



ANDOVER  
ANIMAL HOSPITAL

# Around the Barn



## Andover Animal Hospital

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[www.andoveranimalhospital.com](http://www.andoveranimalhospital.com)

### Hours

Monday: 8:00am - 8:00pm  
Tuesday: 8:00am - 8:00pm  
Wednesday: 8:00am - 6:00pm  
Thursday: 8:00am - 8:00pm  
Friday: 8:00am - 6:00pm  
Saturday: 8:00am - 1:00pm  
Sunday: Closed

Harvey E. Hummel, VMD  
Shelley L. Parker, DVM  
Wendy Turner, DVM



## Ticks: An Autumn Threat

The cool, crisp air of autumn has arrived, and with it, the unwelcome arrival of a seasonal pest here in the Northeast: the adult stage of the black-legged tick.

Ticks go through three life phases, as larvae, nymph, and adult. Black-legged ticks larvae are truly tiny. Nymph ticks are also very small (about the size of a pin-head) and are active during spring and summer. Adult ticks are the largest, and they become active in the fall and will remain active throughout the winter as long as the temperatures are above freezing and the ground is not frozen or snow-covered.

Different tick species are known to carry different pathogens. There are several tick species that are found in New Jersey. The black-legged tick (also known as the deer tick), can carry Lyme disease and anaplasmosis. The American dog tick can carry Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Tularemia. The Lone Star Tick can carry ehrlichiosis and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. American dog ticks and Lone Star Ticks are typically not as active in the fall as black-legged ticks, but you might still find them.

According to the Companion Animal Parasite Council, New Jersey is a high risk state for tick-borne diseases. One out of ten dogs test positive for Lyme disease, one in 14 tests positive for anaplasmosis, and one in every 31 dogs test positive for ehrlichiosis.

Ticks can carry and transmit a wide variety of pathogens in addition to the diseases mentioned above, including bacteria, viruses and toxins. In fact, a

single tick bite can transmit multiple pathogens, which sometimes leads to confusing symptoms of illness in pets. Signs of tickborne disease may not appear in dogs until months after the infection occurred, and some dogs never develop any symptoms of disease, although they may harbor subclinical infections. Typical signs include:

- fever
- lethargy
- lameness (which may be mild or intermittent at first, and may appear in different legs at different times)
- swollen joints and lymph nodes
- decreased appetite

Over time, dogs with chronic infections may develop kidney disease. Cardiac or neurological complications are rare in dogs.

Dogs typically respond well to treatment with specific antibiotics. In cases where kidney disease is present, longer treatment will be required.

There is a vaccination available for Lyme disease. Because ticks can carry multiple pathogens, tick control is an important component of disease prevention. You can reduce exposure to ticks by keeping your yard free of leaf waste and debris.

Check your pets regularly for ticks, especially after walks through deep grass or wooded areas. If you find one, remove it immediately. The longer a tick is attached to your pet, the greater the chance of spreading disease. Use tweezers and grasp as close to the skin as possible. A piece of skin might be removed with the tick, and the wound will sometimes bleed. Wash the area with soap and water. NEVER try to use a liquid or ointment to make a tick release its hold; they are ineffective and can harm your pet.

For more information about ticks, visit [www.tickcounter.org](http://www.tickcounter.org).



## Open House

On September 16th, Andover Animal Hospital hosted an exciting open house. Visitors got to see images from the renovation process, and, of course, had a tour of our state-of-the-art facility. There were games, door prizes, refreshments, activities for the kids and lots of giveaways.

Dr. Turner met everyone in our cat-only exam room for some cat trivia, with prizes of course. Another of the

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## Pampered Pups

Pampered puppies don't grow to be good guides, according to a recent study that analyzed mother-puppy interactions in a group of would-be guide dogs.

The job of a guide dog is complex. A dog must have an even temperament and navigate through an unpredictable world, all while avoiding distractions. It requires intelligence, perseverance, and self-confidence.



About 30% of the puppies in a New Jersey breeding and training program for guide dogs end up being unsuccessful. Researchers from the University of Pennsylvania followed 98 puppies in the program from birth to adulthood, to see if they could determine predictors for success. The results of their study were recently published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

The researchers found that dogs whose mothers were more attentive (licking, grooming, and spending more time in the whelping box) were three times less likely to become guide dogs. Nursing styles made a difference as well. Some mothers laid down to nurse more often, making it easier for pups to nurse. Others often nursed their pups while sitting, which requires more effort for the pups. Pups from that second group were four times more likely to succeed as guide dogs.

Good mothering is important, but this research shows that a level of "tough love," where pups learn at a very young age to face challenges and solve problems, seems to serve them well as they grow.

## The Value of Preventive Care

The statistics are sobering: each year, more than six million dogs and six million cats are diagnosed with cancer, and about 60% of aging dogs will experience heart disease. According to the Banfield State of Pet Health Report, there has been a 79.6% increase in the prevalence of diabetes in dogs over the past decade. These diseases are among "the silent killers," as they can easily go undetected in their early stages because pets often don't show symptoms until the diseases are advanced.

The good news is that in most cases, with early detection and treatment, many of these cases can be well-managed, and sometimes even cured. When caught early, the cost of treatment is often lower as well. Many other diseases, such as heartworm disease, rabies and distemper, are preventable.

The value of preventive care cannot be overstated for humans or pets. A key element of preventive care is a regular wellness examination.

A routine exam starts with asking you about your pet's history, then taking vital statistics (temperature, pulse, respiration, weight), followed by a thorough nose-to-tail examination including ears, eyes, mouth, skin and coat, abdominal palpations, and the limbs. Your veterinarian will be looking for a wide range of signs, including external parasites, such as ear mites or fleas, any inflammation, abnormal lumps or bumps, a normal ability to flex and extend each limb, signs of pain, an abnormal heart beat, and much more.

Lab tests may be recommended, especially if there are any abnormal findings during the physical examination, or if your pet has preexisting conditions, is on certain medications or is a senior pet.

Most pets will test positive for intestinal parasites at some time in their life simply from picking them up in the environment. Some parasites can be transferred to humans, so testing your pets helps keep your family safer as well. External parasites, such as fleas, ticks and ear mites, are an issue as well.

Because dogs and cats age more quickly than humans, an annual exam for them is the equivalent of an exam every few years for humans. For some pets, it is appropriate to have more frequent wellness exams; this is especially true for geriatric pets or those with chronic health problems. Whether you choose six or twelve month intervals, remember that the wellness exam is an important part of your pet's care.



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**"I like everyone and I'm always in a good mood. That can't be normal!"**





# Optimize

## Making the most of your annual veterinary exam

Dogs and cats are incredibly adept at hiding signs of illness, and when symptoms do arise, they can be very subtle at first. Pet owners play a key role in helping veterinarians to assess each pet's health. Here are some tips to make the most of your pet's wellness exam.

Observe your pet, and watch for changes in behavior. Does your dog play less, or hesitate before going up stairs? Does your cat forego her favorite window perch for a new spot, or does she seem to be hiding sometimes?

Note changes in appetite and drinking habits, as these can indicate many conditions, from painful teeth to kidney disease. Changes in the skin and coat may be the first indication you see of an underlying condition such as a thyroid problem. Vision and hearing changes often come with age, but they can be indications of other things as well, so be sure to mention them to your veterinarian. It's best to never pass something off as "normal aging," because it may be an important clue about your pet's health.

Prior to your visit, make a list of any changes you've noted, and any questions you have. In addition, bring a list of all the food your pet eats, including treats and people food, and all the medications and supplements that you feed as well.

If it's your first time at a new veterinary practice, be sure to have your pet's records with you.

Arrive a little early in case there are new forms you need to fill out. Be sure your dog is on a leash and your cat is in a carrier. While your dog may be gregarious and love meeting others, remember that not all dogs feel the same way, and many animals are very stressed when they're at the vet.

More than half of all pets who visit the vet are overweight, but many owners don't want to hear that news. Be proactive, and ask your vet: "How is my pet's weight?" If the answer is that she could lose a pound or two, ask for suggestions to get you on track. There are prescription diets that really help, and other suggestions your veterinarian can give you.

If your pet is diagnosed with a medical condition, ask your veterinarian to explain what options you may have for treatment. For example, if your pet has arthritis, there may be several choices of medications and supplements that can make him more comfortable. Your veterinarian can explain the pros and cons, and help you decide which choice is best for your dog.

In some cases, your veterinarian may recommend additional diagnostics to help reach an accurate diagnosis and determine the appropriate treatment protocol.



**"I have lived with several Zen masters – all of them cats."**

*– Eckhart Tolle*

# Veterinary Diagnostics

State-of-the-art diagnostics help veterinarians provide the best medical care possible for pets. Some tests can be run "in-house," while others may need to be sent to an outside laboratory for processing by specialized equipment. Here's an overview of some common diagnostic tools:

**Blood work** – There are multiple types of tests to run on blood. Some measure the cellular components of blood, such as red and white blood cells, while others measure blood chemistry, such as glucose, protein, and various enzymes that are produced by different internal organs. Abnormal results can indicate things such as infection, leukemia, anemia, muscle injuries, and problems with the heart, pancreas, kidneys and liver.

**Urinalysis** – Urinalysis can detect urinary tract infections, bacteria, crystals and yeast, as well as diabetes, kidney and liver disease.

**Intestinal Parasite Screening** – Detects the presence of parasite eggs (larvae) in pets' feces.

**4DX** – This combination test can detect heartworms and three different tick-borne diseases: Lyme disease, anaplasmosis and ehrlichia.

**X-rays** (radiographs) – help to image bones, gas, soft tissue, fluids and metal. They help identify fractures or joint problems, and to find foreign body obstructions. X-rays also help to discover dental problems, including those that occur below the gum line.

**Ultrasound** – Ultrasound is valuable for imaging soft tissue and internal organs. The fast update rate allows organs like the heart to be viewed as they are functioning. Tumors, abscesses, cysts, bladder or kidney stones, fluid pockets and obstructions can be detected and measured with ultrasound. Ultrasound may also be used to help guide a needle when performing a needle biopsy of tissue.



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exam rooms featured Ashely Pochick, a representative of Merial, running a preventive care quiz game with prizes and candy! Then the tour moved on to spin for more prizes before touring our kennel yard, kennel, cat ward, and modern in-house laboratory. Dr. Parker explained the state-of-the-art features in our treatment room, radiology, and surgery. One of our technicians, Shari, demonstrated ultrasound in our special procedures room. But the party was downstairs! We had Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary and New Jersey Boxer Rescue on site with some canine good citizens to help educate visitors. There were games and refreshments for all.



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243 Newton Sparta Road, Newton, NJ 07860

*25 years of excellence*

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## EXOTIC PETS

Are you happy for hamsters, sweet on sugar gliders, cheerful about chinchillas, or raving about rabbits? We are, too! We'll gladly see your exotic pets, and can provide information on their special husbandry needs as well. We'll also see reptiles, including snakes, turtles and lizards. Due to their special hospitalization needs, we do not see birds.

