

FALL 2025



The Staffy Standard

Hamilton Wenham Veterinary Hospital's Quarterly Newsletter

I find myself writing and editing this newsletter at a time when my own family is grappling with the emotional turmoil, heartache, and financial reality of caring for a toddler with a femoral shaft fracture. During this time, there have been two refrains for me:
gratitude and grace.

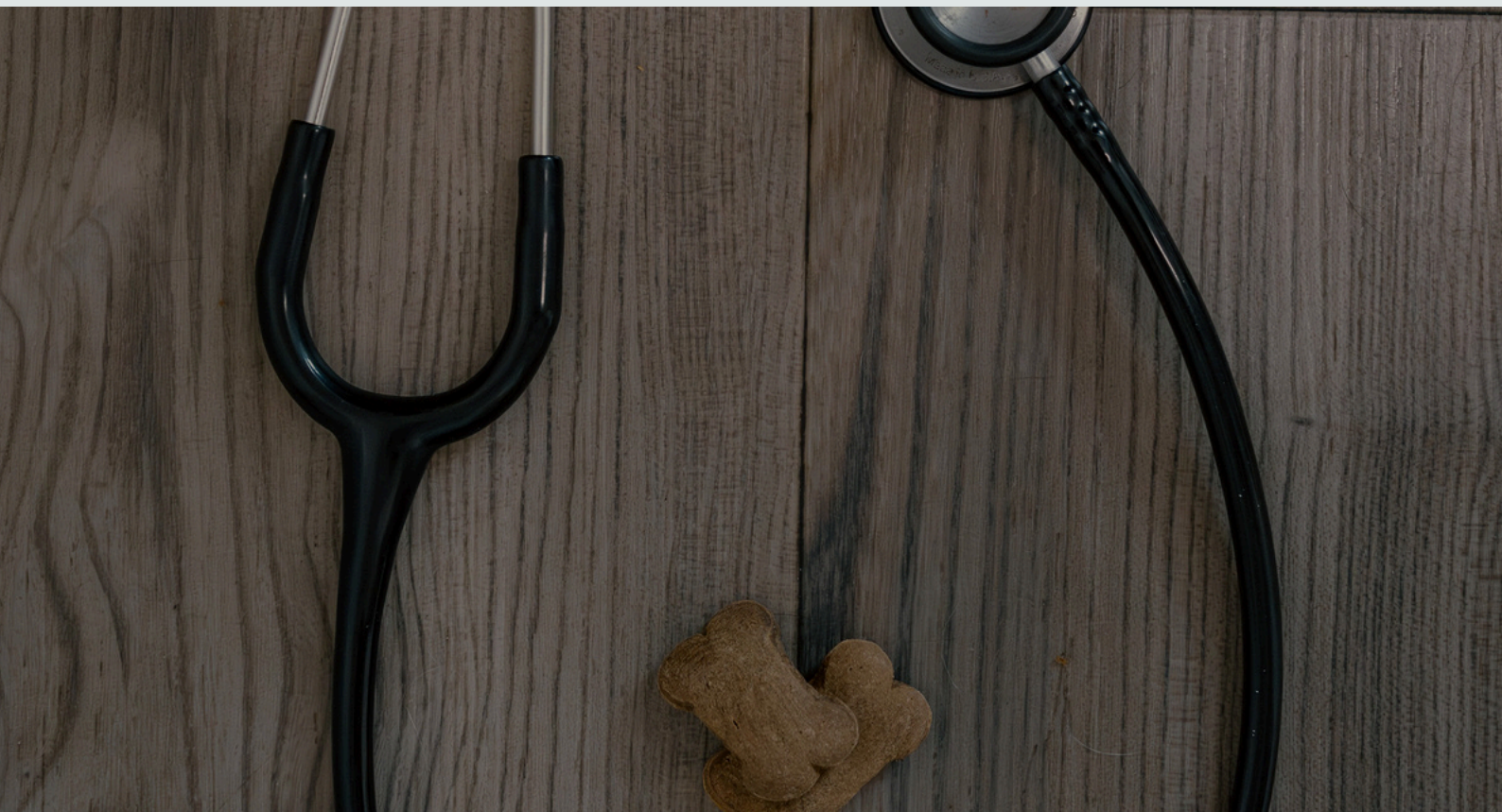
Gratitude that my son is broken, not ill. He will heal and these next 4-6 weeks will become simply part of the fabric of our family's story. And also gratitude that we live in a part of the world with access to excellent medical care.

Grace - for his care team when the initial stabilization of his fracture failed, realizing that it is the *practice* of medicine and even the best doctors are still only human. But also gratitude for the grace shown to me and my team as we scrambled to balance my personal needs with that of our wonderful clients and patients. Thank you all.

HAMILTON WENHAM VETERINARY HOSPITAL

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In this issue we're covering the shift in how we use (and perhaps, shouldn't use) metronidazole in veterinary practice, introduce you to our newest staff member and veterinarian, Dr. Jordan Shealey, and try to answer the question "why is it so hard to get in with my vet?"

In this issue



Rethinking Metronidazole



**Dr. Jordan Shealey joins
the HWWH team!**

Dr. Jordan Shealey
joins the HWWH
team bringing
expertise and a
deep sense of care
for her patients and
their families

*With the sale of the practice in
February of 2025 and Dr. Mark
Fagan's departure, the
hospital knew that the most
pressing challenge would be
finding a second veterinarian.*

*Dr. Alex's first steps as the
practice owner and now lead
veterinarian, was to launch a*



search for this individual, balancing the desire to hire quickly in order to continue to meet patient needs with the deep understanding that finding the right fit would better serve the high standard of medicine and personalized care our clients

have come to value and expect. Fortunately, after a series of thoughtful

**Dr. Shealey with
her German
Shepherd-
Catahoula mix,
“Evie”**

*conversations between
Dr. St. Pierre and Dr.
Shealey that centered on*

their shared values: individualized, patient-centric care and a desire to build meaningful relationships within the community, it became evident that Dr. Shealey would be an invaluable addition to the HWVH family.



**Looking to find out more about our staff?
Need a medication refill?
Check out our website!**

Dr. Jordan Shealey earned her veterinary degree from the University of Glasgow School of Veterinary Medicine in Scotland in 2015 and went on to complete a year-long rotating internship at The Hope Advanced Veterinary Center in Vienna, Virginia, where she received advanced training in emergency and critical care and internal medicine.

Before moving to Massachusetts, Dr. Shealey worked as both an associate and relief veterinarian throughout the D.C. metro area. Although D.C. will always feel like home, she is happy to

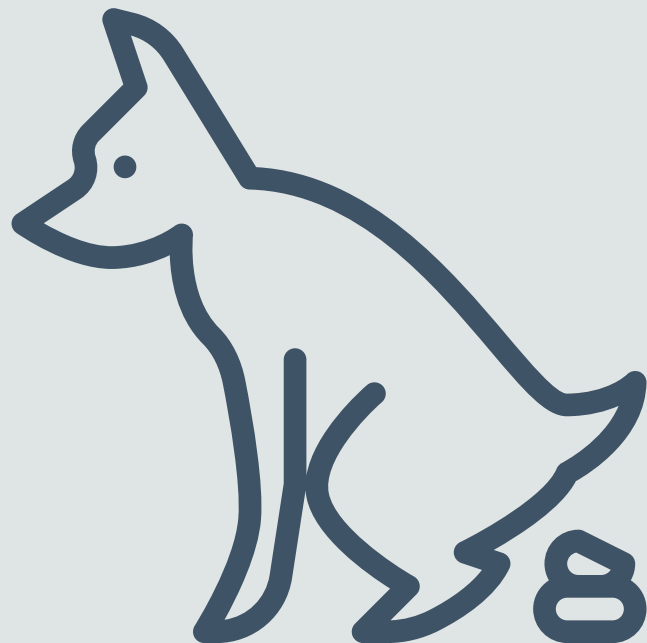


Dr. Shealey will be seeing appointments starting Wednesday, December 10th

have settled on the North Shore with her husband – a North Shore native – their two boys, and their German Shepherd–Catahoula mix, Evie.

Dr. Shealey's professional interests include geriatric care and internal medicine. She is dedicated to providing thoughtful, compassionate care and values building trusting, long-term relationships with her patients and the families who love them.

Metronidazole: why vets are increasingly hesitant to use the go-to drug for diarrhea in dogs (and why you should be too)



Metronidazole (brand-name Flagyl) has long been the go-to drug for addressing acute diarrhea in dogs. An antibiotic and anti-protozoal medication touted to also have anti-inflammatory effects, metronidazole has remained largely unchallenged in the arsenal of veterinary drugs. Until now.

With increasing concerns surrounding antimicrobial resistance, multi-drug resistant infections, and a growing awareness of the dangers of dysbiosis (an imbalance of microorganisms within the body), the use of metronidazole in general practice has come under greater scrutiny.

In fact, most drug monographs now include a disclaimer of sorts

Further reading:

Langlois DK, Koenigshof AM, Mani R. **Metronidazole treatment of acute diarrhea in dogs: a randomized double blinded placebo-controlled clinical trial.** J Vet Intern Med. 2020;34(1):98-104.

Rudinsky AJ, Parker VJ, Winston J, et al. **Randomized controlled trial demonstrates nutritional management is superior to metronidazole for treatment of acute colitis in dogs.** J Am Vet Med Assoc. 2022;260(S3):1-10.

similar to the one provided in Plumb's:

*"Although metronidazole has been frequently used for acute nonspecific diarrhea in dogs, use for this indication has **fallen out of favor** as evidence to support this use is conflicting, and the drug may have a **potentially significant and sustained detrimental impact on the GI microbiota.**"*

In other words, the use of an anaerobic antibiotic is not indicated for the vast majority of cases resulting in acute diarrhea and furthermore, metronidazole may harm the balance of gut bacteria for a month or more following each course of treatment, exacerbating the duration and severity of clinical signs in these cases.

So why have veterinarians continued to use a medication that



"My dog is having diarrhea but is feeling okay, what do I do next?"

- Stop any new food items or treats
- If your dog spends time at **daycare**, is **less than 6 months** of age, or has a **new housemate**, consider dropping off a fecal sample to screen for parasites
- If diarrhea persists without improvement for **48 hours**, consider switching to a **therapeutic gastrointestinal diet**

Most cases of diarrhea will resolve with **dietary change, probiotics, and simply (but frustratingly) time.**



seemingly causes more harm than good? Unfortunately, the answer is simple: because metronidazole's status as an "instant cure" has become entrenched within veterinary and owner psyches alike. And change takes time. Especially when the best replacement for metronidazole according to the emerging evidence is just that: time.

However, there are steps you can take to protect your dog from developing diarrhea in the first place. Avoiding boutique and raw diets, limiting chew treats (especially rawhides and bully sticks), and utilizing therapeutic diets in breeds at greater risk for inflammatory bowel disease and chronic enteropathies can help to limit or prevent most bouts of diarrhea in our canine companions.

Further reading:

Pilla R, Gaschen FP, Barr JW, et al. Effects of metronidazole on the fecal microbiome and metabolome in healthy dogs. J Vet Intern Med. 2020;34(5):1853-1866.

Whittemore JC, Price JM, Moyers T, Suchodolski JS. Effects of synbiotics on the fecal microbiome and metabolomic profiles of healthy research dogs administered antibiotics: a randomized, controlled trial. Frontiers Vet Sci. 2021;8:665713.



Gilly + Dr. Alex

The Final “Woof” *with Gilly and Dr. Alex*

“Why is it so hard to get in to see a vet? I used to call and be seen same day!”

The veterinary workforce shortage is playing a key role: it took 9 months (which happens to be the industry average) to find an associate veterinarian and there has long been a shortage of veterinary technicians. Other factors include increased demand for services (pet owners seeking care sooner and more often) and management of more complex cases by primary care vets (similar to what you might expect of a family medicine practitioner). Unfortunately, missed or no-show appointments and a rise in distrust of traditional medical practices (resulting in more time taken during routine visits to assuage owner fears and hesitations) also contribute to more limited availability.

With Dr. Shealey joining us, we look forward to expanding our capacity. Additionally, our team is working to put together in-person educational seminars in the hopes of fostering a safe space to address commonly asked questions and concerns. Because we know how important it is to be able to access timely care provided by individuals you know and trust.



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