



Dear canine clients and friends,

Lyme disease is rapidly emerging as a major threat to dogs in our area. We would like to share our concerns and recommendations to help keep your dog as safe as possible as Lyme disease continues to spread through Central New York.

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection spread by deer ticks. It often goes unnoticed, but can lead to symptoms including lameness, joint pain, fever, lethargy and loss of appetite. In severe cases, it can cause inflammation of the kidneys which can be fatal. More than 14,000 cases have been diagnosed in New York in the last seven years, with the majority occurring in the last three years. (See www.dogsandticks.com for more information.) In our own practice, the number of Lyme disease positive dogs we identify through testing continues to rise: 36 in 2007, 54 in 2008, and 78 already in 2009. Annual sampling of ticks at Green Lakes State Park by state biologists in 2008 revealed an astounding 63.5% were harboring the Lyme disease organism. These trends are expected to continue in the coming years.

In response to this threat, the veterinarians at Fairmount Animal Hospital are recommending that any of our canine patients at risk for exposure to ticks be vaccinated against Lyme disease. We have chosen a safe, effective vaccine which must be given initially, boosted three weeks later, and then given annually. We believe that vaccination, in combination with effective topical tick control products like K-9 Advantix, will provide your dog with the best possible protection.

If your dog goes outdoors, please call our office to start the Lyme disease vaccination series. Your initial visit will be with one of our doctors who will discuss the risks and benefits of the vaccination and answer any questions you may have. The three-week booster will be administered by one of our Licensed Veterinary Technicians in a quick and easy visit.

If your dog has not been tested for Lyme disease within the last year, we encourage you to have your dog tested prior to vaccination. While the Lyme disease vaccine is considered safe for use in Lyme disease positive dogs, there are recommended precautions your doctor will discuss with you prior to administering the vaccine if your dog tests positive. The Lyme disease test can be run while you wait, (it takes about 10 minutes), eliminating the need for an additional visit.

At Fairmount Animal Hospital, our focus has always been on continuing education so that we may provide the most current diagnostic, therapeutic and preventive options to our clients. Periodically, as medical advancements are made, recommendations change and new vaccines become available. It has been shown that the likelihood of adverse events associated with vaccination increases with the number of vaccines given simultaneously. As our goal is to keep your pet safe and healthy, when you come in your doctor will do a risk assessment based on lifestyle and environment, decide which vaccines are appropriate for your pet, and customize a safe vaccination schedule.

The Doctors and staff of
Fairmount Animal Hospital