

Blue Ravine News

YOUR PET'S HEALTH IS OUR CONCERN

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Please Welcome Dr. Jessica Winters to the Blue Ravine Animal Hospital Staff

I am originally from the San Diego area. I graduated from Whittier College with a BA in biology prior to relocating to Davis. I graduated from UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine and while I was there, I met the man of my dreams and married him! We've settled in El Dorado Hills, built a beautiful life and had a son!

I am most interested in dermatology, internal medicine, preventative medicine, geriatric care, and acupuncture. When not in the office, you can find me hiking, eating good food or hanging out with my husband and son. We share our home with a sweet, aging English Bulldog named Titus. I'm thrilled to be part of the Blue Ravine team and look forward to meeting you all soon.



Blue Ravine Welcomes Clients Inside for Scheduled Appointments

We are ready to welcome our clients back inside for scheduled doctor appointments ONLY (the lobby remains closed). If you are more comfortable with curbside care, or if you choose not to wear a mask or are feeling ill in any way, please let us know when you arrive and we will be happy to accommodate you curbside. If you are going to arrive late, be sure to call or text ahead; if you are 15 minutes late, you will be asked to reschedule your appointment.

Please TEXT 916.984.0990 when you arrive, regardless of your reason for visiting. A team member will call you by phone to collect and record history and then invite you to meet us at the front door. Please request any preventative refills, supplements, or prescription diets at the beginning of the visit so they can be gathered efficiently.

During your exam: We require masks for all clients and team members at all times regardless of vaccination status. Only ONE family member may accompany the pet to the examination room; no children will be allowed to enter with their parents. You will be able to ask questions and express concerns at this time. Please stay seated and masked throughout the examination process if staff members have stepped outside the room. (A reminder that pets are often taken to the treatment area for common procedures like anal glands, nail trims, laboratory samples, x-rays, etc.) Once any issues are addressed and the examination is completed, you will be checked out in the exam room by the technician and escorted to the lobby exit.

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September is Animal Pain Awareness Month

The International Veterinary Academy of Pain Management (IVAPM) educates and informs pet owners about their pet's health and well-being when it comes to pain management, be it acute or chronic pain.

IVAPM has proclaimed September as Animal Pain Awareness Month, and this coincides with human medicine's Pain Awareness Month. Animals suffer from pain just like people do. Pain comes in many forms: surgical pain, arthritis and cancer related pain, just to name a few. Acute pain is obvious and distressing. Chronic pain can be subtle, and masked as "getting old" or "slowing down." Age is not a disease, but pain is. There are many options to treat the various causes of pain in animals including pain medications, physical rehabilitation, acupuncture, laser therapy, and therapeutic massage. Below are listed some signs to identify when your pet is in pain.

Reluctance to walk on slippery surfaces. Some dogs may never have liked to walk on wood or vinyl flooring because it was too slippery. However, if this is a more recent issue, then pain needs to be considered as one of the possible reasons for it. To understand why this reluctance may reveal pain, it's important to understand how dogs get traction on slippery floors. In general, dogs have very smooth pads on the bottom of their feet. Dogs also cannot perspire out of their pads like we can from our hands and feet, improving our grip when we need it. Because of these two factors, they rely on their nails for traction, but nails won't help on smooth surfaces. Strength and balance on all four legs help healthy dogs to remain in an upright position. But when a dog has one or more bad limbs, problems start to occur. A leg slides out, and she doesn't have the strength to draw it back toward her body. If there is a second bad leg, then she must suddenly ask her body to balance on only two limbs. Out her

legs go from under her, increasing her reluctance to walk on that floor. Dogs are quick learners, and it only takes a few such falls or near falls for them to become fearful of these slippery surfaces. If there is a neurological issue causing weakness or instability, this compounds the fear of walking on the slippery surface even further.

Going up or down stairs. Walking up or down a stair puts most of a dog's weight on either the front or back legs, depending on the direction your dog is moving. Some dogs in pain simply refuse outright to use stairs. Others become reluctant, and will only use them with coaxing or assistance. Many owners describe their dog as standing on the landing and looking up or down the stairs, but not moving until they get their nerve up, or maybe even just barking in frustration.

Becoming selective about what to jump up on or down from. Sometimes it might be that a piece of furniture is too high or that the floor is too slippery. Or you might notice it only when they are trying to jump into a vehicle, where the jump might be low, but they have to jump at an angle to avoid the door or seat. This reluctance to jump may happen gradually, or it might happen overnight if your dog decides "enough is enough" and no longer feels the reward is worth the effort.

Attempting to stand up with the front legs first. The vast majority of dogs stand up with their rear legs in motion first—but not dogs in pain. You may have even seen dogs start to stand up on their rear legs, and before they get all the way up, stretch their front end in what looks like a "praying" position. This is normal. When a dog has problems in its hindquarters, however, this becomes too difficult. Instead, they will try to gather themselves together up front

Animal Pain Awareness (Continued on page 3)

The Most Common Signs of Pain in Your Pet

- Decreased activity: take notice if your pet is not playing as much as usual.
- Not going up or down stairs: this could be an early sign of osteoarthritis.
- Reluctance to jump up onto surfaces: this especially applies to cats.
- Difficulty standing after lying down: is a sign of osteoarthritis.
- Over grooming or licking a particular area: can be a sign of referred pain.
- Decreased appetite: this can signal mouth pain.

If you notice any of these signs, please contact your veterinarian.

Brought to you by **IVAPM**

SEPTEMBER IS ANIMAL PAIN AWARENESS MONTH

Common Signs of Pain in Dogs

- Decreased social interaction
- Anxious expression
- Submissive behavior
- Refusal to move
- Whimpering
- Howling
- Growling
- Guarding behavior
- Aggression; biting
- Decreased appetite
- Self-mutilation (chewing)
- Changes in posture

Not Joining the Family? It Might Be Pain.

SEPTEMBER IS ANIMAL PAIN AWARENESS MONTH

Ask your veterinarian about ways to treat pain.

Visit IVAPM.org/Pain

September is Animal Pain Awareness Month (cont'd.)

Animal Pain Awareness (Continued from page 2)

first, and you can actually see them pulling with their front legs as they stand. This is not normal and almost always indicates a pain-causing problem, such as hip dysplasia or arthritis.

The simple task of lying down may actually become difficult. We have all seen dogs circle and circle as they look for just the right spot and angle to lie down. This normal behavior, however, might become more pronounced in the dog experiencing pain. This might be a result of pain in the joints and muscles accustomed to lying down, or perhaps your dog knows that it has become painful to lie on arthritic joints, and is therefore reluctant to do so. In either case, it is always an indication that something is causing pain.

Running and jumping activities are often limited in the dog in pain. Maybe his muscle strength has decreased from months of reduced activity. Or perhaps the impact of landing is just too much for the joints to bear. In either case, the fact that your dog doesn't run or jump like before should set off an alarm in your head to have this checked out.

Placing an abnormal amount of weight on his front legs is generally a sign that a dog is having difficulty bearing weight on his back legs. This can be due to a problem in the knee, hip, or lower back. This forward-leaning stance can be hard to determine in subtle cases, even for the trained eye. Pronounced cases can be seen more easily from the side. Instead of the front legs standing straight up and down, they are tucked back under the chest.

Abnormal wear on nails can be the sign of either pain or neurological disease. Painful limbs are more difficult for the animal to pick up, causing the nails to scuff as she walks along and tries to exert the least possible effort to pick up the limb. In cases of neurological disease, she might not even realize that she isn't lifting her feet up all the way. In either case, something is wrong and should be checked out.

Behavioral Changes

The behavioral changes and the changes in physical abilities sometimes overlap, and may not strictly fit in one camp versus the other. For example, a reluctance to run and jump can also be considered a reduced social interaction.

Many behavior changes are impossible for your veterinarian to witness as they are almost always exhibited in the home

environment, yet these behavioral issues are probably more important in predicting the presence of pain than the loss of some of the physical abilities described above. If you suspect that your pet is in pain, prepare a careful history of these behavioral points for your veterinarian.

Unwillingness to initiate play or other social interactions is sometimes confused with the aging process, and therefore can be hard to recognize, if only for the fact that the changes are gradual. Try to think back a few years, and compare your pet's behavior then and now. This makes it much easier to determine if some of these changes are real and representing some kind of pathology.

Aggression toward other animals where no aggression existed before is one of the hallmarks of pain. A dog may suddenly growl and snap at other dogs in the same household—dogs that have lived together for years. Pain is a big motivator for your dog to let his “dog friends” understand that their previous interactions are no longer acceptable, and this is often accomplished by a showing of teeth, growling, or even snapping as if intending to bite. Successful pain treatments can sometimes be measured through observation of declining levels of aggression.

Aversion to being petted or brushed is another strong indicator of pain. Obviously if your pet never liked these activities, this will not provide a very good yardstick. Consider if you have ever had a painful shoulder, wrist, or other joint: you can often move it around without a lot of pain, as you know exactly what that joint's tolerance levels are, but have someone grab your arm or shake your hand too hard, and the pain can almost drop you to your knees. Petting and grooming can have that same unwanted effect of moving joints in unexpected ways and causing a painful reaction.

Disruption in sleep patterns is very common in animals experiencing pain. Painful spots might easily be ignored dur-

Animal Pain Awareness (Continued on page 4)

Common Signs of Pain in Cats

- Reduced activity
- Loss of appetite
- Quiet/loss of curiosity
- Changes in urinary/defecation habits
- Hiding
- Hissing or spitting
- Lack of agility/jumping
- Excessive licking/grooming
- Stiff posture/gait
- Guarding behavior
- Stops grooming/matted fur
- Tail flicking
- Weight loss

Appointments (Continued from page 1)

End of life care: We will continue to allow two masked individuals to be present with their pet inside during the euthanasia process.

We will continue to keep the lobby area closed at this time to reduce close interpersonal contact. **IF YOU FEEL ILL, WE REQUEST THAT YOU PLEASE STAY HOME AND RESCHEDULE YOUR PET'S APPOINTMENT.**

Thank you for your patience as we navigate the inevitable hiccups in this process. We are trying hard to serve you as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Your friends at Blue Ravine Animal Hospital



News Flash! Kelly O'Keefe is a friend of Blue Ravine and one of our pharmacological representatives; you may have met him at one of our Christmas parties/Open Houses. Kelly is bicycle riding across the U.S. from San Francisco to Savannah (3600 miles) to raise funds and awareness for five causes including NOMV (Not One More Vet) and World Vets. **NOMV** is a crisis support system designed for veterinary professionals; it conducts research to



further wellness and mental health, and to reduce suicide in veterinary professionals. Many veterinary professions are in crisis. NOMV supports all veterinary teams and students who are struggling or considering suicide.

World Vets is an international veterinary aid organization based in Gig Harbor, Washington that provides free veterinary care through a volunteer force of over 4,000 individuals in 48 countries and 6 continents. Currently, World Vets has five established programs which include Small Animal spay/neuter and medical treatments, Equine and Donkey Welfare, Livestock and Animal Husbandry, and Advancing scientific knowledge as it relates to veterinary issues in developing countries. The group works in partnership with animal welfare groups, foreign governments, non-governmental organizations, agriculture and public health officials, as well as a wide variety of veterinary professionals.



Follow Kelly on Facebook and visit his GoFundMe page at <https://gofundme.com/f/kellys-ride-for-5-charity-ride-across-america>.

Animal Pain Awareness (Continued from page 3)

ing waking hours, but the immobility of sleep can put pressure on joints that might not be noticed when awake, as your dog is constantly shifting position to change limb and joint angles, pressure points, and help the joints stay mobile as they redistribute joint fluid through the constant flexion and extension of even subtle movement. These dogs often fall asleep for several hours, but then start waking up, moving around the house, and trying to get comfortable again, so they can fall back to sleep. Many of these dogs are exhausted by morning, and as a result, sleep more during the day to make up for what they missed the previous night. You might see the same behavior during daytime naps, where they can't seem to get comfortable.

Stiffness can result from either working or playing too hard, and we all overdo it from time to time. However, stiffness after rest in the absence of a known predisposing event should be cause for concern. If you've ever had plantar fasciitis, you may not have necessarily walked with a limp—at least you didn't until the time you put your feet up for an hour and then tried to stand up. Similar mechanisms are at

play in painful conditions such as osteoarthritis, which may cause the same issues to arise in your dog.

A decrease in appetite may accompany some dogs in pain. Certain breeds, such as retrievers, however, often maintain their appetite and interest in treats even when on death's door, so the presence of an appetite cannot always be relied upon, however, when any dog quits eating, especially if it is outside the realm of their normal behavioral pattern, pain must be considered as one of many possible causes.

House-training issues often arise in geriatric dogs. Although many caregivers come in to a clinic and joke about their dog going through its "second childhood," the reality of the accidents may be that it is simply too painful to come and find the owner to ask to go out, to negotiate the steps into the back yard, or to face some extremes of outdoor hot and cold. Many dogs just give up, and although they may feel shame for breaking the rules, the alternative is even more painful to contemplate.

Kindness is the rule when dealing with pets in pain.

Please call Blue Ravine Animal Hospital today to help assess and ameliorate your pet's pain— 916-984-0990. We want to help.

BLUE RAVINE OFFICE HOURS

COVID-19 Temp. Hours, Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. Saturday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm; Sunday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. For emergencies outside regular office hours, please call MarQueen Pet Emergency & Specialty, 916 757-6600 or Sacramento Veterinary Referral Center, 916 362-3111.

www.blueravineanimalhospital.com

BLUE RAVINE ANIMAL HOSPITAL NEW APPOINTMENT POLICY

Due to the tremendous pressure we have for appointment space, we have been forced to create a policy to limit cancellations or missed appointments. While we understand busy schedules and extenuating circumstances, if you do not show up for two appointments within a calendar year, you will be asked to prepay for future examinations.

If you cancel an appointment within two hours of the appointment time on more than two occasions, we will charge the exam fee, and future appointments will require prepayment. If you miss a prepaid scheduled appointment, you will forfeit your deposit.

We are working very hard to serve all of our clients as efficiently as possible. Please talk to us and help us adhere to our schedule so that we can accommodate everyone. Thank you!

BLUE RAVINE ANIMAL HOSPITAL
1770 Prairie City Rd., Folsom, CA. 916-984-0990