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# LINDA MAR VETERINARY HOSPITAL/ COASTAL CAT CLINIC

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## PAW & CLAW PRINTS

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### The Trouble with Too Many Teeth!!

Most puppies and kittens start to lose their baby teeth (also called “milk” teeth or deciduous teeth) around 3 months of age. The process begins with the incisors (front teeth) and ends with the molars (back teeth) when they are around 6 months old. As the deciduous teeth are lost, room is made for the permanent adult teeth to emerge.

Occasionally the permanent adult teeth do not erupt under the deciduous teeth, failing to push the temporary teeth out. When a puppy or kitten has both baby and adult teeth in the same site, it is referred to as **retained deciduous teeth**. This condition results in crowding along the gumline. It is not uncommon for the crowding to cause displacement of permanent teeth, forcing growth in abnormal angles and misalignment. Adult teeth may come into contact with the roof of your animal’s mouth, causing injury and pain. Food may be trapped between the permanent and temporary teeth leading to gingivitis, infections and possible abscesses.

With regular health examinations and keen owner observation at home, problems like this can be detected at an early stage. We recommend having a thorough physical examination prior to spaying or neutering your pet at 6 months of age. At the time of the elective surgery, the retained deciduous teeth can also be extracted. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at LMVH or CCC. 🐾



Adult in front of deciduous canines

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### Puppy Socialization and Noise Phobias (Fireworks Fears)

Early socialization of puppies is very important in promoting adult dogs that are confident and able to adjust to the world around them. When puppies are young, they are more able to easily adapt and acclimate to loud and unfamiliar sounds, people and other animals. This socialization makes them much less likely to develop fears and phobias as they mature. Proper socialization helps establish a loving and lasting relationship between you and your pet. Early in your puppy’s life, it is very important to confront unfavorable habits and address them in a positive, productive and timely manner.

#### Puppy Desensitization

One of the best ways to work with your puppy is to introduce him at a young age to common situations. Some of these may include trimming nails, bathing, brushing and medicating. You can make any future trips to the veterinarian and the groomer a much more pleasant experience through touch desensitization. Handle his feet, touch his toes, and look in his ears and mouth. Do all of this with positive rewards such as praise, food treats or by giving a favorite toy. By introducing these stimuli at a very young age, they are far more likely to be accepted by the pet later in life.

For puppies, obedience training is essential. We recommend starting at 12-13 weeks of age (after the 2<sup>nd</sup> DHPP vaccine). Many capable trainers are available to help you socialize and train your puppy properly. Do your homework in order to take advantage of the training courses offered in your area. Similar to children, pets' habits, both good and bad, are learned at an early age!

#### Working with Noise Phobias

Those dogs that do develop noise phobias can be helped. Through a program of noise desensitization with the use of CD's (containing sounds of fireworks, thunderstorms, horns and/or sirens), positive reinforcement techniques should be employed and gradually introduced to the fearful

## Summer-time Preparation

Everyone loves summer weather- the sun and the warmth- but the heat can also be a true problem for our pets. Here are a few tips to help our fuzzy companions remain healthy through the season.

- Be sure fresh clean water is always available to all pets. This includes providing water on long walks.
- Do NOT leave pets in cars unattended. Cars often heat up quickly and act as an oven with your companion animal trapped inside.
- When possible, avoid strenuous exercise in the heat of the day. This is especially important to old, overweight dogs with heart or respiratory conditions. Just like people, they can suffer from 'heat stroke'. Instead try sticking to early morning and evening walks.
- Consider grooming or trimming long-coated dogs and cats. If you are thinking of having your pet's coat trimmed, contact a groomer to have this professionally done. Often times home haircuts result in the accidental injury of your pet.
- Use a fan or plant mister to help cool down old dogs during the warmest parts of the day.
- Place a dab of high factor, waterproof sunblock on non-pigmented areas of skin that are poorly covered by hair. This helps to prevent skin cancer. It is particularly important in white cats (ears and nose are predisposed to squamous cell carcinoma) and non-pigmented spots on dogs (especially around the eyes).
- Be on the look-out for grass awns when on hikes or walks through fields. The most common in the area are foxtails. They resemble wheat grass sprouts. Foxtails can become trapped in dogs' ears, between toes, in thick undercoat, and can even be inhaled through the nose to the upper respiratory tract. Check your pet after every walk through suspected areas. If your dog has violent head shaking, constant sneezing episodes, or is continually pawing at his ears or nose, please contact your veterinarian immediately.
- If your pet is going to the kennel, attending doggy daycare or training this summer, don't forget to make sure he is up to date on his vaccines. In order for vaccines to be at peak therapeutic levels, they should be given at least one week prior to the actual needed date. So, if your dog is to be boarded, he should receive the Bordatella (Kennel Cough) vaccine 5-7 days **BEFORE** going to the kennel. If he is given the vaccine closer to the boarding date, he may still develop the disease, as the vaccine has not reached efficacy. 🐾



Foxtails

pooch. Medications can also help reduce anxiety (i.e. Alprazolam) as your dog's response to loud noises gradually improves over time.

If the desensitization approach is not possible, short term treatment with medications that reduce anxiety may be used on and around such traumatic events as the Fourth of July. If your pet does require medication, it is best to not wait until the event to request the prescription. **Contact your veterinarian well in advance**, as such medications may run low or need to be special ordered when your pet needs it the most. By no means is this patch treatment a cure or addressing the root of the phobia. If you would like to discuss puppy socialization or noise phobias, have a behavior consultation, or receive a referral to one of our recommended trainers/puppy classes, please do not hesitate to contact us. The socialization and gradual desensitization approaches promote healthy adaptations and acclimation to a variety of life's potentially stressful events. 🐾

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*If you are interested in receiving the LMVH/CCC newsletter CLAW AND PAW PRINTS via email, please fill out a card at the front desk.*

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## SPECIAL EVENTS, SERVICES AND PROMOTIONS

### 🌞 WEEKLY LOW-COST DOG VACCINE CLINIC:

Every Tuesday evening from 7:00-8:00pm; NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY

We offer DHPP, Rabies, Lyme, and Bordatella (Kennel Cough) vaccines; Heartworm Testing also available.

### 🌞 WE NOW HAVE A TONOPEN!!

A tonopen is an instrument used to detect the intra-ocular (eye) pressure of your pet. It is a diagnostic tool used to detect glaucoma (high pressure) and uveitis (low pressure). As your pet ages, these changes may be more prominent. Just like a senior blood panel, the tonopen should be an integral part of any geriatric examination. It should also be used in routine exams to screen predisposed breeds.