

RIDGEWOOD VETERINARY HOSPITAL

Dear Friends,

I am writing this letter to ensure that you are aware of an emerging health risk from a disease called Leptospirosis that started to become a serious problem in our area several years ago. The incidence of this disease has been steadily rising and this letter is prompted by *the diagnosis of three cases of this deadly disease at the Ridgewood Veterinary Hospital within the last three weeks*. We are concerned that some people may not have received our previous mailings regarding this disease or for other reasons are uninformed or have chosen not to vaccinate their dogs. This letter was generated to owners of dogs who do not have a current Leptospirosis vaccine recorded in our computer data base. If you feel that this data is incorrect for any reason please call our office to have the information updated. If you have already decided not to vaccinate for medical reasons supported by a veterinarian you may choose not to proceed with vaccination, but we still suggest that you share this information with family and friends.

Leptospirosis is a bacterium that is spread in the urine of wild mammals such as raccoons, skunks, rats, mice, moles, opossums, etc. I just returned from a seminar on Leptospirosis wherein the speaker indicated that in the northeast 33% of raccoons and 15% of skunks show exposure to Leptospirosis types that infect dogs. These animals may urinate in your area at night and when dogs smell an unusual odor, they often lick the area, allowing the bacteria to enter their systems. Bacteria can also infect through unbroken skin. Most cases occur in the late Summer or Fall in the Northeast. Lethargy, loss of appetite, depression, and vomiting are the most common signs. Some dogs develop life threatening disease in a very short time and require hospitalization and very aggressive therapy. Not all dogs survive. Cats can also be infected, but such cases are relatively rare and there is no vaccine for cats as there is for dogs. The infection also infects people.

The best protection against this dreadful disease is vaccination. Fortunately, a vaccine is available for dogs and, while not a guarantee against infection, the vaccine is effective. The initial immunization requires two vaccinations given several weeks apart and is followed by a booster that is given every 6-12 months depending on your dog's life style and exposure. If you would care to provide one of our client care representatives with your email address we can make sure that you obtain future health alerts as quickly as possible. Please call our office today to schedule an appointment with a doctor to discuss your dog's needs and to begin the vaccination process.

Yours truly,
Dean J. Cerf, D.V.M.

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