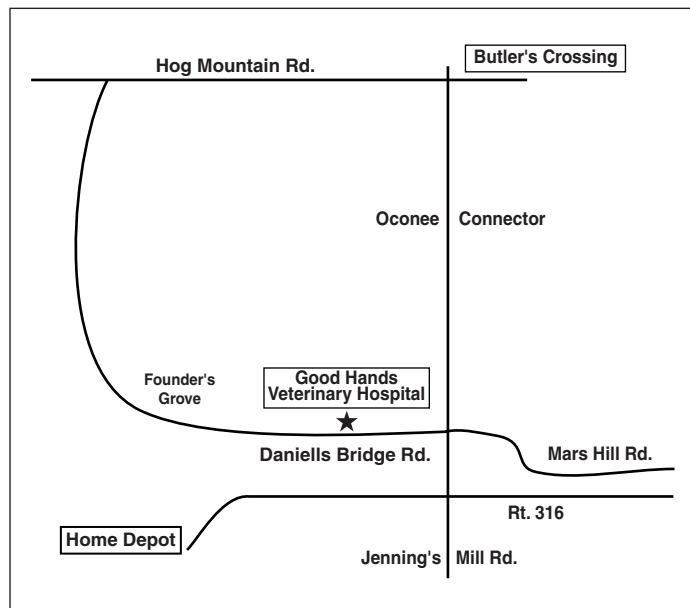


HOSPITAL HOURS:

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



We have just completed our first full year at our new location and would like to thank all of you for entrusting the health and well-being of your four-legged family members to all of us at Good Hands. Providing you and your pet with the highest quality medical care, and efficient, courteous service is our number one goal. We look forward to serving you for many years to come and welcome any suggestions or feedback on our facility, staff, and services.

February is National Pet Dental Month

February is National Pet Dental Month and we are celebrating this occasion by offering all dental prophylaxes at 20% off for the entire month of February. Please call the hospital at 706-613-1880, to make your appointment.

What is Dental Disease in Pets and How Can I Prevent It?

Dental disease is the most common disease in dogs and cats. Over 68% of all pets over the age of three have some form of periodontal disease, although most pets will show few signs. It is up to the pet's family and veterinarian to uncover this hidden and often painful condition.

There are a number of signs that should alert you to dental disease or other mouth problems that may be present. Your pet may show a decreased interest in food, or approach the food bowl and then show a reluctance to eat. It may chew with obvious caution and discomfort, drop food from the mouth, or may swallow with difficulty. Dribbling may be seen, possibly with blood, and there may be a marked unpleasant odor to the breath. In some cases, your pet may be seen pawing at the mouth or shaking the head. A reluctance to eat may lead to weight loss, which can become quite marked. Many pets will refuse dry food and demonstrate a preference for moist or canned foods. Dental disease and oral pain may account for the “finicky appetites” that

many cats display. The most common cause of dental disease in cats and dogs is due to tartar and calculus accumulation. As in humans, pets accumulate bacterial plaque on the surface of their teeth; if the plaque is not removed quickly, it becomes mineralized to form tartar and calculus. The bacterial products and decaying food stuck to tartar are one potential cause of bad breath. Tartar is easily identified by its tan or brown color and it normally starts at the gum edge, especially on the back teeth (premolars & molars). In severe cases, it may cover the entire tooth.

The accumulation of tartar and bacteria on teeth surfaces leads to infection and gingivitis (inflammation of the gums). If the disease is caught at an early stage and a thorough veterinary dental scaling and polishing is performed, most of the teeth and gums will have a full recovery. However, if gingivitis is allowed to persist untreated, then irreversible periodontal disease will occur. During this process, the bone and ligaments that support the tooth are destroyed, leading to excessive tooth mobility and eventual tooth loss. Infection around the socket causes the formation of pus and a foul odor and may spread deep into the tooth socket creating an abscess, or even more severe problems. Once periodontal disease starts, the degenerative changes cannot be reversed. These changes make it easier for more plaque and tartar to collect, resulting in further disease.

If you see that your pet has evidence of tartar accumulation, gingivitis or is exhibiting any signs of mouth

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pain or discomfort, he or she should be examined by your veterinarian. You will be advised of the most appropriate course of treatment, which may involve having your pet's teeth examined and cleaned under short-acting general anesthesia.

The rate of tartar accumulation is variable between individual pets and is affected by diet and age. In some cases, your pet may require professional cleaning on a regular basis (every 6-12 months). Do not try to remove tartar from the teeth yourself using any form of metallic instrument. Aside from potentially harming your pet's mouth (or your pet harming you), you are likely to damage the tooth surface by creating microscopic scratches, which will encourage more rapid plaque formation and predispose your pet to further disease.

Dental Prophylaxis (Teeth Cleaning)

The goal of dental scaling and polishing is to remove the tartar and invisible plaque. We may perform pre-anesthesia blood tests to ensure that kidney and liver function are satisfactory. Sometimes antibiotic treatment is instituted before full dental prophylaxis is carried out. We will be happy to discuss this with you.

Tooth scaling will be performed both by hand and using ultrasonic cleaning equipment to remove tartar both above and below the gum line. The tartar beneath the gum line causes the most significant gum recession. The teeth are then polished in order to help prevent subsequent plaque build-up. It may be necessary to carry out other procedures at the same time such as extractions, and special applications of a dental gel may be indicated to decrease gum recession. All of these procedures will be fully discussed both before your pet's dental cleaning and when you bring your pet in for the procedure. We will need a telephone number where you can be reached during the dental cleaning so that we can discuss any additional procedures that may be indicated once we begin.

The prime aim to help prevent dental disease is to keep the mouth as hygienic as possible and to reduce the rate at which tartar builds up on the teeth. Recent advances in nutrition have resulted in diets that reduce tartar accumulation. We can give you specific dietary recommendations that will benefit your pet's dental health.

Plaque and tartar begin forming in as little as six hours after your pet's dental cleaning. We recommend you begin a home dental care program for all pets. We will provide you with detailed instructions on how to brush your pet's teeth, the most effective way of reducing plaque and tartar. A number of toothpastes, brushes, and finger wipes are available that are specially designed for your pet's mouth. With gentleness, patience and perseverance it is possible to maintain excellent oral health. Please do not use human dentifrice or toothpaste to brush your pet's teeth. These are foaming products and are not meant to be swallowed. Additionally, many types of human toothpaste contain sodium, which may cause problems in some pets.



Spay Day USA is Nationally Recognized on February 25, 2003

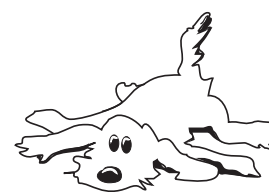
Led by the Doris Day Animal Foundation (DDAF), Spay Day USA is America's premier national day of action to promote the spaying or neutering of companion animals. There are three important reasons for having a Spay Day USA event each year:

- 1) To raise the public's awareness of the severe companion animal overpopulation problem, particularly of cats and dogs in the United States and throughout the world.
- 2) To promote spay/neuter surgery as a primary means of addressing companion animal overpopulation.
- 3) To inspire each humane American to take personal responsibility for preventing the births of surplus litters by sponsoring the spaying or neutering of at least one companion animal or feral cat.

Spay Day USA is recognized annually on the last Tuesday of February. This year SPAY Day USA is observed on February 27, however, to stress the importance of spaying and neutering your pet we will be offering a 20% discount on all elective spays and neuters during the entire month of February.

Grooming Services

Deidre Edder is now providing grooming services on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Deidre has over 31 years of professional experience in the Athens and Atlanta area, and is wonderful with all of her clients. She will groom dogs of any size, and even cats. Laura Moll will receive and discharge our grooming appointments. She will also be a hospital receptionist on some Saturdays. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, for your convenience, animals may be dropped off between 7:30 – 9:00 am. All our grooming guests must be up-to-date on their vaccinations.



Boarding and Day-Care

Have you made your spring break boarding reservation? We are currently taking reservations for spring break holidays. 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, provided a fleece or elevated bed, and are bathed prior to check out. Our feline guests have a room with a view and are constantly pampered during their stay. Lodging fees are \$22 per night for dogs and \$14 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.

After-hours Emergencies:

Good Hands Veterinary Hospital is a member of The Animal Emergency Hospital on Old Business 441, Watkinsville, Georgia. 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 12 noon until 8:00 am Monday morning, and all observed holidays. Dr. Kucher will receive a fax transmission summarizing admission and treatment, and your pet will be transferred to Good Hands Veterinary Hospital 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 hospital. We look forward to making you part of our Good Hands family! If you have any questions, please call us at 706-613-1880, email us at goodhandsvet@earthlink.net, or visit our web site at www.goodhandsvet.com.

