

IN THE NEWS

Dogs, cats feel holiday stress; Vet offers pet care tips

Amidst the hustle and stresses of the holiday season, people with pets may have some additional responsibilities and concerns. Army Capt. Larry Shelton, 437th Services Squadron Veterinary Services, offers the following tips for pet care during the holidays:

Traveling with pets--

- The best thing to do if traveling by car is to get the animal acclimated to driving conditions. Take short trips around the block or to a friend's house, and work up to longer distances. Use a pet carrier and try to place a towel/blanket/toy that the pet is familiar with in the carrier with the pet.

- Airplane travel can be quite stressful for a pet. The best thing is to provide the pet as much comfort as possible. A familiar carrier, toys or blanket will help. If the animal is in the cabin, it is reassuring for them to

know that you are there.

- Many animals do not need medications to travel. Acclimation and comfort are all that is necessary. Some animals do get motion sickness, or they may get stressed and out of control. In these extreme situations, speak with a veterinarian for advice.

Staying behind--

- If you must leave your pet, leave it with a responsible person who will remember how and when to give medications; how much to feed and other important care instructions. Leave emergency numbers with the sitter for yourself and veterinary facilities.

- If your pet will have to stay in a boarding facility, make sure all vaccinations are current, and that you consult with the boarding facility on what is required by the facility for the animal to be boarded. Ask around to find reputable facilities.

While at home--

- Remember, your holiday diet should not become your pet's holiday diet. Chocolates, other sweets and table food are not healthy for the pet; and they may get upset stomachs or other health problems from certain food items.

- Holiday decorations: Treat your pet like a child. Watch for the cat or bird in the Christmas tree, the dog chewing light wires and the ferret ripping open gift boxes. This will help to avoid shocks, foreign objects lodged in the throat, stomach or intestine; or other physical injury.

- Continue to give your pet its normal amount of attention. This is always difficult when friends and family are visiting, but a neglected pet is an unhappy pet.

Pets as gifts--

- Make sure the person wants, needs, can afford and knows how to take care of the pet. If the pet is for a child, remember who usually ends up taking care of it.

- Bring the pet to a veterinarian, on or off base. In fact, consult with one before the pet is acquired. Get all medical records and information you can from the person and place where the animal is adopted.

Shelton said the list of tips covers some of the main holiday pet concerns, but there may be more. He added, "Consult with the base veterinarian or a civilian veterinarian if you have any questions concerning the care of your pet."

(Capt. Tracy Velino, 437 AW Public Affairs, and Army Capt. Larry Shelton, 437 SVS, contributed to this article.)



Photo by Senior Airman Jason Smith

Army Capt. Larry Shelton checks Landy's heart. Master Sgt. Lee Woody, 373rd Training Squadron Detachment 5, took Landy and Ransom, Woody's other Black Lab, to the vet for a check up. The two dogs visit hospitals and other places as therapy dogs to cheer up patients.



Photo by Senior Airman Jason Smith

CAFB veterinary clinic serving pets, saving owners money

By Capt. Tracy Velino
437 AW Public Affairs

Since the grand opening of the new Charleston AFB veterinary clinic Apr. 21, the three-member staff has served pet owners throughout the 26,000-person Charleston military community.

Pets of active-duty, reserve and retired members of any branch of service are eligible for veterinary services.

The clinic sales hours are from 8-11:30 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday. Items for sale include heartworm products, flea and tick control and some medicated shampoos, according to Christy Leek, receptionist and clerk.

Visits to the veterinarian, Army Capt. Larry Shelton, and the animal technician, Army Sgt. Larry Linney, are by appointment only.

Services such as rabies shots, distemper shots for dogs and cats, heartworm checks for dogs and bordetella (kennel cough) preven-

tion take priority, Leek said. Eye checks, ear checks, skin checks and some other services may be scheduled on a space-available basis.

"We are preventative medicine in nature," said Shelton. "We're here to prevent diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans. But the spectrum is changing so we are allowed to do more if we have the time."

The only cost associated with a veterinary visit is the cost of medications or services such as lab work plus a \$2.50 surcharge, said Shelton. "If we see the pet and do not treat it for anything, there is no fee.

"The prices are unbeatable," Shelton said. "A rabies shot for \$3.50 versus \$20 at a civilian vet—that's a deal!" The clinic's financial goal is to break even at the end of every fiscal year, he explained.

"If you live off base and you don't call here first, you're missing out on a good deal," Shelton added.

Award

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Operation Shining Hope, the 315 AW rose to the call, supporting humanitarian aid missions for the more than 45,000 refugees that had fled the war-ravaged Kosovo for Albania and Macedonia

- The 315 AW C-17 aircrews directly supported President Clinton and the First Family into Bosnia and Hungary.

- Members of the 300th Airlift Squadron flew the first C-17 into flood-ravaged Maputo, Mozambique, with 36,000 pounds of humani-

tarian relief supplies and equipment

- Members of the 701st Airlift Squadron were the first to airlift fuel and food to Soto Cano AB, Honduras, in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch

- The 315 AW obtained the first operational Explo-

sive Ordnance Disposal unit in AFRC, providing 496 days of EOD support nationwide for the White House, FBI, Secret Service, Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms and various local police agencies

- Members of the 315th Mission Support Squadron

volunteered and deployed to the East Coast Port Mortuary when an Army helicopter crashed at Fort Campbell, Ky., killing seven soldiers

- Aircrews from the 315 AW flew three Vietnam Missing in Action repatriation missions and counter-drug support missions.