Project Threshold

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Cryptorchidism

Cryptorchidism is a condition in which one or both testicles do not descend into the scrotum (unilateral or bilateral cryptorchidism). It often is incorrectly referred to as monorchidism, which is an extremely rare condition in which one testicle is present. The undescended testicle does not produce sperm, but does produce the male hormone, testosterone. Thus, if the undescended testicle is allowed to remain when the scrotal testicle is surgically removed, the animal will retain the physical and behavioral characteristics of a male.

The condition occurs in horses (the affected animal is called a "ridgeling"), and the affected animal acts like a stud rather than a gelding. In swine, the meat become unpalatable, as it does in boars. The treatment is castration before maturity.

In dogs, the condition is a disqualifying fault at shows. It is fairly common and has been found in many breeds, although it seems to occur more often in the smaller breeds. The overall prevalence is about 10 percent. It is considered an inherited condition. Family studies indicate that inheritance of the trait is best predicted by an autosomal recessive model.

Affected males must have two genes for the trait, receiving one from each parent. Males with only one gene are not affected but are carriers of the trait. Females, of course, are not cryptorchid, but carrier females have one or two genes for the trait, in which case 50 percent or 100 percent of their offspring will also be carriers. Unilaterally cryptorchid males have nearly normal fertility, since the scrotal testicle can produce sperm. Elimination of the trait is possible only if the affected animal and its parents are not used for breeding. Siblings of affected males may also be carriers. The retained testicle may develop tumors which sometimes cause feminization. Medical treatment is not recommended since it is of little value in inducing testicular descent and because of the inherited nature of the condition. The owner should be urged not to use the dog for breeding.

In many species, both testicles are descended at birth. In dogs, testes normally are descended at ten days of age, but it is difficult to determine at that age since the testes are small. However, both testicles should be in the scrotum by three months of age. As a rule of thumb, an undescended testicle can be considered permanently retained at six months of age. There are differences of opinion as to whether castration is indicated in young dogs to prevent the development of testicular tumors. Certainly, castration prevents the reproduction of affected individuals.

Preventive Measures—Reminders

ANTIFREEZE is highly toxic but animals seem to be attracted to it. A small amount on the garage floor could be fatal if ingested. Keep containers closed and out-of-reach.

RABIES vaccination now is compulsory in Pennsylvania and other states. A killed vaccine is available. The recommended schedule is vaccination of puppies at three months, re-vaccination in one year, and then a "booster" every three years. Any animals under one year of age vaccinated for the first time should receive a "booster" one year later, then at least every three years.

The increasing frequency of rabies in wild animals (raccoons, skunks, etc.) makes it important to pro-
test domestic animals which might come in contact with them.

HEARTWORM DISEASE occurs throughout the United States. Infection may be prevented by daily doses of Diethylcarbamazine (DEC). Treatment should be started at the beginning of the mosquito season and continued for several weeks after. In warmer climates, it should be given year round. Have a blood sample checked for microfilaria before starting treatment.

The new drug Ivermectin, which is effective when given every thirty days, has not yet been approved by the FDA. It is being tested in tablet form, and very small doses are effective against microfilariae. Some dog owners are using products approved for horses and cattle. It cannot be recommended for dogs until it has passed all tests for safety.

Get It Right!
If Doctor or its abbreviation Dr. is used before a person's name, academic degrees are not given after the surname. Correctly, a name is written as Dr. John Jones or John Jones, V. M. D.

V. M. D. (Veterinariae Medicinae Doctoris) is awarded only by the University of Pennsylvania in the United States. The other schools award a D. V. M. The requirements are much the same for each.

The noun veterinarian and the adjective veterinary are often used incorrectly. A veterinarian is a graduate of a veterinary school.

In spay means to neuter a female animal—the past tense is spayed (not "spaded"). A male is castrated.

Specialists
The American Veterinary Medical Association recognizes fourteen Specialty Boards. After fulfilling prerequisites (advanced training, experience, etc.) and passing an examination, a veterinarian becomes a Diplomate (Board-certified).

The American Board of Veterinary Practitioners has Diplomates in three categories: Companion Animal, Food Animal, and Equine. Their certificate expires in ten years, when a recertification examination is given.

Other boards are Veterinary Toxicology (the science of poisons—their source, chemical composition, action, tests and antidotes), Laboratory Animal Medicine, Theriogenology (the study of reproduction in animals), Anesthesiology, Dermatology, Veterinary Internal Medicine (Internal Medicine, Cardiology, and Neurology), Microbiology, Ophthalmology, Veterinary Pathology, Veterinary Preventive Medicine, Veterinary Radiology, Veterinary Surgery, and Zoological Medicine.

The Annual Directory of the American Veterinary Medical Association lists Specialty Boards and Diplomates as well as the prerequisites for examination.

Book Reviews
The Evans Guide for Housetraining Your Dog by Job Michael Evans (Howell Book House, 230 Park Ave., New York, NY 10169, $11.95)
This is an excellent book for anyone getting a puppy for the first time. For the more experienced owner, there are new ideas and something to be learned from the author's progressive approach. Housetraining requires time and hard work, for a time, and this book can be a guide to success. It shows how to do the job so the dog becomes an accepted member of the household.

Some excerpts...

... Problems arise when an individual dog, either through its genetic makeup or mistreatment by its owner, comes to think of itself as the leader of the pack... Establish eye contact on your own terms... if you've been yelling at your dog when dealing with a housetraining accident, resolve to stop today. Try using the human equivalent of a bitch's growl...

... You should discipline your dog... the most you will need, except in chronic cases, is your growling tone of voice and eye contact. Discipline humbly and on a level that the dog can comprehend, because the discipline mimics that of the bitch...

... If you want your puppy or older dog to get housetrained, you simply must confine the dog...

... The Umbilical Cord Method: Attach the dog's leash to your belt loop and go about your day. You'll know exactly where your dog is and can more effectively avoid housetraining accidents.

... Schedules are important and it is essential to have one if you want to housetrain effectively...

... What Goes in Comes Out... Select a good food...

... Housetraining isn't just something that magically happens... but once it's done, it's done.

General Alumni Society Trip
The General Alumni Society and the College of General Studies will sponsor an exciting Alumni College Weekend in Charleston, South Carolina, during the Spoleto Festival. This comprehensive arts festival was founded by composer Gian Carlo Menotti in 1977. A full program of sightseeing throughout this charming city will be included, as well as a performance of chamber music; "The Prints by the Jazz Fiddler" starring "A Road to Mecca," starring and directed by the playwright, Athol Fugard; and the opera "Salome" by Richard Strauss, Dr. Eugene Narmour, associate professor in the music department, will lecture throughout the weekend.

The group will stay at the famous Mills House in Charleston. The dates are May 28-31. For more information, please feel free to call Rhea Mandell at 899-6940.