

Myths on pet health untrue

United Press International
ATLANTA — If a dog's nose is cold, it doesn't necessarily mean it's healthy. Animals do not heal themselves by licking their wounds, and a dog's tongue is not sterile.

These are among myths many pet owners cherish about their animals, says Dr. Paul C. Glouton, a veterinarian in nearby Liburn, Ga., and a spokesman for the American Animal Hospital Association.

Some are amusing, said Glouton, but others can lead to incorrect decisions about pet care or delays in making the right decision.

Glouton said the myth that a cold nose means a healthy dog is a persistent prognosis of amateurs. Some dogs with a cold nose may have pneumonia and a temperature of 105 degrees, he said.

"Dogs and cats also get much more credit for healing themselves than they deserve," the vet said. "Licking can actually slow down the healing process and cause further damage to the wound unless the licking is stopped."

The myth that a dog's tongue is sterile is an untrue variation on the wound-licking idea, Glouton said.

The tale about cats always landing on their feet "is a vicious rumor that undoubtedly has brought misery to many cats."

Another myth involves bones being good for dogs.

"Wrong," Glouton said. "Bones can cause a lot of problems for dogs, such as constipation, impaction of the intestine and laceration of the intestinal walls."

Glouton said the notion is wrong that declawing a cat is cruel and inhumane.

Declawing a cat usually involves only the nails on the front feet, he said. Surgery is performed under general anesthesia "and there is no real discomfort to the cat."

"The cat can lead a normal life, even outside, and defend itself with its major weapons — back feet and teeth."



photo by Lisa Macan

And over here . . .

Astrid Boneta, a sophomore industrial engineering student, fields a question from an incoming freshman concerning Aggie yell leaders. Boneta gives tours to visitors and new students. Tours are scheduled in Rudder Tower at the information desk.

Dolls used in personal hygiene, sex education

United Press International
MOLINE, Ill. — Without leaving her sewing machine, Effie Hutchins has taught sex education and personal hygiene to youths across the United States and now is beginning to help young rape victims.

The 85-year-old Tulsa, Okla., woman is the creator of Effie Dolls — stuffed male and female rag dolls made of soft cloth that are realistic right down to their private parts and personal hygiene accoutrements.

"They're using them in rape cases and to show how to take care of themselves and change a sanitary belt — just about anything you can think of," Hutchins said.

She began her dollmaking business when her niece, Orieda Anderson, was teaching sex education to mentally retarded children.

"I needed sex education dolls and asked her to make a set with genitals," Anderson said.

The dolls are used by instructors in family planning centers, by teachers in regular classrooms and in classes for the handicapped.

The niece said sex education is much simpler and more easily understood with the dolls.

"If this happens," she tells students, holding the male and female dolls together intimately, "this will happen" she says, pulling the baby out from the pre-

gnant female doll. Most recently, the dolls have been used in court cases involving battered spouses, rape victims and abused children.

Anderson said the dolls also are a great help to people who lack language skills or are too traumatized to talk about their experiences.

Hutchins was reluctant at first to sew an anatomically correct doll.

In an effort to change her aunt's mind, Anderson showed her a pornographic movie. "I wanted to know what the real value it had."

"Well, since you're making the dolls, you're allowing this (pornographic movies) to be the way people learn their sex education," she said.

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Diet not linked to hyperactivity

United Press International
CHICAGO — The additive-free diet — once hailed as a breakthrough in curing hyperactive children — has no effect on the behavioral disorder, says a team of university medical researchers.

In an article in the August issue of the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, Drs. Morris A. Lipton and James P. Mayo refute the theory that proponents once said could cure up to 75 percent of the children afflicted with hyperactivity.

Their conclusions are based on tests conducted with 190 hyperactive children. The physicians said only three became more unruly while on a diet of food containing additives.

Prevent car stereo theft by taking time

United Press International
NEW YORK — One way to protect a car stereo from theft is to increase the time a rip-off artist needs to remove the equipment.

That may lead a thief to move on to an easier target, says Nancy Golonka, director of consumer affairs for the Insurance Information Institute.

As sales of expensive car stereo systems have increased, along with their prices, so has the incidence of theft.

While auto thefts dropped about 2 percent during the first half of 1983 compared with the same period a year ago, partial thefts for the period rose 2 percent to 3 percent, says an insurance company executive.

Ron Arnold, a vice president of State Farm Insurance, of Bloomington, Ill., said partial thefts involve stealing of such items as wheel covers and car stereos. He said random surveys show about half the reported partial thefts involved radio-tape player and stereo systems.

The situation has created a market for anti-theft devices such as a special decoy to make a stereo system look like an inexpensive AM-FM radio.

Car stereo prices ranging from \$350 to \$1,000 are only the tip of the iceberg. A thief can do \$2,000 worth of damage to the dashboard in removing the equipment, Golonka says.

Precautions to protect the costly equipment may also prevent car theft, she adds.

In a reverse test of 40 children on an additive-free diet, they found "clinically insignificant" improvements in the hyperactivity.

The regime recommended in 1973 by the late Dr. Ben Feingold triggered drastic changes in the dietary habits of families with hyperactive children by directly linking the behavior problems to the ingestion of food additives, particularly food dyes.

It's a futile attempt for a cure, said the physicians from the

Biological Science Research Center at the University of North Carolina's School of Medicine.

They said the success rate was 1.5 percent, at most.

"The behavioral changes we note have nothing to do with the additives," Lipton said. "If there was any improvement at all, it may be attributed to the shift of the family focus on the child who caused changes in the way the entire family ate. It's purely psychological."

The tests used foods with and

without additives under double-blind conditions. Neither the children, the parents nor the researchers knew at what point the subjects were eating additive-free food until after their behavior was recorded.

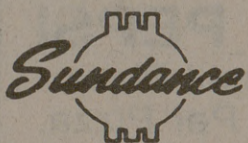
Feingold's theory was based on his observations of patients following the additive-free diet, Lipton said, adding that Feingold did not conduct clinical studies.

"The dramatic improvement described by Feingold was never found," Lipton and Mayo write.



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