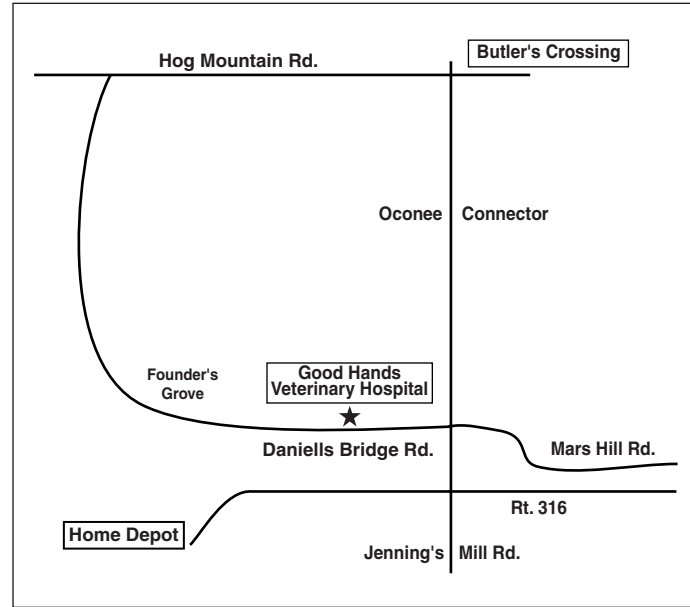


HOSPITAL HOURS:

Monday - Friday 7:30 am – 6:00 pm
 Saturday 8:00 am – 12 noon

Patients may also be “dropped-off” for evaluation and treatment. Appointments are preferred and may be scheduled by calling: **706-613-1880**.

We will continue to schedule house visits on Wednesdays mornings for those clients that would rather have us come to their home. The schedule for these visits however, will be limited, and a “trip” fee will be charged in addition to the standard exam fee.



2391 Daniells Bridge Road
 Athens, GA 30606-6160



Good Hands Veterinary Hospital News



Although it seems like yesterday, it has been a little over a year since we moved into our new hospital. The doctors and staff would like to thank all of our extended Good Hands family for your support and insight in making this a truly exciting and wonderful year.

We would like to welcome Dr. Jill Coleman as a new part-time relief veterinarian. Dr. Coleman will be scheduled on most Wednesdays and some Saturday mornings. Dr. Coleman received her undergraduate degree from Furman University in 1991 and graduated from the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine in 1995. Dr. Kucher and Dr. Coleman had previously worked together for nearly 5 years. Dr. Coleman is a compassionate and highly qualified veterinarian whom Dr. Kucher trusts completely.



"GOOOO DAWGS!"

What are the Benefits of a Wellness Examination?

Today, our furry family members live longer, healthier lives. The care given to your pet can help them achieve a happier, more active life. Just as your physician is recommending regular laboratory screening tests as well as preventive diagnostic procedures, we are recommending the same tests for your pet. An annual wellness exam of your pet can identify subtle, early risk factors of common diseases before clinical symptoms become apparent. Identification of these risk factors allows us to take early preventive measures or initiate early treatment, both of which will minimize the development of potentially life threatening diseases and provide your pet with a long and healthy life.

As part of our overall wellness exam, we perform tests to check for:

- ❖ Diabetes mellitus
- ❖ Liver Disease
- ❖ Cardiovascular Disease
- ❖ Glaucoma
- ❖ Hypertension
- ❖ Urinary Tract Problems
(infection/bladder stones)
- ❖ Periodontal Disease
- ❖ Kidney Disease
- ❖ Anemia
- ❖ Infection

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We will draw blood for a Complete Blood Count (CBC), Biochemistry Profile, and Thyroid Profile. A urine sample will be obtained and submitted to the laboratory as well. Chest radiographs and an electrocardiogram (ECG) will be performed to evaluate heart and lung function. We will also measure the pressure in the eyes, screening for glaucoma or other ocular disease.

The entire process takes approximately 30 minutes. Your pet needs to be fasted for at least 12 hours prior to testing so we generally recommend scheduling the appointment for early morning; however, we can perform the tests at any time during the day. You

are more than welcome to wait for your pet while the tests are being performed or you can "drop off" your pet and we will call you when the tests are complete.

Early detection and rapid, appropriate treatment will prolong the health and happiness of your pet. If each test is run independently, the cost for all the procedures is \$450.00, however, we feel that this is very important for your pet's health and our ability to better screen and treat our patients, therefore, we offer this screening at a 20% discount. Please feel free to ask any questions and/or schedule an appointment at any time.

Monica Kucher, DVM

Heartworm Disease: Why You Should Be Concerned

Heartworm disease is caused by a parasitic worm called *Dirofilaria immitis*. It can affect dogs, cats and ferrets. Adult heartworms are long and thin, and can be up to 20-cm long. Untreated dogs can have up to 100 worms in their systems.

In dogs, adult heartworms live in the right side of the heart and in the blood vessels leading to the lungs, while the immature stages, or larvae, circulate in the blood. The adult worms can damage the heart and blood vessels by causing blockages. The life cycle of the heartworm begins when a mosquito sucks blood containing larvae from an infected animal. These larvae live and develop in the mosquito, and are then injected into another animal the next time the mosquito has a blood meal. Once the larvae are back in a dog, they travel to the heart and blood vessels leading to the lungs, where they develop into the adult, sexually mature stage. The adults then produce more larvae, and the cycle can begin again.

In cats, infection usually involves only a few adult worms, and there are no circulating larvae. However, it is common to find adult heartworms in unusual locations in cats, and the cat may die suddenly when a worm is traveling through its various systems. This is also the case for ferrets.

Symptoms of heartworm infection include coughing, shortness of breath, enlarged heart, and vomiting. In cats, the infection often looks like an asthma at-

tack. It is possible to diagnose heartworm infection by looking at a blood sample under a microscope (the wiggling of the larvae can be seen), but this technique doesn't work in cases where there are no circulating larvae. If all the adult heartworms in an animal are of one sex, or during the period before the adults are old enough to reproduce, there are no larvae in the blood. Cats rarely have circulating larvae as well. A better diagnostic test is an ELISA test, which shows the presence of certain compounds (antigens) that are produced by the adult worms. This type of test is called an Occult test, since it can detect heartworm infection without visible, circulating larvae.

Because of where the adult worms live in the body, treating heartworm disease can be extremely stressful for the animal. To kill the adult worms, toxic chemicals are administered, and as the worms die, they are carried into the lungs of the animal. The dead worms gradually disappear, but during this time period (usually 4-6 weeks) it is critical that the animal is completely restricted from any exercise, because of the partial blockage of many blood vessels into the lungs.

Obviously, it is far easier, less expensive, and less stressful to an animal to prevent heartworm disease rather than to treat it. Prevention has been made simple by use of monthly preventative tablets or chewables. These medications kill all the larval heartworms that may have been injected by infected mosquitoes, be-

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fore they ever have a chance to develop into adult worms and start causing damage. The monthly preventative should be given all year here in Georgia, since it is often warm enough during winter months for mosquitoes to be out. An additional advantage to the monthly preventative is that it also kills other parasitic worms, such as roundworms and hookworms. Hookworms live in the soil and can be transmitted to dogs all year, which is another reason for

keeping a pet on year-round heartworm preventative. We recommend **Heartgard®**, an oral monthly preventative that is manufactured by Merial Limited, an internationally known provider of human and veterinary pharmaceuticals. The United States headquarters for Merial Limited is located in Athens and Atlanta.

Laurel Berger-Bishop and Monica Kucher, DVM

Boarding and Day-Care

Have you made your **Holiday Boarding Reservation?** We are currently taking reservations for the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holiday. Spaces are filling up quickly and we want to be the ones to love and pamper your pet while you are away. All of our canine guests are exercised three times daily and provided a fleece or elevated bed. Our feline guests have a room with a view and are constantly pampered during their stay. All of our canine guests are bathed prior to check out. Lodging fees are \$20 per night for dogs and \$13 per night for cats. **Please note that because of limited availability, all holiday boarding reservations require a \$25.00 non-refundable deposit.** Weekend borders may be picked-up Monday mornings before 12 noon. All our guests must be up-to-date on their vaccinations.

Doesn't your canine companion deserve some extracurricular activity during the week? Why not take advantage of one of our doggie-day care programs? We have 2, 3 and 5 day/week programs, or just drop them off for a day. They will enjoy walks, play time, and lots of TLC. The boarding, day-care and grooming facilities have a separate entrance in the rear of our building. We would like to take this time to thank our student volunteers who have helped give our day care participant's extra special attention. Thanks to Joseph Stunzi, Hanna Dean, Anna Wilson, Allison Parker, and Caroline Beveillard (regulars), and all other helpers who have participated in our program. The dogs all appreciate their love and attention, as does the staff at Good Hands Veterinary Hospital.

After-hours Emergencies:

Good Hands Veterinary Hospital is a member of The Animal Emergency Hospital on Old Business 441, Watkinsville, Georgia. In January of 2002, a new, 2500 sq. ft. emergency hospital was completed. A veterinarian and technical staff are on site for phone consultation, admission, and care of your after-hours emergencies Monday-Friday from 6:00 pm until 8:00 am the following morning, weekends from Saturday at 12 noon until 8:00 am Monday morning, and all observed Holidays. Dr. Kucher will receive a fax transmission summarizing the admission and treatment, and your pet will be transferred to Good Hands Veterinary Hos-

pital the following morning, or a re-check examination scheduled. The telephone number of the Animal Emergency Hospital is: 706-769-0229

Please feel free to stop by Good Hands Veterinary Hospital to meet our doctors and staff and to tour our new facility. We look forward to making you part of our Good Hands family! If you have any questions, please call us at 706-613-1880 or e-mail us at goodhandsvet@directvinternet.com (that's directv with one "t")