

Ask the Vet



Deborah Cowan, DVM

Doctor Deborah Cowan graduated from NCSU-CVM in 1993. She has been working with Exotic animals since 1982 when she went to NC A&T University for her BA in Lab Animal Science. She was part of the group that started the Wildlife Rehabilitation League in 1978. She has done a month long internship at Texas A&M, Galveston campus in Fish Medicine.

- Doctor Cowan has been a member of the House Rabbit Society since 1990.
- Association of Reptile and Amphibian Veterinarians since 1988.
- The Ferret Society since 1993.
- She is a member of the NCVMA and AVMA
- Dr. Cowan learned about Birds from Avian Specialists, Dr. Carmen Lindheimer and Dr. Kevin Flammer.
- She has worked on animals as diverse as \$10,000 Koi and on small green tree frogs.

Animal medicine and care define her. Doctor Cowan is the owner of Animal Hospital of Walnut Cove and has been treating and helping exotic pets since 1993.

I have a pet rabbit that is 5 yrs. old and suddenly seems to be getting very “poochy” in the abdomen. She is still very playful, could something be wrong?

Exotic animals (ferrets, rabbits, rats, mice, guinea pigs, chinchillas, fish, frogs, lizards and turtles) can also develop tumors (cancer) just like cats and dogs. Female exotic pets can develop ovarian tumors and uterine tumors that can be fatal. Spaying and neutering these pets can help prevent these types of tumors.

They can also develop splenic tumors, intestinal tumors, and other types of abdominal mass.

We recommend that your pet have a yearly exam just like we recommend for your cats and dogs.

I have a pet turtle that I have had for years. The shell seems to be getting a little soft, is this a problem?

Turtles require sunlight (Vit. D) and calcium to maintain a healthy shell. Even water turtles require being out of the water and basking in sunlight. Often pet stores will sell drops, food etc. that promises to help with these issues : THEY DO NOT. You must provide unfiltered sunlight or use a VitaLite Reptile Light to provide the necessary UV rays that will provide Vit. D.

Calcium comes from the food you provide, you can call us and we will gladly fax, email or consult with you on proper nutrition. These pets also should be checked yearly.

I have a rat that is 3 years old, the fur has suddenly started falling off. What is the problem?

If veterinarians had a crystal ball, we would gladly answer these questions over the phone. In reality, we often advise the owners to bring the pet for a check up, the reason is that some symptoms could represent any number of diseases. It is always to the benefit of the pet and owner to do an exam because that will often help the veterinarian to better determine what the health problem is with the pet. Not all veterinarians see reptiles and amphibians so make sure the vet you call treats them.

I have an award winning Koi that has developed a large mass on one of its eyes. What can I do?

Koi like any other pet, can develop eye issues and other problems just like any one else. We are able to do exams on fish, Dr. Cowan has taken many courses on fish care and has done surgery on numerous fish. Once again, we recommend that an owner bring their pet to the veterinarian to have a physical exam done when the owner perceives a problem or an issue.

I have a bird that seems to be “nesting,” what should I do?

Birds can develop numerous habits that can cause distress to the owners. The females can reach maturity and start laying eggs, even without a male. We always recommend an exam when your pet starts exhibiting strange or unusual behavior.

Animal Hospital of Walnut Cove

We treat you and your pets like family!

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Closed for lunch 12:30-2:00

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