**FEBRUARY**



Just like humans, our pets can be born with, or develop heart disease. Often in dogs, heart murmurs are the first indication of a problem. Cats on the other hand rarely have murmurs associated with heart disease.

Heart problems in our pets are not the result of eating too much cholesterol, sugar or not enough exercise. Genetics play a large role in the development of heart disease.

What do we do? First step is usually an ultrasound of the heart (which can be done here!). This allows us to look at the heart, in motion and identify any abnormalities in the movement, size, or function of the heart. We can find a leaky valve, which is the most common cause of a murmur. Masses or very thick or thin walls of the heart can also be seen.

Once the cause of the murmur is identified, we can treat specifically. We monitor the murmur every 6 months and take chest x-rays at least yearly.

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Heart Health

***Chocolate is good, chocolate is nice, but if you share it with your pet you’ll have to see it twice!***In all seriousness, chocolate causes vomiting and diarrhea in dogs. In a large enough amount it can cause seizures, heart arrhythmias, pancreatitis and even death.
The darker the chocolate, the less it takes to cause toxicity. Just ONE ounce of dark chocolate in a 10 pound dog can result in an emergency!
If you want goodies for your furry friends, come in and check out BZ Barkery’s valentine cookie selection!



**Respiratory Disease, Colds and Flu**

As a general rule, viruses are not spread between species. This means that your cold or even flu is not going to make your pet sick as well.
There have been cases of upper respiratory disease (kennel cough) in dogs in the area. It can be very contagious in a kennel situation. Viruses or bacteria can be the cause of the coughing. If your dog is coughing, call and we will do an in car exam to determine whether antibiotics are needed. If a virus is the cause, we have no specific treatments.
At this time, we are NOT vaccinating for canine influenza in all dogs. If you are traveling, showing, hunting with other dogs in other regions your dog might be at risk and we can vaccinate.