

Northwoods Humane Society – Deanna Persson, President

As pet owners, we are the first line of care for our animals. At the shelter, it is the staff that is the first line of care. All of the animals that come to us are given a thorough health check. They are fecal checked and wormed appropriately and vaccinated as needed and heartworm tested. All animals adopted by NHS must have by law, a vet check certification.

When an animal comes to the shelter they too do an exam of the animal not matter where they come from. The staff looks at the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, breathing/respiration, skin and hair, legs and feet, anal and genital area and general appearance in general. They make vet appointments and provide what ever else is needed for the pet.

As pet owners we too can make these checks – most likely, we will recognize when there is a slight change in our pets behavior or condition. When there is a change – it is time to see a veterinarian. The following check list is from the magazine “Animal Sheltering”.

When checking the eyes we want to see clean, bright and clear eyes and that they are responsive to visual stimuli. Warning signs are: eyes that are watery, red, filmy, cloudy, discolored, dry, inflamed (swollen), hypersensitive to light, pupils are unequal in size, pupils are overly dilated or overly constricted, showing third (or middle) eyelid, showing discharge, itchy or painful.

When checking ears the good signs are: clean (both outer ear and canal), pink and clean (inner ear) and responsive to noises. Warning signs are: showing discharge (waxy or other), crusty, red or inflamed (canal is swollen/thickened), hair around ear is matted, scabbed, fly-bitten, itchy (animal scratches ear or shakes head), foul odor, painful (animal cries when ear is touched).

When checking the nose good signs are: clean and free of discharge and warning signs are: scabbed, showing discharge (Clear, mucous, blood, or pus), crusty, cracked or congested or blocked.

When checking the mouth, the good signs are: free of odor, teeth are clean, gums are pink, gums have good capillary refill time (pink gum color returns within 1 – 2 seconds after being pressed with finger and animal appears to swallow normally. The warning signs are: unusually red or pale, dry, salivating (animal is drooling), foul odor not caused by food, foreign bodies, showing discharge, swollen or inflamed gums are pale, white, purple or inflamed, teeth are loose, pitted, broken, or tartar-covered or animal has trouble swallowing.

Breathing and Respiration good signs are: respiration is regular, respiration sounds clear and respiration rate is normal. Warning signs are: breathing is irregular, rapid, shallow, or labored, animal is sneezing, coughing, wheezing, moist lung sounds, breathing is through open mouth.

Skin and hair good signs are coat is bright, and glossy, coat appears well groomed, skin is clean, free of oil, skin is free of swelling, lumps and lesions. Warning signs are: coat is dull, coat is oil, dirty, coat shows areas of hair loss or thinning, hair is matted, skin is dry or flaky, skin shows swelling, lumps or lesions, skin is scabbed, skin is red, irritated or animal has fleas, ticks, lice or other parasites.

Legs and feet good signs are: legs support weight evenly (no limp), pads are clean and smooth, nails are healthy looking. Warning signs are: animal favors one leg (limps), animal has limited motion, animal is weak or uncoordinated, joint feels tender, pads are cracked or hard, pads have matted hair between them, nails are long, short, or ingrown, legs show swelling, lumps, or lesions.

Anal and Genital good signs are: area is clean and free of discharge and stool is normal. Warning signs are: area has discharge, stool is watery or bloody, animal is constipated, area around anus shows swelling or lumps, one or both testicles are not descended (not in scrotum), one testicle is harder and/or larger than the other.

General appearance good signs: animal is bright and alert and responsive, skin is elastic (springs back immediately after being raised) animal is balanced coordinated, temperature is normal, animal is interested in surroundings, oriented.

Warning signs are: animal is very thin or obese, animal has wounds or abscesses, animal has swelling, lumps or bumps, animal appears to have umbilical hernia, mammary glands are swollen or oozing discharge, skin does not spring back (animal is dehydrated), animal appears uncoordinated, animal tilts head, animal repeatedly circles, abdomen is bloated, temperature is abnormal, animal appears lethargic, animal appears hyperactive, animal appears disoriented.

We know that our pets can't tell us in words that something is wrong, but we are sensitive to changes in those we love and can be proactive in their health care.

Dates to Save: September 12 – Dog Walk and Ice Cream Social at NHS Shelter beginning at 12:30 p.m. – to register go to : <https://www.northwoodshumanesociety.org/events> - fundraisershtml

October 5 - 10 Art For Animals On-Line -