



# Otonabee Animal Hospital

“Going the distance for you and your pet!”

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## November 2014 Newsletter

### Pet Myths debunked!

Cats don't have nine lives—even though cat lovers wish they did—and dogs are not color blind. A lot of falsehoods about cats and dogs are often mistakenly accepted as facts. Here are 10 myths about our pets - and the realities that debunk them.

**MYTH** - “Cats always land on their feet.”

**FACT** - yes, cats are agile. They can jump high and twist their bodies like grand acrobats, often landing feet first. But cats falling from great heights—even if they land feet first—can suffer severe injuries or death. Keep your cats safe by making sure that all windows have secure screens.

**MYTH** - “Declawing a cat is akin to trimming his nails.”



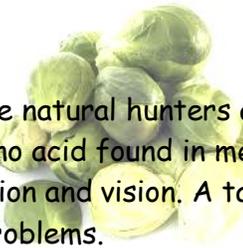
**FACT** - declawing involves the amputation of the last bone of each toe. It is a painful operation, and many veterinarians refuse to do it. Plus, if your cat goes outdoors, he'll be defenseless. Clip your cats' nails; don't declaw them. Teach your cat to use a scratching post, not the sofa, and praise him each time he does. If he attempts to scratch the furniture you can put bubble wrap around the area your cat wants to scratch. One or two pops will keep him away. Packing tape placed sticky side out can deter some cats too (they don't like the feel of it.)

**MYTH** - “A female cat or dog needs to have a litter before she is spayed.”

**FACT** - belief in this major misconception brings more cats and dogs into an overcrowded world. Spaying reduces risks of mammary cancer and ovarian and uterine cancers. It also helps cats and dogs live longer healthier lives.

**MYTH** - “Cats can live on a vegan diet.”

**FACT** - this myth is dangerous. Cats are natural hunters and carnivores. They rely on taurine, an amino acid found in meat that is essential for normal heart muscle function and vision. A taurine-free diet can result in blindness and heart problems.



**MYTH** - “Cats can't be trained.”

**FACT** - at the ASPCA in New York City, a cat was taught to turn pages of a book and to toss a ball. You can teach your cat to use a scratching post and a litter box. You can even teach your cat

tricks. You need a clicker, treats, and lots of praise. Cats respond negatively to punishment. So be positive and patient.

**MYTH** - "My pet stays indoors, so it doesn't need to be vaccinated."

**FACT** - certain vaccines can literally save your pet's life, even if the dog or cat lives inside. For instance, dogs and cats can pick up communicable disease like distemper, leptospirosis, and upper-respiratory infections without even leaving the home. And rabies is the law in Ontario, regardless of whether your pet stays in or not.



**MYTH** - "A dry nose means a dog is ill."



**FACT** - many of us believe that a cool wet nose on a dog means the dog is healthy, and that a dry nose means she's sick. Not true! A dry nose can be caused by poor air circulation in a room, or even just by the dog sitting in the sun. If a dog's nose is cool, he or she may have just had a drink of water. A dog's nose can change from dry to wet and back to dry several times a day. If you want to figure out if your dog's ill, look for signs of lethargy, loss of appetite, coughing, vomiting, diarrhea, and other signs of distress, and contact your vet if you see any symptoms.

**MYTH** - "Everyone can afford a pet."

**FACT** - while in a perfect world everyone who wants to would be able to own a pet, the reality is it costs hundreds—sometimes thousands—of dollars a year just to properly feed your pet and make sure it's getting proper preventive care from a veterinarian. "If you can't afford food for yourself, it's not the right time to get a pet," says Dr. Shelly Rubin (VMD, director emeritus of Blum Animal Hospital in Chicago and past president of the Illinois State Veterinary Association). If you'd like to spend time with animals but don't have the funds, consider fostering through a local animal rescue group or volunteering at an animal shelter.

**MYTH** - "Flea collars are effective."

**FACT** - we know that they don't work—the research on flea collars has shown that the effectiveness is only where the collar touches," explains Dr. Rubin. "You'll find fewer and fewer on the market. I've seen dogs with flea collars in the past and fleas are running all over the rump of the animal. Dr. Rubin recommends veterinary hospital-sold products to prevent fleas and ticks.



**MYTH** - "Cats need milk."

**FACT** - while many of us can conjure up a cute image of a cat lapping a bowl of milk, resist the temptation to offer this in real life. Cats and dogs don't have the ability to appropriately break down the lactose in dairy, and consuming it can lead to diarrhea, vomiting, and other issues.

To make sure your cat is hydrated properly, make sure that fresh water is available at all times or even invest in a cat water fountain; the animals are naturally drawn to moving water. (That's why they're often found lapping up water beneath a leaky faucet.)

Most of the myths included in this newsletter are from <http://www.rodalenews.com/pet-myths> but there are more to be found at <http://www.hillspet.com/dog-care/dog-myths.html> ☺