

## Pet Talk Tuesdays – 5/5/2020

### Radio Show Host:

Time now, once again, for Pet Talk Tuesday, and joining us in the studio from Veterinary Village in Lomira, it's our friend, Dr. Marty Greer. Dr. Greer, how are you doing?

### Dr. Marty Greer:

I'm doing great. Thank you.

### Radio Show Host:

Good, good. Here we are it's spring. I'm not a pet owner, but I have been in my life certainly, and just my observation from being out on the bike trail and being outside, the animals are thrilled to be outside.

### Dr. Marty Greer:

Oh yeah.

### Radio Show Host:

You can see it.

### Dr. Marty Greer:

Yes, they are very happy. The weather has changed. They're very happy to be out there, and it's good for us too. Get out, get a little fresh air, get some exercise.

### Radio Show Host:

So what are some of the pitfalls? Because we know that they're excited, and as I said, you can see it and God blessed them and they should be excited. But what do we got to watch out for?

### Dr. Marty Greer:

Well, the biggest thing we're seeing right now is the early onset of allergies for the season. So we see allergies anytime after we get our last frost. Well, we've actually got one more frost I think coming this weekend. But as soon as the tree pollen start to come out, the grass pollen start to come out, we start to see allergies in our pets and we'll see those all the way until October or November when we get our next frost. So allergies in pets look a little different than they do in us. In us, we usually have symptoms of hay fever, sneezing, runny eyes, that type of thing. Dogs get itchy feet, itchy ears. They start scratching and biting and chewing because they are itchy and uncomfortable.

### Radio Show Host:

I would guess that a lot of people that aren't familiar with this phenomenon would not even think about allergies in pets.

### Dr. Marty Greer:

Right. They don't think their ear infection is due to allergies, they don't think their foot chewing is due to allergies, the rash on their belly. They just don't put two and two together because the cells are different in dogs than they are in us. The mast cells are the cells in our body that set up allergic reactions, and yours and mine, they're in our nose and in our eyes, but in dogs they're in their feet, skin and ears. We start to see these problems and people just don't understand what it is, and they come in and they're like, "Ah, she's chewing her feet, she's scratching and she's rolling around," and we tell them it's allergies and we get this funny look like, "You're crazy." But we're really not.

The good news is we have multiple medications now that work really, really well. For decades, all we had was prednisone or cortisone type products. But a few years ago, new products started coming to the market. We have Apoquel, we have Atopica, we have a couple of other great products and injectable called Cytopoint. So we now have

some really good solutions for owners that used to watch their pet suffer all summer, and now we can give them a really great solution, either with a tablet or with an injection that lasts three to five weeks. It's really cool.

**Radio Show Host:**

I don't want to get off topic, but do we see allergies in pets manifesting themselves in other ways from food, from things that they might consume? Do we see that as well?

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Oh yeah. We can see contact allergies, that would be an allergy, like wool, that your pet would be in contact with. There's inhalant allergies, which are the ones we were just talking about, atopy or inhalant allergies. We see food allergies and we can see flea bite allergies. So those are the four most common kinds of allergies that we see. So flea bite allergies are usually associated with fleas, and that seems obvious, right? But sometimes just one flea bite a week in a highly allergic pet can be enough to set them off. So it can be very, very hard to find the source because it can be a very low number of fleas. So flea control is really important. If we think it's a food allergy, then we go through a whole litany of things that we eliminate from the diets, and then we start to very gradually add back. That usually requires veterinary intervention because it's complex.

**Radio Show Host:**

Right. And time consuming, I would guess.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

It is. It is. It takes 12 weeks. If grandma lives with you and sneaks food to the dog, or the kids are dropping food off their high chair-

**Radio Show Host:**

You just don't know.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

... you're destined to fail. If you're the only person in the house or you and maybe one other person and you're really committed to that food elimination diet, you may be successful. But a lot of times you are undermined by the neighbor that throws scraps out, by the party you had at your house for the brats. Eventually, we'll have brat fry again, When somebody slipped a brat or a burger to the dog. So there's a lot of places that that can fail.

**Radio Show Host:**

By anything that the dog found on the street or I mean ... Yeah. The possibilities are endless.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

They are, and dogs are so fast. As soon as they see something-

**Radio Show Host:**

Oh bang, they're there.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

They are. Yeah.

**Radio Show Host:**

They're there.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

And the faster you run toward them to remove it from their mouth-

**Radio Show Host:**

The faster they'll run.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

... the faster they swallow it. Yeah.

You cannot run fast enough.

**Radio Show Host:**

What else are we looking at spring time?

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Well, we've already started to see ticks. Ticks are actually bad, even in the winter time, the deer tick. But yesterday we took a great big juicy fat tick off of a adorable little white dog that barely touches-

**Radio Show Host:**

Thanks for that visual.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

... the grass. Sorry.

**Radio Show Host:**

That's fine.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Just have to be honest.

**Radio Show Host:**

Teasing you.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

So ticks are out, fleas are out, so it's not too early to start your flea and tick medication. You should be using it year round to get optimal protection. But a lot of people in Wisconsin are like, "Eh, it's January. It's okay." Well, it's not January anymore folks. It's May. Even though it's a little chilly, we're still seeing those little critters moving.

**Radio Show Host:**

They can't wait.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

They can't.

**Radio Show Host:**

They can't wait.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

They're hungry. They need to come out and feast on our dogs. The blood meal is where they get their nutrition, so it's time for them to come back out and start chomping on your dogs. So the flea and tick medications should be started at this point, and that's pretty easy to do. There's either topicals, there's a collar and then there's a pill. There's three companies that make a pill that lasts four weeks, and there's one company that makes a pill that lasts 12, so we have to say 12 weeks, not three months, it's 12 weeks. You can give a pill to the pet and you're done for the next 12 weeks. There's some really nice collars. They're not like the old collars used to be. They're much more effective. Then there's the topicals. The topicals are the liquids that you put over their back. Some pets don't tolerate those very well. They get a little itchy or little heebie-jeebie from the application and the alcohol in it. But a lot of pets tolerate it well, and that also has the advantage of repelling biting insects, flees, mosquitoes, those kinds of things.

Even the flies and mosquitoes can be repelled by that product. Again, it's time to start those and that's simple to do. You can call your veterinarian, maybe go to their online store. We have one, a lot of veterinary clinics too, and get those products ordered. Heartworm is a little more complicated because we're really supposed to test for heartworm disease once a year. If we haven't had the pet on year-round medication, we really need to test before we restart. The complicating factor is right now we're not supposed to be seeing anything that's routine for care. So veterinary clinics have had to make some alternative arrangements with their owners to make them safe that they can get their heartworm medication, but know that sometime yet this season we need to get them in for a blood test. So we're still restricted on the wellness visits that we can do right now.

**Radio Show Host:**

Are there certain breeds that are more susceptible to not only ticks, but allergies, I mean, all the things that we've discussed? Is it across all breeds? I mean, a tick will go toward any dog if they're hungry, and-

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah. Ticks don't seem to really be that fussy. A lot of people think if they have a long coated dog that their dog will be protected, and they aren't because they still have soft spaces in their feet and their armpits and around their ears and on their heads where there's less hair. So we still see biting insects and fleas and ticks on all of those creatures. It seems there's a few breeds though that are more vulnerable to picking up the diseases that the ticks and fleas carry. So for instance, Bernese Mountain dogs seem to have an increased risk of Lyme disease, which-

**Radio Show Host:**

Really?

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah, which is interesting.

**Radio Show Host:**

I find that ...

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah, we don't really understand why.

**Radio Show Host:**

Wow.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

But there are probably some variations. As far as allergies go, yes. Allergies are definitely an inherited characteristic in a lot of breeds. A lot of people are under the assumption if they have a mixed breed dog, a designer dog, a mixed breed, mom was from a good home and dad was a traveling man, we're not really sure where they came from, that their pet

won't end up with allergies, and unfortunately, that's not necessarily the case because we see allergies in so many breeds of dogs that if you breed one to another, that doesn't make all the genes that are bad fallout, they just still have problems.

**Radio Show Host:**

Sure.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

White dogs in particular tend to be especially sensitive with allergies, but we can see it in all breeds. So I'm not going to sit here and tell you that there's a breed that's exempt because someone will be able to point out an example-

**Radio Show Host:**

Oh, absolutely

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

... of a dog that was allergic in spite of their breed or their breeds that they were composed of.

**Radio Show Host:**

The basis of the whole thing, no matter what behavior the dog is exhibiting, if the dog is uncomfortable, or the kitty-

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yes.

**Radio Show Host:**

... talk to your veterinarian.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Exactly.

**Radio Show Host:**

Because you may be able to self diagnose a little bit, you may be able to figure some things out if you're a longtime dog owner.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yes.

**Radio Show Host:**

But there's other things where you look at it and it's like, well, you don't want the animal to be uncomfortable.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Exactly. So things like ticks are pretty easy to diagnose. Most people can tell a tick. But other things are more difficult and there is a way right now because some people are reluctant to come to the veterinary clinic and veterinarians are somewhat restricted in what we're allowed to do right now. We are only supposed to do sick pets, injured pets, time sensitive types of needs, like a rabies vaccination that is coming up due. We're allowed to do rabies. If it's a puppy, we're allowed to do their series. But if it's routine care, we're supposed to limit what we're doing right now. But there is an alternative and that's telemedicine. Like on the human side, it's a little more difficult because we have to have the person on the phone with the dog. I haven't yet to have a dog make their own phone call for their own telemedicine consult.

**Radio Show Host:**

It's coming.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

If your dog can do that, you call me right up. I'll give you a free telemedicine consult if it can sort that out. Yeah, won't that be the day.

**Radio Show Host:**

Doc, it's Scruffy.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Exactly.

**Radio Show Host:**

I have a couple of questions.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

So we have telemedicine platforms. A lot of veterinary clinics are using a platform that you can video chat with your veterinarian so we can see what your pet is doing. You can hold the camera on your phone up so that you can see the pet, we can describe it, you can talk to us, and in doing so we can do a long distance consult. Now, there are some restrictions on that as well because of course the government dictates to us what we need to do. So we have to already have a relationship with that owner, with their pet and that owner, so it's called a valid veterinary-client-patient-relationship, VCPR. We have to know the pet and we have to have, at some point, examined them. Of course we can't feel them through the telephone, but there's a lot of things that we can see. We can say lameness, we can see skin lesions. There's a lot of things that we can see using the phone.

So it's a pretty cool alternative for people that can't travel, are reluctant to come in, those kinds of things. Now, you're always welcome to come in at our place. We've got a garage you can pull in, we can zip out, pick up your dog from your vehicle, come inside, take a look, bring them back out. We can look at the pet in the vehicle. So there's a lot of alternatives for ways that we can make this work right now because pets should not be suffering the lack of veterinary care for the reasons that are currently operating. But we do have options for people, whether it's telemedicine or curbside service or garage side service or whatever we need it to be. We can make those things work so your pet can get the care they need. So please, please, please do not let your pet go without medical care. If at this time you're reluctant to figure it out, we'll figure out a way to make it happen.

**Radio Show Host:**

Sure. Just like with us, we have to have good medical care for us as well. So you have to do the same thing for your animals.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Absolutely. So we need to make sure that that's happening. So please dial the phone.

**Radio Show Host:**

We talk pretty much about dogs, but what about cats with allergies?

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Cats tend to manifest a little bit differently. They will have skin problems, but they tend not to chew their feet. So we can see ear problems, skin disease, they'll have something called miliary dermatitis where they get these little bumpy rashy things and then they'll really accessibly groom. They'll groom to the point that they cause themselves injury with that rough tongue of theirs. So we do see differences in their manifestation, but they are still allergies. Most of the

medications that we have for dogs can also be used on cats for good success. We do see food allergies and flea allergies and contact allergies in cats too.

**Radio Show Host:**

I still remember when we were kids, I don't know, my sister would spend a lot of time washing the cat's eyes with boric acid. Well, I don't know. Was that was allergy-related?

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Probably upper respiratory. That's usually a virus, like a herpes virus. Herpes is the gift that keeps on giving. It just never goes away. Whether you're a dog or cat-

**Radio Show Host:**

There's your T-shirt by the way.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yes.

**Radio Show Host:**

You can make a mint on that one, doc. Start writing these ideas down.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

So those cats with runny eyes are typically not allergic. It's typically a virus.

**Radio Show Host:**

Yeah, I remember her doing that.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Oh yeah.

**Radio Show Host:**

It seemed to clear everything up.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Oh yeah. For a while.

Until herpes comes back.

**Radio Show Host:**

Reasserts itself.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Exactly. Yeah. Herpes is herpes.

**Radio Show Host:**

Another T-Shirt.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yes.

**Radio Show Host:**

We're doing good.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yes.

**Radio Show Host:**

Anything else for the spring we should be thinking about as we get set to get more active and get the animals outside more and get ourselves outside more?

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Sure. Of course with your dogs, if you're going out on some walks for some exercise, build up slowly. Don't decide one day you're going to go out for a six mile walk or put the dog on a leash next to the bicycle and go bike ride forever because your dog needs to be physically conditioned. Cats, of course, they aren't going on a walk with you or a bike ride.

**Radio Show Host:**

If they walk with you, it's a coincidence.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah. Yeah, exactly. This is totally a mistake. You are going in the same direction. But yeah. Cats are not going out on the bike with you on a walk.

**Radio Show Host:**

I have seen it. I mean, I have seen cats go for a walk and it's successful, but it's rare.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

It's rare and it takes a special cat with a lot of training. It's not something you're going to start anytime.

**Radio Show Host:**

Takes a special owner too.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah, so it takes someone that's a cat person that doesn't want to own a dog, because if you have a dog, you're going to take the dog. I mean, I love cats and dogs both.

**Radio Show Host:**

Sure.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

I don't want to sound that way, but cats are cats, and-

**Radio Show Host:**

Well, yeah. I could never figure that out. Being in a farm kid, we had many cats and many dogs, and I grew up ... I love cats and dogs, and it seems ... I understand that people gravitate toward one or the other-

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Oh yeah.



**Radio Show Host:**

... and I think that's fine. But there are people that absolutely do not care for one or the other and I can't figure that out.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Right, and there's not a substitution, and it's like other things. You can't substitute a goldfish. It's just not the same. It's a nice pet, but it just ... you can't-

**Radio Show Host:**

Yeah.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

No, no. No. I just saw a commercial the other day of a guy jogging with his gold fish and-

**Radio Show Host:**

That's good.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

It didn't work out well. We'll just say. It wasn't good for the fish. So we do have to be a little careful. Those are the primary things this time of year, are the allergies, the fleas, the ticks, the heartworm medication. Of course, we want to get them on that so that they're protected, and the heartworm meds also protect against intestinal parasites, the roundworms, hookworms, tapeworms, the things that our dogs go out and ingest, shall we say, parts from other animals.

**Radio Show Host:**

Acquire.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah, acquired parasitic infections. As much as we love our dogs, when they're sleeping in your bed, you don't need parasites in your bed.

**Radio Show Host:**

No, absolutely not.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Let's be very, very careful with our parasite control products so that our families are safe, especially people who are immunocompromised can suffer the consequences of parasite infestation. So let's just take all those precautions and be really safe.

**Radio Show Host:**

You mentioned the potential of doing too much with the dog over-exercising the dog. Usually, we think of the culprit being the other way around, right?

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah. But if you bring them on too fast, they end up with sore feet.

**Radio Show Host:**

Just like us the same way.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Oh yeah.

**Radio Show Host:**

You got to work up gradually.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Exactly. But people forget that, and they're so excited that the weather is finally nice, they go out, they forget the sunscreen. So the dogs will get sore feet, the dogs will end up with sore muscles. We can see dogs that tear cruciates. We see all kinds of orthopedic injuries. Dogs don't have a lot of common sense when it comes to this. If you're going, they're going.

**Radio Show Host:**

They're going, yeah.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

And they're going to overdo it, so you have to be the wisdom for that pet so that you don't end up seeing us on Sunday afternoon with an athletic injury.

**Radio Show Host:**

Right. I always think too, because dogs like to supervise, I always think when you're doing yard work and other things, just be aware that that pet is out there, so you don't swing back with a hammer or something or ... I mean, there's so many ways where they can get injured because they want to be in on it.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Oh sure. Lawn mower injuries. We see all those things. Yeah. We've had a dog that stuck his nose into the lawnmower when it was upside down. The guy had the blade guard off and was-

**Radio Show Host:**

Oh no.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

... working on it. So you can see some pretty magnificent injuries because the pets don't really understand.

**Radio Show Host:**

No.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah, be careful. If you have an older dog, don't let them walk behind the lawnmower every single foot that you cut the grass, because you may be riding and the dog may be walking, and I've seen elderly dogs just exhaust themselves. So we have to be watchful for our pets because they don't have any judgment. It's like going in the water. As soon as there's ice gone, the dogs are going to be in the water and it's too cold. You don't want to be that person that has to go in and rescue the dog because they fell into a water source that's too cold or broke through ice. So just use some good common sense, and that common sense isn't very common. So we do have to be careful.

**Radio Show Host:**

Well, again though. Just you and the animal, everybody gets excited and you're thinking about 87 things you've got to do that day and it's just so easy to take your mind off the safety for one second, and that-

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

It is, and that's all it takes.

**Radio Show Host:**

Right, and that's all it takes. Because those doggies, they're going to do what doggies do.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yeah, yeah. They slip out of the yard, all kinds of things happen. You spend the next eight weeks putting them back together.

**Radio Show Host:**

Exactly. Quickly doc, we need your contact information.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Sure. So we're located at the corner of 41 and 49, just South of Fond du Lac. It takes less time to drive to Lomira than across Fond du Lac. Our phone number is 920-269-4000. Our website is [smallanimalclinic.com](http://smallanimalclinic.com). We are open seven days a week, so you're welcome to come visit us on Saturdays, on Sundays. We have shortened our hours just a little bit, but hopefully once we are relaxing some of these orders, we'll be able to expand our hours again and meet your needs. So we are there for those weekend crises as well as the stuff that happens during the week.

**Radio Show Host:**

And that convenient drive up. Don't forget about that.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Oh yeah. Our garage.

**Radio Show Host:**

Yeah, that garage works nice. Dr, Marty Greer, Veterinarian Village, Lomira.