

PET TALK TUESDAYS – 4/8/2020

Nick on Sunny 97.7:

Dr. Marty Greer from Veterinary Village in Lomira. And doctor, we know you've got a lot on your plate today, so thanks for taking the time to join us. Of course it's a tough time for everybody. The world has gone totally upside down in the last month. And how does this affect our furry friends?

Dr. Marty Greer:

Well, at this time veterinarians are still considered essential services, so we're allowed to be open, but only for time-sensitive urgent care, emergencies, injured pets, sick pets, those types of conditions. So we're not allowed to see routine care patients right now. We can do rabies vaccinations, because, according to the state of Wisconsin, that is an essential service. And we don't want our pets to lapse on rabies. If they're coming in for rabies, then we're going to be able to take care of other things. But the only other things we can do will be urgent care. No spays and neuters. No routine vaccinations unless they're puppies or kittens. And, again, that's time sensitive because we don't want the little puppies and kittens to pick up anything because they weren't vaccinated when they were young.

Nick on Sunny 97.7:

It's a different deal, isn't it? I'm out on the bike trail all the time and I noticed that people are getting outside with their pets and that's a good thing. Obviously, it's a necessity but, also I think for many people, hanging with the pets is kind of a mental balm at this time. Wouldn't you agree?

Dr. Marty Greer:

Oh yeah. And if you go on Facebook, you'll see a thousand posts about people making funny videos with their dogs and making up all these things about how great it is for the pets to have everybody at home. We've had multiple phone calls from people. In fact, Dr. Ahmann was talking to me about this yesterday. That yesterday alone she had three phone calls from people who were concerned that their dogs were having extra stools. Now, they weren't having any problems. They were just going more. And she's like, "Yeah, but you're out walking them all the time. And you're staring at them all day. And this is probably the same thing they would be doing if you weren't the home, but you're there staring at them." So we're seeing things that I think people ordinarily would have not observed in their pets. My son talked to me last night about his cat and how she's picking up a front foot and shaking it. I'm like, "She probably does this all the time, but when you're at work you haven't seen her do it. So you were unaware of that she has some kind of tingling in her paw." It's been really interesting to see the change in people's relationships with their pets.

Nick on Sunny 97.7:

One of the things that I always say... And I was lucky enough when I was a kid that we were out on the farm and, as you say, often we were there all day and we got to hang with the animals all day. And so their behavior didn't seem... I mean, they were just with us all the time. So we saw them all the time and kind of knew what they were all about. And I always hear people say, when they come home from work, "Oh, he's always so glad to see me." He's so glad to see you? Eight hours to a dog. He had an APB out on you. You just didn't know it.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Exactly. And now they're staring at you like, "Uh, excuse me, but this is my usual nap time. Do you mind? I need you to just go somewhere else. Stop playing ball with me. Stop taking me on walks. Leave me alone."

Nick on Sunny 97.7:

Right, right. Well, it was funny because we watch The Weather Channel quite a bit at our house. And Kelly Cass was saying they have her set up to work from home now. And they brought in the camera, it's permanently pointed at one direction for her. And somebody asked her what the biggest adjustment was and she said, "The dog looks at me like there's clearly something wrong."

Dr. Marty Greer:

Because you're talking to a box.

Nick on Sunny 97.7:

Right. Well, the dog knows that normally at this time of day she gets up and drives to The Weather Channel. And she's not leaving. She's there. So the dog's looking at her like, "What is your deal?"

Dr. Marty Greer:

Right? So, getting down to something more serious. We probably really should talk about this. The Center for Disease Control is encouraging people, if they are ill, not to spend too much time hanging out with their pet. I have a little trouble understanding that because when you're sick, no one else wants to be in the room with you except for your dog or your cat. So it seems to me that's the ideal time for your pet to be hanging out with you. The concern is whether pets can transmit coronavirus to another human if you're sick with it. Now remember, only about 6% of the people in Wisconsin that have been tested for coronavirus have shown up positive. The other 94% have had some other disease process that isn't corona, or at least that the test isn't picking up as corona.

So we don't believe at this point that dogs and cats can transmit it. There was a case yesterday at the Bronx Zoo that a group of tigers were reported to have it, but I just want to know who was less than six feet away from a tiger that could potentially have transmitted corona to them. It's no longer an era that zookeepers go into the enclosures with their animals. They are kept on other sides of fencing. So I'm not quite sure who was nose to nose with a tiger that could have potentially spread it. But 80 to 90% of cats in general show antibodies, showed evidence that they've had a coronavirus. And we've known about these coronaviruses in cats since the 1950s. If in that amount of time we had seen frequent transmission, in the last 70 years, we would have noticed that. So I'm going to propose that that's probably not anything I would get too excited about.

However, if you do live alone and you have pets, you want to make sure you have provisions made for them if you do become ill enough that you can't care for them or that you end up in the hospital. So please make sure that you have a friend, a relative, someone that is aware of your pets' needs, the medications they're on, how to feed them, the kind of care that they're going to need if you do end up needing to go to the hospital. Please do not abandon your pets because you think that they're going to end up sick from coronavirus. Keep them in your home. And, in fact, we are seeing pet adoptions, both through shelters and through our breeders, skyrocketing right now because people are home. They're home with the kids. They're going to be home until September. They're getting tired of just staying at home and looking at the same four walls and the same other people. So they're really out there looking for pets, whether they're foster care or truly longterm relationships that they're looking for for a dog or cat. So this is a good time to think about putting a new pet in your household, if your finances will allow for that.

Nick on Sunny 97.7:

Right. And we have seen a spike in that nationwide. And in many ways that's a good thing. Maybe not adopting permanently, but there are more people fostering, as you said, as well. And some people... We all know of some... But sometimes you start to foster a pet and you fall in love with the pet and before you know it, you're keeping the pet. And that's great. There's nothing wrong with that.

Dr. Marty Greer:

No, not at all. It's a good way to take a pet for a test drive is to foster it. If it works into your family and your lifestyle, well it's great, keep it. And if it doesn't, then you are on a nice stopping place along their life for them to find a new home that's going to be a better mix, a better fit for them.

Nick on Sunny 97.7:

A friend of mine makes it a point to always adopt the older pets that people don't seem to gravitate toward. He makes it a point to do that. And he says, "Don't get me wrong. Every few years it's kind of heartbreaking, but in another we want these animals to have a great environment." So that's kind of a cool thing.

Dr. Marty Greer:

And it's really lovely when people are willing to do that with the older pets. They come housebroken. They don't chew on your shoes. They don't run off. They're pretty nice pets by the time they've had some training and they come to you already with some experience.

Nick on Sunny 97.7:

Dr., you started the segment today by kind of mentioning what you guys are up against at this point. What are you seeing in the relationship between people and their animals at this point, that you see coming into the shop?

Dr. Marty Greer:

Yeah. There's no question that they are bonding even tighter than they usually have. So it is a really great opportunity for people to spend time with their pets, especially if they're older or they're not doing well. You can spend time at home with them, observe them, make sure that they're getting the care that they need, whether it's veterinary care or just home care.

And I do want to mention that at our practice we have two garage stalls. So rather than curbside service, we are still letting clients come into the building if they are healthy. We are letting one person per pet come into the building. No one hangs out in the lobby. No extra kids running around in the exam room. So we're trying to limit the exposure of staff to clients and clients to staff. But we do have a garage. So if people are uncomfortable and coming into the facility, they're perfectly capable of pulling into the garage, handing off their pet to one of our caretakers. We'll take them inside, do our examination, do all of our care that we need to do, whether it's a bite wound.

We're actually seeing a lot of bite wounds right now because people are out with their pets at parks and in the neighborhoods where sometimes pets are not familiar with each other. So we've seen an increased number of bites. We're seeing a few other things that are significant as well. We had a couple of cases of marijuana exposure in a week's time. I think the kids all came from college and just threw their stuff in their room and didn't really think about what they had brought with them. So we had two cases in a week of dogs that had an ingested marijuana or hemp-containing products unbeknownst to the owners and came in with symptoms of intoxication.

So we're seeing a spike of certain cases and then of course the decline in other cases. So, no routine vaccinations, no routine spays and neuters. But we did three dentals yesterday because we had pets that had loose teeth and they were painful and not eating and not feeling well. So those kinds of care, we are still able to provide as veterinarians. According to state mandate, we are essential services.

Nick on Sunny 97.7:

Okay, excellent. Doc, it's always a pleasure. We always learn something. I know that you're busy... you have other fish to fry today. So give us the contact information.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Sure. We're at Highway 41 and 49, catty-corner across from Quad/Graphics, just South of Fond du lac, the Brownsville exit. Our phone number is (920) 269-4000. Our website is smallanimalclinic.com. We are open seven days a week. We have shortened our evening hours a bit so that we can have staff working longer, but fewer shifts during the week to reduce exposure, setting up things so that we can have multiple doctors, multiple teams so that we can continue to provide care. So we are there seven days a week. Sunday afternoons, and then all day Monday through Saturday. If anybody needs anything, please feel free to give us a call or send us an email at vv@k9stork.com and we'll be happy to answer your questions.

Nick on Sunny 97.7:

Okay. Dr Marty Greer, Veterinary Village in Lomira. Doc, thanks so much. Stay healthy.

Dr. Marty Greer:

Thank you.

Nick on Sunny 97.7:

We'll talk to you soon.