



Welcome to the New Year!

We hope you had a wonderful holiday season and are ready to focus on making 2011 a great year!

This month our focus is about what you can do to protect the health of your pet in 2011 and beyond. We insure our cars, homes and ourselves, but what about our beloved pets? Insuring your pet is great peace-of-mind.

We've also including an article on what may not just be "coughing up a hairball" as it relates to your cat's health.

If you've been putting off your well visit, addressing any concerns or just need to pick up your preventive medication, please give us a call and start your pet's health off right this year.

And as always thank you for allowing us to share in the care of your pet. Best Wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year!

The Greenfield Animal Hospital Team



Researching Pet Insurance - Is it for You?

As a member of your family - your pet's quality of life is important to you. The American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and Greenfield Animal Hospital recommend you take a look at pet insurance coverage. A pet insurance plan offers a financial solution to your



veterinary bills so you can focus on providing your pet optimal care which may include preventive care, emergency services or financial coverage in times of more serious illness.

For those considering pet health insurance, the AAHA offers the

248-356-1100

[Click here to visit our website](#)



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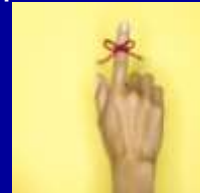
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Important Reminder!



Please remember to give your pet their monthly heartworm and parasite preventive, and flea control this month. Keep this e-mail in your Inbox as a reminder until you have administered the medication for this month.



following suggestions:

- Be sure you understand what the policy covers. Some policies (but not all) cover some preventative care, such as vaccinations, but there may be additional cost for this coverage.
- Understand the exclusions. Almost all policies exclude pre-existing conditions and some exclude hereditary conditions. Some may exclude certain conditions unique to certain breeds.
- Almost all policies have a deductible and a co-pay requirement. Some pay according to a set schedule of "usual and customary fees" while some pay based on the actual incurred expense. Be sure you understand how expenses will be reimbursed.
- Ask whether or not the policy allows you to seek care from a veterinarian of your own choosing or whether you must go to a veterinarian that participates in the company's network of providers. When faced with a pet's serious illness, most pet owners want to be able to obtain care from their regular veterinarian.
- Speak with your veterinarian or the office staff. While veterinarians do not sell insurance, chances are they have had experience with the policy you are considering and can provide helpful advice.

Visit [VPI Pet Insurance](#) to learn more about their various plan and coverage offerings.

Why is My Cat Coughing?



Claremont, Calif. resident Harrison Stephens and his family have owned plenty of cats over the years - he's 95 years old. Fortunately, by keeping the family cats vaccinated and regularly visiting the

veterinarian, his cats never had any serious bouts of coughing that caused the family alarm. The main coughing their cats experienced proceeded "coughing up" a hairball.

Stephens speaks from experience; however, for many cat owners, particularly new ones, a cat who is coughing can be disconcerting or distressing. Cat owners shouldn't dismiss coughing as a harmless hairball because it can actually be symptom of more serious health issues that, left unchecked, can lead to permanent lung damage.

"A cough and a hairball are not synonymous," says Janice Dye, DVM, MS, PhD, Diplomate, ACVIM (small animal internal medicine) and researcher at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Research Triangle Park, N.C.

While a hairball tends to be a symptom of a gastrointestinal issue (in combination with too much ingested hair), coughing in cats is actually a protective reflex for the respiratory system, much like our own.

"Respiratory disease in cats is fairly common, and coughing - with or without sneezing - is probably the most common sign associated with respiratory disease," Dye says. "If something gets into our airways - our windpipe is our largest airway - and it shouldn't be there, the cough reflex causes the patient to take a deep breath, and then rapidly force that air out of our airways, to dispel mucus or inhalation material."

A cough can be caused by very different things. The most obvious cause is when a cat inadvertently inhales food or liquid while eating (possibly after gobbling down food from the garbage or when an owner tries to force his or her cat to swallow medicine and it goes down the wrong pipe). People who sew should be particularly careful not to leave thread lying around. Cats like to chew on strings, and if there is a needle attached, it can poke through the esophagus and into the lungs, causing serious damage.

A coughing cat with sneezing, often with mucus, is likely experiencing a viral respiratory infection, and if its nose is so blocked that it is doing open-mouth breathing, the infection may be very severe.

"In general, open-mouth breathing fits with a severe bronchial constriction - you should never ignore a cat that can only open-mouth breathe," Dye advises.

Other possible causes of coughing in cats include so-called "feline asthma" as well as bronchitis, heartworm, lung infections, tumors and even a collar that is too tight (a general rule of thumb is that a regular-sized finger should fit between the cat's neck and collar).

When in doubt, head to the veterinarian.

"In this day and age of cell phones, we just tell people to videotape (the coughing or hairball retching episode) and bring it in when you bring in your kitty," Dye suggests. "A good exam by a veterinarian on a regular basis can help look for subtle disease before changes get so bad that your cat is frequently having bad bouts of coughing."

Other preventive measures include keeping cats' vaccinations current, not mingling them with unvaccinated cats (e.g., strays, at a boarding facility), and avoiding indoor irritants such as cigarette smoke, extremely dusty kitty litter and chemical cleaning products.

"If you're using any cleaning product that would give you a headache or make you sneeze or start to cough, by all means, take a break from that,

but don't leave your pets in that environment either," Dye says.

Certain cats should be more closely monitored if they begin coughing, such as Siamese cats, who are "over-represented" with bronchial disease; older cats, who may have more serious issues like a tumor; and indoor/outdoor cats, who may have had a foreign body or bite that has traumatized the thorax.

When transporting a coughing cat to the veterinarian, it is important to keep them comfortable. If it is a hot day, "don't go from your nice cool home and put them in a really hot car," Dye advises. "Take the time to cool off your car, and then bring the kitty to it. Don't leave them in the parking lot while you run into the store to grab a few things on your way."

Ultimately, aside from the occasional cough, cat owners should take their coughing cats to the veterinarian to determine the root cause of the coughing so that it can be diagnosed and treated.

"Don't be paranoid, but don't completely ignore it, either," Dye says. "If we look, we can sometimes find something that we can treat such as a parasite or infection, and if we can get rid of it before it causes a lot of secondary changes in the lung, that cat can then go back to being completely normal."

Source: AAHANET.ORG, Pets Matter



**From your friends at
Greenfield Animal Hospital**

**Start the New
Year off right!**

There is no better compliment

Greenfield Animal Hospital

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you can give us than referring a friend or family member to Greenfield Animal Hospital. Forward or print this coupon (which is also available on our website). When the new client presents the coupon at their first visit to Greenfield Animal Hospital, both you and the new client will receive a \$25 credit toward the care of your pets.

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