

the Snoot Report

Special
8 Page
Edition

Snoot Snyder,
Vetcetera Spokesdog

News for Pet Owners from Vetcetera Pet Healthcare Centre

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Fall 2002

Dental Care for Healthier Pets

by Dr. Julie Buzby Snyder

Periodontal disease is the number one disease of pets today. It is a diagnosis common to all pets, in all age groups, becoming more advanced as pets get older. This disease affects 85 percent of adult dogs and cats, but can strike young pets too. Yet it is very preventable. Factors that influence the development of oral disease include genetics, diet and home care. Veterinarians believe that periodic professional dental cleanings coupled with home dental care is a critical element of total healthcare for our pets.

Periodontitis, inflammation of the tissues and structures surrounding the teeth, not only causes “doggy breath” but also pain, discomfort and potential tooth loss. It is not normal for your pet to have a severe odor from his/her mouth. The byproduct of bacteria produces this foul odor. Dental disease generally begins with inflammation of the gums and accumulation of plaque on the teeth. Plaque is formed when bacteria combine with salivary debris. Tooth loss, gum bleeding and pus between the teeth or at the gum line are indicators of advanced periodontal disease. A pet with periodontitis can send a bacterial shower into the bloodstream every time they chew. In turn, these bacteria can affect the heart valves, lungs, liver and kidneys.

A thorough oral exam is one of the most important parts of our comprehensive exam. Many of our clients are



surprised when we point out dental disease in their pets. Clinical signs of disease may include bad breath, excessive salivation, appetite changes, facial swelling, weight loss, pawing at the mouth and behavioral shifts. Invariably, we suggest home dental care and perhaps professional dental care for your pets, depending on severity. Home dental care is a classic example of preventative medicine.

We can't change the genetic code of your pet, but we can significantly slow the progression of dental disease through home care. We educate all puppy and kitten owners on basic teeth brushing techniques as part of routine grooming and training. Daily teeth brushing is ideal. It takes 6-8 hours for bacteria to attach to the tooth's surface.

The bacteria then absorb calcium from saliva and become mineralized, forming tartar or calculus. This is why brushing is recommended daily, to continually break this cycle. While brushing a few times a week is helpful, brushing weekly does not significantly inhibit the formation of calculus. Do not use human toothpaste when brushing your pet's teeth. The toothpaste may cause tummy upset and the fluoride levels can be toxic to their kidneys. We recommend and sell CET enzymatic toothpaste, in chicken and mint flavor.

Though there is no substitute for brushing, as it mechanically breaks up the plaque film, there are other home care options when brushing simply is not possible. These include wiping the teeth with medicated wipes, rinsing the mouth with an antiseptic prescription rinse and lastly using chews, such as CET Chews and Greenies. While calculus is reduced by chewing on hard crunchy foods and treats, real bones, rocks and even ice can cause fractures of the teeth, and are best avoided.

We can assume that dental disease causes pets significant chronic pain, just as it does in people. Recognizing the critical link between dental care and pet wellness, Vetcetera has recently invested more than \$10,000 in leading-edge dental instrumentation and advanced dentistry training. It is thrilling to see the dramatic improve-

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Canine moderate periodontitis.



Feline advanced periodontitis.

ments in pets we have treated for advanced dental disease. Their activity levels, appetite, and energy levels often improve significantly.

We would be glad to discuss specific recommendations for your pet, in both the professional and home care realm. We can determine upon exam the need for a prophylactic cleaning (to prevent disease) or periodontal therapy (treatment of current disease) and provide an estimate accordingly. As a rule, smaller breed dogs and cats are more prone to periodontal disease than large

breed dogs. The interval between professional cleanings varies based on the same factors that influence development of disease. Some dogs and cats need annual cleanings while some may go a lifetime without the need for this procedure. The adult cat has 30 teeth; the adult dog has 42. Our wellness goal at Vetcetera is to educate owners to care for each of these teeth over the lifetime of their pet. Dental care isn't costly, but dental disease is.



Nutrition Update *by Celene Johnston*

Just as you are what you eat, so is your pet. Imagine if you were to eat fast food for breakfast, lunch and dinner, with nothing but junk food in between. Your body would probably not function at full potential. The same is true for your pet. Nutrition has a direct correlation to health and longevity.

Most national petfood manufacturers know that when it comes to nutrition for our pets we are enticed by "healthful" advertising claims. Yet even the so called "premium" brands like Eukanuba, Iams, and Science Diet fall short by Vetcetera standards. All of these foods are extruded at high temperatures causing a loss of nutritional value and palatability. Many of these diets are primarily corn or other cereal grains which are used primarily as a filler product. Therefore, the food must be coated or infused with preservatives, fats, and other palatability enhancers to make these poorer quality foods smell and taste good.

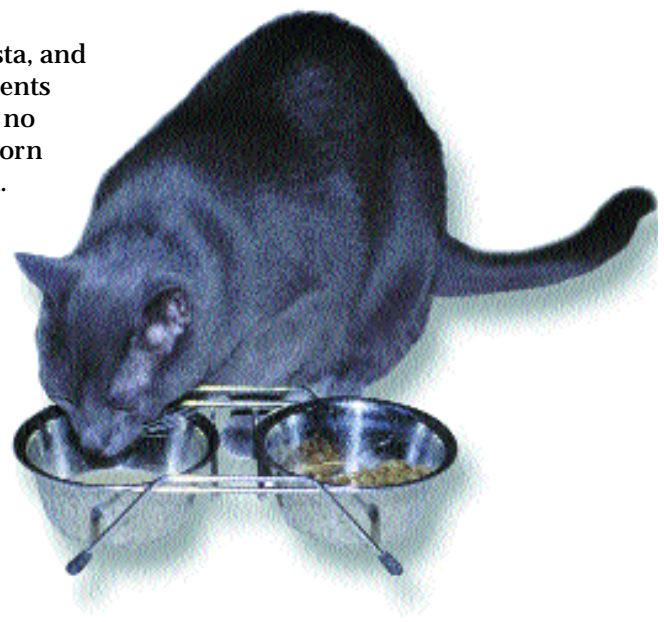
Fortunately, there is a new generation of pet food that is rapidly gaining acceptance. These are the super premium holistic foods. More pricey than grocery store brands due to the quality of ingredients, they are far more wholesome.



Brands that meet Vetcetera's optimum standards for nutrition include Old Mother Hubbard Wellness (dog, puppy, cat, and kitten formulas) Solid Gold (dog and puppy formulas) and Innova cat formulas.

Whole meats, vegetables, pasta, and fruits are the primary ingredients in these foods. They contain no chemical preservatives and corn is not used as a filler product. Since dogs and cats are not vegetarians by nature, these are meat based, not grain based, diets.

You are invited to stop in for a pet nutritional consultation.



Pet IDentification by Amy Eckert

Pets can become separated from even the most conscientious pet owner. A family pet is lost every two seconds in this country. Identification of your pet is a vital part of responsible pet ownership. Two options are available at Vetcetera for permanent pet identification: tattooing and microchipping. Unlike a collar or tags, neither can become separated from your pet.



Tattooing is a very effective way to ensure visual identification of your pet. It can also serve as a lifetime license. After submitting the proper paperwork and fees to the county courthouse, a number is assigned for your pet's lifetime license. This number is then permanently applied to the right inner thigh of the pet, with the letters "PA". The courthouse charges \$31. The cost to apply the tattoo through our clinic is \$45. Tattooing is quite cost effective in the long run as it saves the annual licensing fees. We prefer to tattoo while the pet is under anesthesia, thus a spay/neuter or dental cleaning is the ideal opportunity to apply this permanent identification. The process of tattoo application takes approximately 10 minutes. It is considered safe and discomfort is minimal.



Pet microchip.

Microchipping is another option for permanent pet identification. This procedure requires the injection of a small microchip under the skin between the shoulder blades with a sterile hypodermic needle. It can be done while pets are awake. The cost for microchipping your pet

at Vetcetera is \$35. In addition, we recommend registering your pet with the AVID PETtrac identification system for \$15. Unlike a tattoo, the microchip cannot be visually seen, but the company provides a tag for the pet's collar indicating that they have been microchipped. Scanners that read these microchips are supplied free of charge to shelters and are owned by most veterinary offices. The scanner is passed over the pet, revealing the unique number of the pet's chip. This number can be called into a sophisticated national database that works 24 hours a day to reunite lost pets with their owners.

Many owners choose one or both of these methods of identification for greater peace of mind. Snoot the Spokedog is currently microchipped and will be tattooed when he undergoes a dental cleaning in the near future. We would be delighted to discuss these options with you in an effort to help you keep your pet home where he belongs. ♥

Pet Care Prayer Team News

Prayer and spiritual conversation occur at Vetcetera every Tuesday at 7:00 PM. All are welcome.

Santosh Thomas, a native of India and a Christian missionary in Kashmir (the disputed region between India and Pakistan) will be our guest from November 11th through 17th. He will be speaking at several local churches and with the local media. You are invited to join us at Vetcetera on Saturday evening, November 16, to meet this courageous evangelist.

Angel Baby Ministries in Pottsville provides a safe, loving environment for pregnant women who need help. Their need for disposable diapers and other baby items is constant. If you would like to donate items, yet cannot get to Angel Baby, please leave your items with us and

we will deliver them for you.

You are invited to join us this Christmas season as we support the work of the Angel Tree project. Last year we were able to give toys and gifts to more than 20 Schuylkill County children who had a parent in prison that could not be with them for Christmas. This year, with your help, we hope to do more. Look for a note from us soon that will provide details on how we can work together to bring a smile to the face of an underprivileged child on Christmas Day.

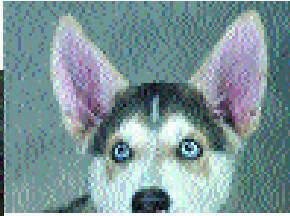
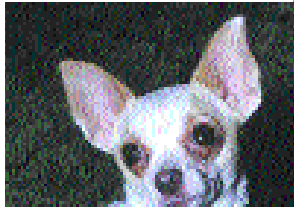
The First Community Christmas Celebration to be held at Vetcetera will take place on December 15 at 2:00 PM. Please take this opportunity to join us for Christmas hymn singing and a retelling of the story of the First Christmas. Light snacks and refreshments will be provided.



*A Note from
Vetcetera
Chaplain,
Ray Krammes*

Fall is here. I hope all is well with you and your pets. Our prayer team is grateful for the privilege of presenting your prayers and requests to heaven. Thank you for sharing your needs with us over the summer. Please remember that the welcome mat is always out for you to join us on any Tuesday at 7:00 PM for prayer and Bible conversation. ♥

Navigating the “Ear-rie Canal”



Otitis, inflammatory disease of the ear, is one of the most common diagnoses made in small-animal veterinary medicine. Symptoms include shaking the head, pawing at or rubbing the ears, pain around the ears and odor from the ears.

The ear is composed of three segments: the external, middle and inner ear. The external ear canal is a structure made of cartilage and lined by skin. This explains why the ears are often involved with skin problems. This skin contains glands that secrete a waxy substance known as cerumen, designed to trap dirt and debris in the ear canal and move it outward – a self cleaning mechanism. The external ear also functions to conduct sound and protect the eardrum. The ear canal has

a vertical component that leads to the deeper horizontal ear canal that cannot be evaluated without a special tool called an otoscope. The middle ear is separated from the external ear by the tympanic membrane, commonly called the eardrum. In severe ear infections, the middle ear can also be affected, often with rupture of the eardrum. The inner ear is responsible for hearing and balance.

Development of ear disease can be related to three factors: predisposing, primary and perpetuating. Predisposing factors increase the risk of developing otitis. Genetics is a key predisposing factor. Examples include the narrowed ear canals of the Shar Pei breed, the hairy ear canals of Poodles and the long floppy ears of Spaniels.

Another predisposing factor is moisture, seen in dogs that spend a lot of time swimming or that live in a humid climate. Often dogs are presented to Vetcetera with ear infections a few days after a bath. A warm moist ear canal is a prime environment to cultivate the abnormal growth of yeast and bacteria. Trauma to the ear canal from improper cleansing or use of irritating agents in the ear can also predispose to ear inflammation.

Primary factors are the conditions that initiate the inflammation within the ear canal. The most common cause of primary otitis in dogs is allergic reactions, either to things in the environment or to food. Up to 50

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Amy Eckert

Our featured staff member for this issue is Amy Eckert. Before joining Vetcetera, Amy served for 11 years as a staff member at the Hillside SPCA and she still volunteers there. She is licensed as an animal cruelty officer through the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

Over the years, Amy adopted five dogs and six cats through the Hillside SPCA. All of the dogs were considered "unadoptable." Two had severe aggression problems. One of these is now a registered therapy dog and has been recognized as a Canine Good Citizen.

Amy is pictured here with her dog, Eclipso, and Toby the cat.



“ I love working at Vetcetera. This is a caring place helping people to make quality choices for their pets. ”

— Amy Eckert



percent of dogs with allergies manifest with ear involvement. Ear mites (much more common in cats than dogs) and other parasites as well as microorganisms such as bacteria and yeast are also examples of primary causes. Other primary causes include hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid), Cushings disease (a disease of the adrenal glands) and foreign bodies (such as plant awns).



Cat ear mite.



Dog ear mite.

Perpetuating factors prevent the complete resolution of otitis, resulting in chronic recurring infections. Bacteria and yeast are often secondary invaders in primary otitis, thus serving as primary factors.

Certain conditions of the ear are not medically responsive. This is when surgical ear options are discussed. With chronic ear disease, the skin of the canal begins to thicken and scar which

leads to narrowing of the canal opening and eventually calcification, which no medical treatment can reverse. Involvement of the middle ear is another serious change. Anatomic changes perpetuate ear disease.

Treatment errors include under-treatment or inappropriate use of antibiotics. This is why it is important to diagnose before treating. A first time offender will be diagnosed by an ear cytology. A swab of the ear is taken and the debris is rolled out on a slide, stained and evaluated microscopically. This allows differentiation between yeast, bacteria and other cell populations. Appropriate antimicrobials can then be chosen based on this information. In a chronic ear situation, an ear culture is recommended. This test is performed by inserting a sterile curette deep into the external ear canal and sending the material obtained to the laboratory for identification and determination of the best antibiotic choice.

Ears should be cleaned on a regular weekly schedule (cats less frequently) and after bathing or swimming. We recommend flushing Oticalm or DermaPet solution down into the

canals to reach the horizontal ear canal, gently massaging the base of the ear for a minute or two to break up debris and wax in the canal and then allowing the pet to shake his head. This will bring the fluid carrying debris up from the deeper canal to the external surface. Next, gently wipe the fluid away with cotton balls or gauze squares. You may carefully use Q-tips to wipe debris away from the visible crevices, but do not put Q-tips down into the canal as this packs down the wax and debris. The goal of home cleaning is to make the environment less favorable for microbial growth and decrease inflammation by keeping the ears clean and dry.

As a rule of thumb, pets may have one "free" ear infection in their life. If otitis frequently recurs we must look for an underlying cause. Without getting to the root issue, otitis may never be resolved long term. Most recurrent ear problems are a manifestation of a generalized health condition. If your pet has ear problems or you would like a thorough explanation of proper home cleaning, please call to schedule an appointment. ♥

Spotlight On Our Senior Cats *by Carol Farabaugh*

Buttons

My name is Buttons Cummings, but my friends call me Butzy Buttercup. My mom rescued me from a farm twenty years ago! I was asked by Vetcetera to share my secrets of prosperity, health and long life.

I spend a lot of time sunbathing. My favorite place for this is on the back of the couch in front of the window. I also love to lie on a heating pad, turned on low. This seems to help with my old creaky joints. Of course I get a ton of love from my family and a lot of conversation. I also get at least 15 minutes of play time each day followed by a

couple of treats. I consider myself a chiropractic devotee. After Dr. Julie is done adjusting me the spring is back in my step and I strut around like a kitten. I also had my teeth cleaned at Vetcetera in March. I was the oldest cat to be anesthetized thus far at Vetcetera but obviously it was a success.



20-year old Buttons

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Feline Leukemia Virus by Wendy and Willy Fisher

Feline leukemia virus (FeLV) is a highly contagious disease of cats that can be transmitted by a mother cat to her kittens or cat to cat. A mother cat can transmit the disease across her placenta in utero or even through nursing. One cat can transmit the disease to another cat through bodily secretions, primarily saliva (shared food and water bowls, mutual grooming, fighting). FeLV is associated with the illness and death of more cats than any other condition. Sadly, this is a disease that is considered incurable.

The feline leukemia status of all cats should be known. A FeLV positive cat brought into a home can insidiously infect all the other cats. A new cat must be isolated until negative FeLV status has been proven. For high risk cats, periodic testing is justifiable. Cats that live outdoors, escape, fight and strays are considered a high risk population. Cats in a multicat household living with cats of unknown FeLV status may also be at risk. It is customary to test any sick cat to rule out this disease regardless of environment.

According to the American Association of Feline Practitioners most recent guidelines, FeLV testing is important in the following situations:

- if your cat has never been tested before
- if your cat is sick, regardless of past test result
- with any newly acquired cat
- if your cat has been exposed to cats that may be FeLV positive

FeLV interferes with the cat's immune system. This is similar to HIV in humans. Also like HIV in people, infections may be subclinical, meaning signs of illness may not manifest for months or even years after contracting the virus. Early signs of FeLV infection may be subtle. They include decreased appetite, grooming and energy. Advanced disease may manifest as weight loss, weakness, pale gums, mouth sores, diarrhea and enlarged lymph nodes. Humans cannot be infected with feline leukemia virus.

This disease is very simple to diagnose. It requires only three drops of blood from cats or kittens and can be performed in our office in 10 minutes. The saliva or tear tests are not recommended for screening of individual cats due to inaccuracies.

There is a vaccination against this disease, but since no vaccine is 100%, avoidance of exposure to FeLV positive cats is the best way to prevent disease. Because of potential side effects of the vaccine, including a cancerous tumor called a fibrosarcoma, this vaccine is only recommended for at risk cats. We do not routinely vaccinate indoor cats from FeLV negative households for leukemia. Cats in at-risk populations should definitely be vaccinated.



Willy, spokescat

**For more information, visit
Cornell's FeLV website at
www.vet.cornell.edu/public/FHC/felv.html**

The "Snoot Report" is dedicated to the pets who have touched the lives of all who knew them.

In loving memory of

**Sam Adams
Idibit Arbushites
Rascal Arbushites
Alex Bleacher
Daisy Blum
Abby Bowen
Pepper Bowman
Sam Boyer
Rosie Brown
King Carroll
Buddy Carey
Moose Clark
Isabelle Clifford
Bear Conrad
Hank Daubert
Blizzard Dillon**

**Daisy Doran
Midnight Dzedziak
Rocco Eroh
Moe Frantz
Precious Hair
Olivia Hay
Ms. Blu Hesser
Xara Hontz
Snickers Hill
Kelsey Jacoby
Snuggles Jenkins
Ashley Johnson
Kobe Kassab
Cleo Keenan
Kittzee Keenan
Midnight Kunstek**

**Gerrie Lehman
Rockey Manley
Amos Margevich
Tom Mease
Tootsie Boy Miller
Gunny Murphy
Jeff Neumeister
Diesel Newswanger
Senjii Noll
Zen Onuschak
Bruno Palladino
Amber Phillips
Darla Quandel
Sambuca Richards
Timmy Rozansky
Scotty Russell**

**Kato Scannell
Sheba Smith
Terry Smith
Molly Sonnenberg
Rambo Sowers
Rascal Wilkes
Emily Witherow
Teddy Wolff
Oliver Worthy
BB Bear Yeich
Bear Zelinski
Kitty Zimmerman**



Ask Snoot

Q: *Dear Snoot, I am bored with my toys and am becoming a delinquent. Do you have any recommendations?*

A: Kongs are the dog toy most recommended by veterinarians, trainers and spokesdogs worldwide. Their unusual shape and design makes for an unpredictably challenging game of catch and their hollow center can be strategically stuffed for hours of fun.



Examples of enticing Kong stuffing recipes include peanut butter mixed with dry kibble, cream cheese and veggies, and canned food with cheese bits. Though some of these foods are not recommended dietary staples, they may be used as an occasional treat. Some parents even put their dog's Kongs in the freezer before play for a twist.

Kongs can be helpful for many behavioral problems by providing an outlet for excess energy and lots of fun! Kongs can be especially beneficial while crate training or housebreaking. Before leaving, your parent can fill up the Kong with tasty treats and it can keep you busy for hours while they are away.

Resilient and durable Kongs come in many sizes suitable for all dog breeds. As with all dog toys, initially Kongs should be used only with parental supervision. Vetcetera sells Kongs and provides complimentary recipes guides for "the perfect" dog.



Consultation Produces Better Outcomes

One of my concerns in founding Vetcetera was operating as a solo practitioner. Determined to practice the highest quality medicine, I developed an extensive network of specialists that daily consult on cases. Many of you have heard me say, "I am going to check with a specialist and get back to you." Most of the time the specialist confirms my diagnosis and plan. This allows me to present the most advanced information for your consideration as we strive for the best outcome. I love my job as a "general practitioner," yet I cannot know everything. Here's a list of the many facets of veterinary medicine in which I may consult a specialist as I make recommendations in your pet's care:

Alternative Medicine
Behavior
Cardiology
Clinical Pathology
Dentistry
Dermatology
Endocrinology

Gastroenterology
Immunology
Internal Medicine
Neurology
Nutrition
Oncology
Ophthalmology

Parasitology
Pharmacology
Radiology/Imaging
Surgery
Toxicology
Urology

Sources of information include:

The Veterinary Information Network. This online service for veterinary professionals offers access to a network of over 6,000 veterinarians, featuring more than 75 board-certified specialists who consult in 34 areas of veterinary medicine. VIN costs \$500 per year to subscribe and is used daily in our office for consulting on cases or researching topics. I also use this resource to stay current on research and trends.

Antech-VCA. Antech Diagnostics. This is the laboratory that processes the majority of our lab work. Antech employs 75 board-certified consultants covering 15 disciplines of veterinary medicine.

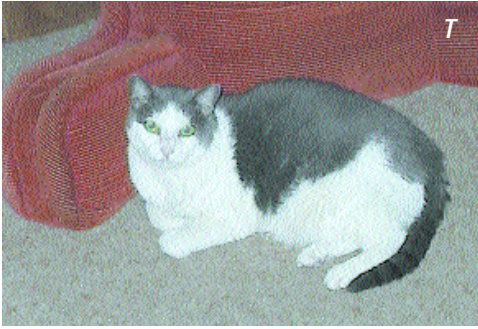
Regional Referral Contacts. Based on the specific patient needs, cases may be referred to specialists in Allentown, Harrisburg, Valley Forge, Frazier, Lititz, New Jersey or the University of Pennsylvania.

Continuing Education. I feel that continuing education is vital to my mission of practicing high quality medicine. Courses completed this year included three advanced dentistry courses, advanced chiropractic technique (Logan Basic), ophthalmology and practice management.

In addition, we constantly seek to upgrade our technology. Recently acquired tools include a \$3,000 Tonopen (the gold standard in glaucoma diagnosis in pets); two ECG units for work up of cardiac cases and anesthetic monitoring; and a \$6,100 high-speed dental drill.



All about T...



My name is T. I think I am very lovable. I like to crawl under the covers as soon as the weather gets a little cooler (like it is now). Some say I am also very ornery since I attribute my longevity to wanting to out live everyone who has ever annoyed me. Since that is a considerable list, I could be here forever.

Seriously though, I am a spayed female, 17 years old domestic shorthair.

I am not as spry as I used to be. Other than cuddling under covers I enjoy going up on a window sill using a step system (I am not much of a leaper anymore). I enjoy checking out the activity, basking in the sun, and chasing my "buddy" Peyote (a domestic shorthair that is almost half my age) whom I do not really like.

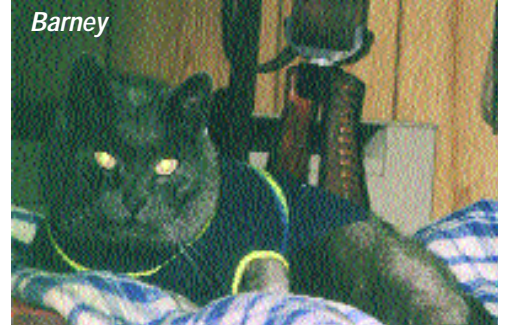
Allie

My name is Allie Kubilus and I am 18 years old. My secret to longevity is that I have really great genes. My daddy has always maintained my health by providing regular check-ups.



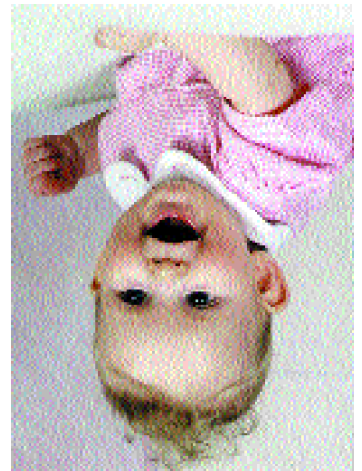
Barney

My name is Barney Fessler and I am 16 years old. My secret to living this long is my mom. She takes excellent care of me and provides lots of love. I am the barn mascot at my farm and wear my sweater to keep warm.



*The "Snoot Report" is published for friends and clients of
Vetetera Pet Healthcare Centre.
We welcome your comments. Call us at 570-345-3250.*

*Abigail Grace Snyder will
celebrate her first birthday on
November 9, 2002. She visits the
clinic nearly every day and
looks forward to greeting you!*



DEVOTED TO
PETS AND
THEIR PEOPLE

35 Browns Road
Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972

Pet Healthcare Centre

