5% in the final volume. The amount of urine produced once the rabbit is rehydrated should be recorded every 4 hours. Adequate nutrition should be ensured, and use of a nasogastric tube with a fiber diet is recommended. Hyperphosphatemia and hypercalcemia should be treated, as should urinary tract infection or suspected cases of E cuniculi. Drugs that may have precipitated the ARF should be discontinued. Once hydration and urine production are restored (fluid input = urine output), azotemia has resolved, and the patient is eating and drinking, fluids can be gradually discontinued, tapering by 50% per day.

COMMENTARY: This article is a quick read that hits the salient points of common differential diagnoses and an outline of treatment of ARF in rabbits. It’s worth a read if you are interested in treating rabbits.—Chris Wong, DVM


Responsible Cat Ownership: Why Cats Shouldn’t Roam

Buenos Aires is divided into 12 sections, each having a hospital with its grounds fenced off. The fences prohibit dogs from entering the area, but cats roam freely. Fecal specimens presumed to be from cats from these fenced-off common areas around the hospitals were collected for fecal flotation. The investigators collected 465 specimens from March to June and found that 53.3% had parasite eggs. The most common parasite isolated was Toxocara cati (62%). Other parasites found included Cystoisospora, Trichuris, T leonina, Ancylostoma, and Aelurostrongylus. Moist fecal specimens contained more parasite eggs than dried specimens. Free-roaming cats contaminate these green areas and constitute a risk factor for people spending time in them.

COMMENTARY: Humans contract Toxocara from contact with contaminated environments. T canis is more widely recognized as zoonotic, but T felis is also of concern. Infections can cause visceral larva migrans and ocular larva migrans in humans. Simple hand-washing and avoidance of areas where animal feces is present minimize the risk for infection. Eggs are hardy, and larvae can be viable for up to 1 year inside the egg. Although this study was conducted in South America, studies in other geographic regions report similar findings. From a public health standpoint, this is yet more reason for additional efforts to address the issue of free-roaming pet or feral cats, especially in urban areas, which have limited green space where humans congregate. Exposure to Toxocara eggs is via contaminated soil. While adults don’t tend to eat dirt or play in sandboxes, children do.—Karen A. Moriello, DVM, Diplomate ACVD


Xylitol for Cats?

Periodontal disease is common in pet cats and is usually managed by a combination of diet and prophylactic dental cleanings. Home care consisting of toothbrushing is another option, but adherence is low in cat owners because cats do not tolerate this procedure well. Xylitol is a 5-carbon natural sugar alcohol that decreases dental plaque and gingival inflammation in humans when given as a chewing gum after meals. After prestudy professional cleanings and measurement of plaque and dental calculus, 30 cats were divided into 2 groups and enrolled in a 56-day parallel crossover study. During the first phase of the study, the cats were given fresh untreated water; during the second phase, they drank fresh water treated with xylitol at 0.005% per day. Cats readily drank the treated water. The investigators found decreases in plaque and calculus accumulation of 52.3% and 53.5%, respectively.

COMMENTARY: Xylitol is found in many human sugar-free products. If ingested by dogs, it can cause a rapid release of insulin followed by a sudden decrease in blood glucose. In 2004, practitioners were warned of potential toxicities associated with the use of xylitol when the consulting veterinarian (Dr. Dunayer) for the American Association for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Poison Control Center noted toxicity in dogs ingesting products containing xylitol. A case report published in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association in October 2006 reported acute hepatic failure and coagulopathy associated with xylitol ingestion in 8 dogs (229:1113-1117, 2006). Currently there is concern about the safety of this product in dogs and possibly other species.—Karen A. Moriello, DVM, Diplomate ACVD


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