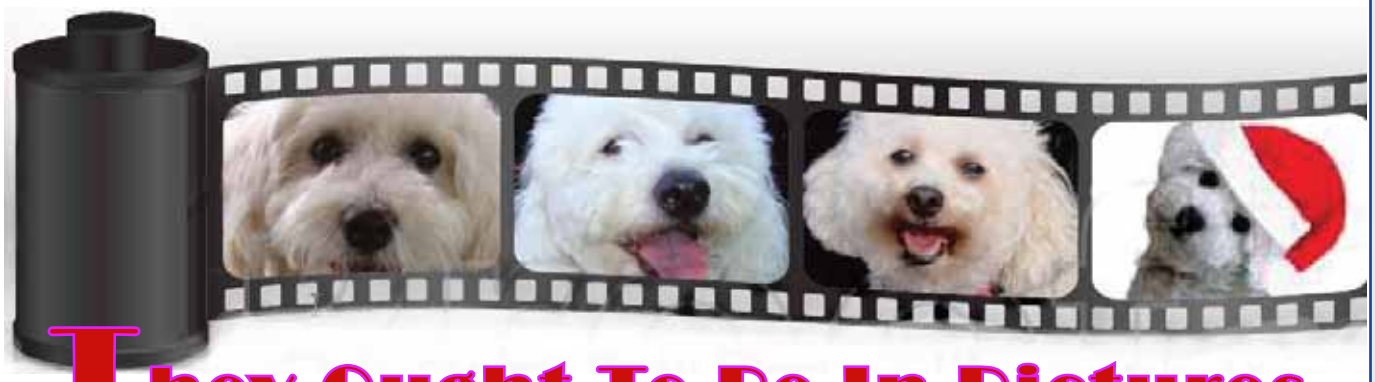
Why test?

The parvovirus/distemper test can help you or others (vets, groomers, kennel owners, etc.) determine if your dog requires additional vaccination, and may save your dog unnecessary shots. It is especially useful when making a decision about vaccinating an animal with unknown vaccination history, or for determining if puppies have received immunity from vaccination (more below).

Most experts believe strong titers are a more reliable indication of immunity than vaccination: tests show the actual immune response, not just the attempt to cause an immune response by vaccination. Do not expect, however, that everyone will accept test results in place of proof of vaccination. The subject of immunity is complicated, and we are programmed to think of vaccination as "the gold standard" — the more, the better. Experts who challenge the status quo are often maligned. Humans don't like change.

Next month, read part two of this article and learn how often to do titer testing, learn when a booster shot is needed, learn when you should test your dog, what the test costs, and more.

(c) Jan Rasmusen. Jan Rasmussen is the Author of "Scared Poopless" and winner of the Best Health book and Best Animal Pet Health Book. You can email her at Dogs4Dogs@aol.com



They Ought To Be In Pictures

Introducing the "We-Adore-Our-FurKids" Calendar Contest

Our 2013 calendar is underway – and we invite you to participate. All Lovers of FurKids will now have a chance to showcase their beloved fluffs.

Do you have a cute, captivating, entertaining or just plain delightful FurKid? The "We-Adore-Our-FurKids" Calendar Contest is looking for "calendar dogs" for a contest running from August 1 to August 31, 2012.

100% of all proceeds will be used to support the medical and veterinary care of current and future FurKids.

Your bichons and bichon mixes do not have to be rescue dogs to be submitted. Multiple dogs may be included in one picture.

There will be an entry fee for each photo submission and ONLY digital submissions will be accepted. Photos will be posted to an online album for voting. (There is no fee for voting.)

Submissions with the most popular vote will be selected to be presented to judges for selection for the 2013 We-Adore-Bichons Calendar.

First Place: $100.00 Gift Certificate and one calendar.

Second Place: $50.00 Gift Certificate and one calendar.

Third Place: $25.00 Gift Certificate and one calendar.

Top placing in votes does not guarantee submission in calendar or any location in the calendar.

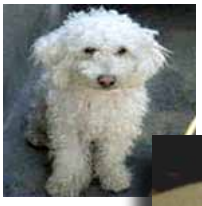
Please watch our web site and FaceBook page (http://www.facebook.com/bichonfurkids) for further announcements – and start collecting photos of your favorite FurKid (or FurKids!) They truly 'ought to be in pictures!'

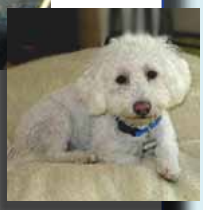
Don't Judge a Bichon by its Cover!

We all know the old saying, "Don't judge a book by its cover." It couldn't be more true than when choosing a dog to adopt or rescue. Many dogs arrive at Bichon Furkids Rescue looking more like dustmops than dogs. These unfortunate little FurKids have suffered such indignities as dirty and grossly overgrown coats, untrimmed nails, goopy eyes, flea infestations, and worse.

Sometimes their condition is so bad that the groomers have no choice but to cut most of the coat off, leaving these FurKids clean and trim...but decidedly not so Bichon-looking. And yet, the transformation from "lost" to "found" is amazing, as these before and after photos reveal. It just goes to show that even the messiest pile of fur can turn out to be a wonderful FurKid with a heart of gold...maybe even that once-in-a-lifetime, perfect pet for you!

Spirit





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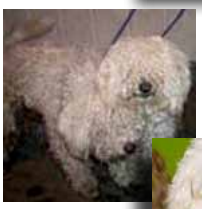

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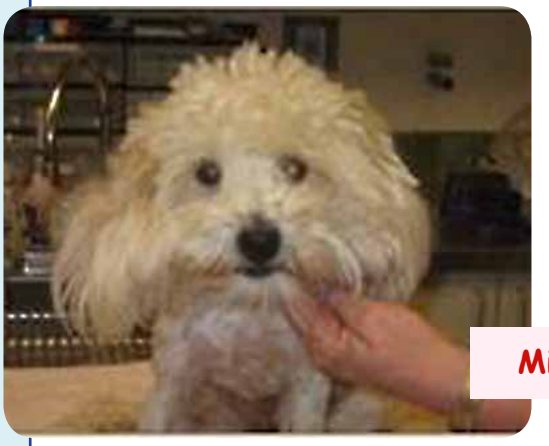

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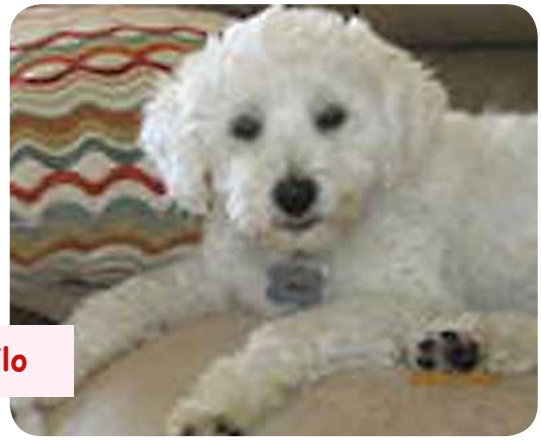
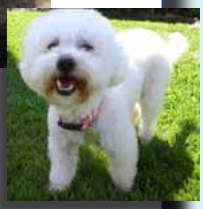
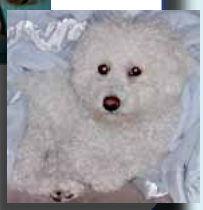




Allie

Brandi



Snickers

New chico's Event Supports BFK

Please join us on Saturday, August 25th at The Forum in Carlsbad for a Back-to-School Meet the FurKids event. We will be holding this event in conjunction with Chicos (fashionable women's clothing and accessories.) Ten percent of all sales at Chicos on that date will be donated to BFK to help our FurKids. More details to follow. In the meantime, please mark your calendars for:

Back-to-School Meet the FurKids
August 25th from 10:00 AM-2:00 PM
1905 Calle Barcelona, Suite 200
Carlsbad, CA 92009
www.TheForumCarlsbad.com

If you want to help us set up, play with FurKids and talk about bichons and what we do, please email Rachel@bichonfurkids.org. We hope to see you there!

Orange County Typhus Cases

Typhus is characterized by extremely high fevers (105 to 106 degrees Fahrenheit, rash, nausea and other symptoms. It is spread by lice and fleas and has re-appeared in Southern California, in particular Orange County. One of our own BFK fosters contracted the disease. She was caring for litters of kittens from another rescue and was bitten by a flea. The symptoms did not surface until weeks after the bite, but fortunately she is doing well and on the mend.

Typhus infections occur when a person is bitten by the fleas or lice that carry the Rickettsia typhi or Rickettsia prowazeki bacteria. These pests live on feral animals, including rats, cats, skunks, raccoons and opossums. There are two types of infection: murine typhus and endemic typhus. Murine typhus is less fatal than endemic typhus. Prompt treatment with antibiotics cures nearly all patients with murine typhus, according to the National Institutes of Health. It can be detected through a blood test.

Although typhus appears to be more prevalent in feral cats than in dogs, it makes sense to keep your dogs on flea medication as a precaution. To avoid infection, you, your family, and your pets should stay away from areas where there are rats, raccoons, opossums, skunks or other carriers. To read the article about typhus in Orange County, see http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Santa-Ana-Feral-Cats-Typhus-155328265.html.

Tainted Sweet Potato Treats

Veterinarians are now reporting canine health problems linked to sweet potato treats similar to those related to chicken jerky treats also made in China. Symptoms appear within hours or days after a treat is eaten and include decreased appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, and increased thirst and urination. If these symptoms appear after you've fed your dog either chicken jerky or sweet potato treats made in China, contact your veterinarian or animal emergency center – especially if the symptoms persist for more than 24 hours or are severe. Brands currently implicated in the sweet potato treat problem are: Beefeaters Sweet Potato Snacks for Dogs, Canyon Creek Ranch Chicken Yam Good Dog Treats (Nestlé Purina), Drs. Foster and Smith (exact item not specified), and Dogswell Veggie Life Vitality (4 varieties). For more information and tips for making your own treats, see this web page: http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2012/07/20/sweet-potato-dog-treats.aspx.