

DOCTOR TOPE'S COLUMN

"When you are through changing, you are through."

-Bruce Barton

There have been many changes at ECAC over the last 5 years. Dr. Bushwack and I are very proud of the team we have and the high quality of care that we provide. We strive to make changes that will positively impact our patients and clients. It is our goal to employ people that will perform their jobs to the best of their ability and make coming to our veterinary clinic an enjoyable experience for you and your pet. Every patient and client that walks through our door is important to us and it is our desire to continue our high quality of care to both.

Our priorities remain the same:

- The care of our patients, which requires that we stay up to date with current medical advances and recommendations through veterinary continuing education, meetings, publications, journals and books. We update our equipment regularly, and strive to have state-of-the-art technology that provides the most accurate diagnostic information and course of treatment, ultimately benefiting our patients greatly.
- Our clients, to whom we strive to provide with the very best customer service, listening to their needs, accessibility after hours, communicating in person and by phone and educating.

2008 marks a change in the way we perform our surgeries at ECAC. Starting in January, *we will be performing pre-operative lab work on all patients undergoing general anesthesia.*

Currently, we include Intra-venous catheterization and fluids, as well as pre-emptive analgesia (pain medication) and pain medication to be administered at home. The doctors at ECAC, however, feel that current standards of care dictate that baseline lab work is crucial for appropriate treatment of our patients. Blood work allows us to get a bigger picture of your pets overall health. Abnormal lab work may prompt the doctor to postpone a procedure in order to deal with another problem and not make a condition worse with anesthesia. Other times, a mild abnormality may be monitored closely in following months.

Over the past year, we have found at least 3 patients that had liver abnormalities that necessitated further lab work and surgery. We have also found mildly elevated kidney enzymes, which have necessitated close monitoring and diet changes. Heartworm disease in dogs and Feline Leukemia Virus/Feline Immunodeficiency Virus –FIV- in cats are conditions that have also prompted us to change our anesthesia and surgery plans.

We take anesthesia very seriously. A veterinary technician is dedicated to closely monitoring your pet while he/she is under anesthesia. They are monitored with pulse oximetry, blood pressure, electrocardiogram, end tidal CO2 and temperature. Your pet is kept warm on the surgery table via a circulating warm water blanket. A "Bear Hugger", which is a warm air blanket, is placed over your pet in the recovery room to aid in prevention of hypothermia. All the current anesthetics (both injectable and gas) are utilized and anesthesia protocols are tailored to our patients. There is no guarantee that there will be no problems with anesthesia, but pre-operative lab work will allow us to evaluate a part of your pet that we cannot do by physical exam alone

We are excited about the New Year and the changes it brings. We anticipate a busy year and we look forward to caring for your pet, and getting to know you better as well.

Wishing you a blessed 2008!

Dr. Tope