

Fleas and ticks can be dangerous

Vet tips
Dr. Sara White



Most of us are alarmed when we find a flea or tick, and we should be! Ticks are more than just a nuisance; they can be dangerous to both you and your pet! Some ticks can carry dangerous diseases such as Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and Ehrlichiosis.

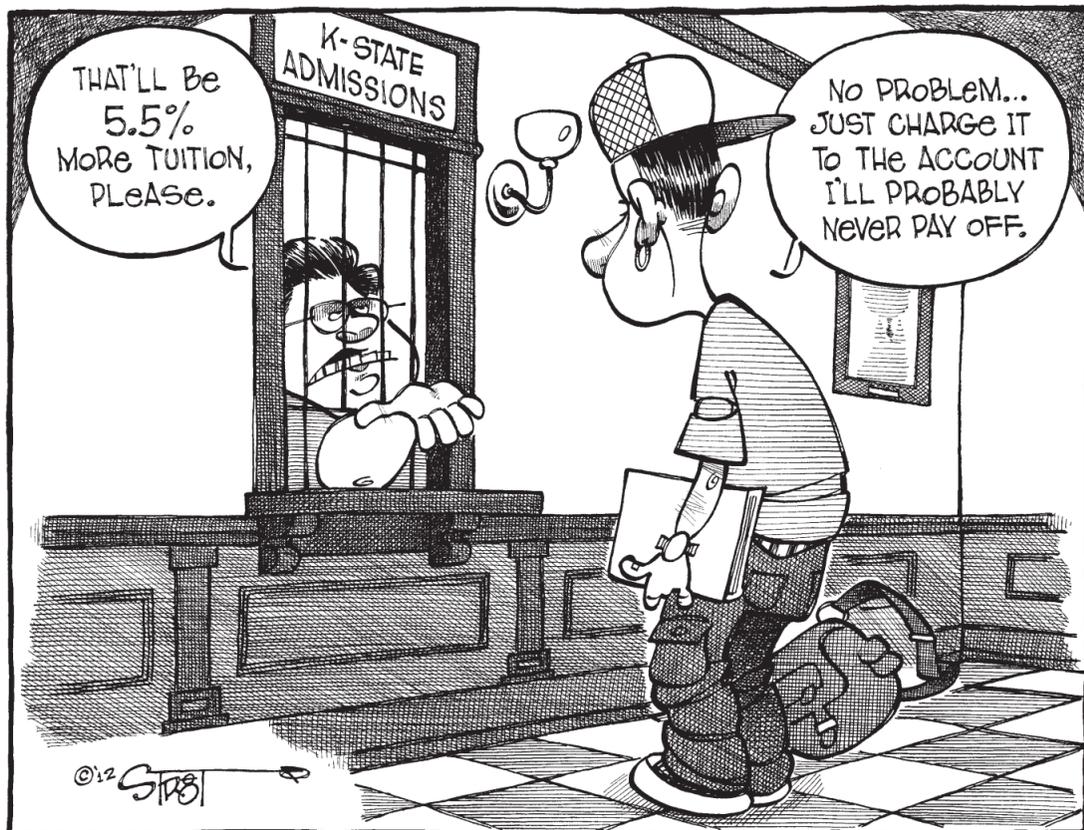
Lyme disease causes lameness, fever, loss of appetite, fatigue, and enlarged lymph nodes in both infected dogs and people. Ehrlichiosis causes fever, depression, lameness and loss of appetite. Rocky Mountain spotted fever causes fever, loss of appetite, coughing, bruising, lameness, depression, vomiting and diarrhea in infected dogs and people. Ticks can transmit diseases that threaten your pet's life and family members' lives.

Ticks are some of the most efficient carriers of disease in all of nature. Since ticks can only crawl and climb, they are considered ambush predators. Ticks, like fleas, are always in search of a blood meal. A tick will climb up to the top of a plant where it waits patiently for an unsuspecting passerby. When a warm-blooded mammal, like a person or a pet comes near, its body heat and movement, as well as the carbon dioxide exhaled in its breath, signal the tick of its approach. The tick responds by waving its front-most pair of legs in the air, letting go of the plant and climbing onto its new host. A tick can crawl around on its new host for hours looking for a suitable attachment site. When it does, it burrows into the host's skin with its mouthparts. Ticks have spiny mouthparts that secure itself in place. Ticks can also produce their own "cement" to glue itself firmly to the skin. A tick will feed slowly, sometimes for days, while engorging on blood. When the tick is several times its original size (it can grow up to 100 times their original weight), it drops off.

In order for an adult female to reproduce, it must have a blood meal. After dropping off, the female lays up to tens of thousands of eggs before dying. Ticks are not insects, but actually arachnids, like spiders, mites and scorpions. It takes approximately two weeks for eggs to hatch. Ticks develop through three distinct life stages after hatching from the egg: the larva, the nymph, and the adult. Each stage only takes one blood meal.

There are steps you can take to protect your family from fleas. Keep your lawns mowed and yards free of weeds and undergrowth. Leash walk your dog and be sure to stay in the center of paths and trails. Examine your pets frequently for ticks and always look for ticks after your pet has been outdoors. When checking your pet for ticks, separate hair coat and inspect the skin especially the neck, throat, legs and underbelly. It is important to remove all ticks immediately whether attached or unattached. Follow these instructions: Always remove an attached tick very carefully without touching it. Use tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the surface of the skin as possible, and pull it straight out. Do not yank, twist or squeeze the tick. If tweezers are unavailable, use a cloth or paper as a barrier between you fingers and the tick. Dispose of an unattached tick with tape, by placing it in alcohol or soapy water, or by flushing it down the toilet. If you are worried about the tick and your pet, store the tick folded in tape and in a ziploc baggie in the freezer. If you or your pet becomes sick, this allows the tick to be tested if need be. Gently clean the wound site. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water. Do not try to burn an attached tick with matches or suffocate it with petroleum jelly or nail polish. These methods are ineffective and may be harmful to the host.

The best way to prevent ticks on your pet is to use a flea and tick control product. You can help reduce the risk of serious tick-borne infections by treating your pet monthly year-around with a product that kills all the life stages of common ticks, Frontline Plus. Please call us at 877.2411 with any questions! To be continued...the last installment of fleas and ticks.



Churches are in need of revamping

One thing I strongly believe, if my children accepted everything I said without question, I would have failed as a parent. My job as a parent was to raise children to wonder, to search, and to determine their path. If they don't question, they don't grow. A recent survey conducted by the Pew Research Center said one in three adults under the age of 30 doubts the existence of God. I don't know that I see this as an alarming trend. If they still feel the same at 60, that might be more revealing. Of those 65 and older, only nine percent said they didn't believe in God. Of course the number is lower; we are closer to death. At 65+, we don't want to take any chances.

But going back to the younger generation, 25% of Millennials, (those from almost adolescence to almost 30), described themselves as "religiously unaffiliated."

Phase II
Mary Kay
Woodyard



To that I would say, "Good for you." Now that I have your attention, let me put it this way. Too many times religions i.e. churches do not promote a walk with God. Too many churches run as businesses. The emphasis is on control, not on spiritual growth. Control is enforced through fear tactics, inflicting guilt and ostracizing. Unfortunately, no church/religion is exempt.

So, when young people say, "Mmmm, let me think about this." I say, "Go for it."

Does this mean I think there shouldn't be churches? No, but I do believe the need to revamp them is long overdue, bottom up, top down, inside out. Years ago, we were fortunate to have experienced the ultimate in 'church family'. Raising our children or handling a chronic illness without that support group would have made life much more difficult. But churches have changed. They have become political entities rather than spiritual communities.

So how do we change this? We remember to keep the separation of church and state. We remember those two commandments deemed all we needed to know: Love God with all your heart and soul and love your neighbor as yourself. Big goals? Perhaps. But maybe the key to keeping the faith. mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

Does the president's religion really matter?

A friend just returned from a trip to the Greenbrier Resort in West Virginia. As early as 1778 people began traveling there to "take the waters".

In the 1830's it attained prominence as a vacation destination, serving as the summer White House for 5 pre Civil War presidents. Tyler and Buchanan were two (I think). Millard Fillmore, Franklin Pierce, maybe? Who are these guys!!!

Another friend sent an e-mail condemning the manner in which Muslims allegedly treat women. It was all true on some level and in some circumstances. The e-mail also included the inevitable questions about President Obama. Is he Christian or Muslim?

I've read a couple of very unflattering books describing the treatment of Muslim women. I've also read "Under the Banner of Heaven"; a true modern story of the murder of a Mormon woman and her child. After that I'm pretty put off by Mormons.

If you ask your Pastor if Mormons are Christians or members of a cult, I'm willing to bet he/she will say a cult.

We may dislike President Obama for any number of reasons. Disliking him for his perceived religion however, strikes me as not only un-Christian but hypocritical. Especially if we are go-

This Too
Shall Pass
Nancy
Hagman



ing to give Mitt Romney, a Mormon, a pass.

Just to be clear, I like Romney. I happen to think he is the best the Republicans had to offer this election cycle. I'm not proud to say this but I also have a problem with his faith.

In 1960 many tried to use John Kennedy's Catholic faith against him. I was a little young to remember all that, but I've read some history. I also grew up with Catholics.

I used to have some tremendous arguments with a good Catholic friend about the merits of our faiths but I have never held any prejudice against Catholics. Sometime in high school when Ireland was very troubled I remember a Catholic classmate turning to me in amazement and saying, "So if we were in Ireland we would hate each other, even try to kill each other?"

It was beyond our comprehension. It still is. (If I had grown up around Mor-

mons would I be more tolerant?)

A lot of our presidents are less than memorable. Kennedy is remembered because of his assassination, more than for anything he did during his brief tenure in office. He will always be "the first Catholic President", just as Obama will be the first black president. Did Kennedy's religion really matter? Does Obama's? Does Romney's?

Because of the abundance of media today we obsess. Millard Fillmore might capture our interest if we could view the church services he attended on U-tube.

We can't. History judges instead. Is Islam a threat to America? I think it is a challenge. At the same time I have tremendous faith: in America, a country founded on religious freedom.

Even with intense media scrutiny we seemingly cannot prove the most basic things to the satisfaction of some. Was Obama born in the United States? Is he a Christian?

Step back from the ledge. Vote. Let history judge.

Maybe all need to go to Greenbrier, take the waters! I hear it's beautiful this time of year. Plus it's got the approval of five former (undoubtedly Christian) presidents. Whoever they were.

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Thanks to Marvin Matchett for taking the initiative to help our neighbor, Oberlin, through donations of hydrating drinks for the firefighters. Great work!
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