



# MIDDLE RIVER VETERINARY HOSPITAL

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## ONLINE PET DRUGS -

# IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE!

The growth of internet commerce over the past several years has made shopping for many items as easy as a click of the mouse. We can order designer pet furniture, all manner of pet toys and treats, and even prescription medications for our four-footed friends. As with most internet shopping, it is the consumer's responsibility to ensure that an internet pharmacy is following the rules and providing the correct medication in a safe manner. Some illegal and fraudulent online pharmacies will sell counterfeit, ex-

pired, mislabeled and incorrectly formulated medications, and they may not ensure appropriate storing and shipping conditions for the drugs they sell.

At Middle River Veterinary Hospital, we will provide you with a written prescription for any medication that your pet needs, as long as we have a valid veterinary-client-patient relationship. This means that a Veterinarian at MRVH has evaluated your pet for the prescription in question within a specific period of time – at least within the past 12 months, and in some cases, we

may require physical evaluation of the pet and possibly laboratory screening prior to authorizing a new prescription. Annual heartworm testing is required for all dogs to receive heartworm preventives.

To ensure that the internet site you use is legitimate, look for the Vet-VIPPS certification from the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy. This certification ensures that the site complies with criteria including patient privacy rights, security of prescription orders, adherence to a quality assurance

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You've heard the constant jingling of your dog's collar as he incessantly scratches, you've seen the bald dog whose coat is so thin that he looks embarrassed, you've felt the glowing dog whose skin is so red that it is hot to the touch, and you have smelled the sour, musty odor of the scabby dog who everyone avoids touching as though he has the plague. These dogs (and their

## PUPTACULAR NEWS!!!

families) are suffering from the typical symptoms of allergies.

There are four main types of allergies that can affect your pet's skin: flea (and other insect bite) allergic dermatitis, atopic (environmental) dermatitis, contact dermatitis and food allergic dermatitis. All allergic reactions result from a hypersensitive immune system that reacts to a harmless substance as if it were an invading army. The resulting inflammation causes the first symptoms of allergy – red and itchy skin. From there, the problem can worsen with secondary bacterial and fungal infections that enhance the itch.

We now have a new weapon in our arsenal for treating allergic dermatitis in dogs. Atopica is a new medication that helps control atopic dermatitis,

which is the most common type of allergy in dogs. Atopica eases the misery of atopic dermatitis, and it does it without causing the drowsiness of antihistamines or the side effects of steroids. Atopica reduces the immune system's sensitivity, so it doesn't over-react to every pollen grain, dust mite or mold spore it meets. It is safe for long-term use, which means your dog can keep taking the medication as long as he needs it.

If your dog is suffering the unbearable itchiness of allergies, please set up an appointment with Dr. Dobyons. She will explain all of the available treatment options for your pet, including Atopica. We are happy to introduce this new safe and effective treatment option for your canine companion.

## IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE!

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policy and facilitation of consultation between clients and licensed pharmacists.

If the veterinary pharmacy site you want to use is not Vet-VIPPS certified, then be on the lookout for the following potential red flags:

*The site does not require a veterinary prescription for prescription drug orders.* Selling veterinary prescription drugs without a valid veterinary prescription is illegal. Sites that offer online "evaluations" do not provide a valid veterinary-client-patient relationship and do not provide the protection you and your pet receive from an actual physical examination by your established veterinarian.

*The site has no licensed pharmacist to answer questions, or does not list a physical business address, phone number or other contact information.* What will you do if you have questions about the medication or your order? What if the medication you receive does not look like what your pet normally takes? What if the medication you normally keep refrigerated was not shipped cold?

*The site does not protect your personal information.* Make sure the site you use is secure and does not expose you to identity theft!

*The site is not based in the United States.* Importation of any drugs not approved by the FDA is illegal. Also, if a foreign pharmacy fraudulently takes your money, there is very little the U.S. government can do to help you.

Remember the old adage – if the deal is too good to be true, it probably is! Be sure to price check with us and take into account the cost of shipping – in many cases you may only be saving a few pennies by using an internet pharmacy.

## HEALTHY LIVING

We all know that a nutritionally complete diet is essential for the health of our pets. However, since obesity is increasingly common, it is important to not feed your pets too often or too much. For adult dogs and cats, we recommend twice daily feedings using the portion control method. To do this, you first measure your pet's food according to their ideal weight, and then separate it into morning and evening portions. At each mealtime, put the food down, and allow your pet to eat it. If any food is not eaten after fifteen minutes, pick it up and feed it at the next meal. If your pet begs for food, or steals food, separating his daily portions out into three or more small meals may be helpful. The amount you feed will need to be adjusted depending on your pet's age and activity level. Toy breed puppies need to eat about every six hours until



they are about six months or older. Nursing and pregnant mothers require more calories, and free-feeding may be necessary. It is also important to avoid feeding table scraps, since a lot of the foods we like to eat can be toxic to animals (see "Stop! Don't Eat That!" article), and are usually high in calories. Treats should be low calorie, and should only comprise 10% or less of your pet's total daily food intake. If you are concerned about your pet's weight or diet, Dr. Dobyns will be glad to check your pet over and give you recommendations. We have free measuring cups

for cats and dogs and a treat handout that lists some healthy alternatives such as melon and green beans. Managing your pet's diet and waistline can be a challenge, but it is worth it in the long run. Lean dogs on average live two years longer than overweight dogs.

**Thanks to all of you who came to our  
Open House on August 12th!  
We had a great time and enjoyed sharing  
our ten year anniversary with all of you.**

# STOP! DON'T EAT THAT!

Our pets enrich our lives, and in return we want to keep them safe and healthy. No one wants to see our best friends get sick from eating the wrong things. Many times we can prevent such catastrophes by being aware of hazards in the environment. Walk around your house and yard, and look at it from your pet's point of view.

Be careful with insecticides, both indoors and out. Ensure that what you are using is safe for your pet. Antifreeze can be fatal. Paint and paint thinners can cause severe irritation or chemical burns. There are certain outdoor plants that can make your pet very sick, so know what you are planting before you landscape your yard. Parts of daffodils and tulips, azalea, rhododendron, and wild mushrooms can cause poisoning problems. For a more complete list of common toxic plants visit [www.apcc.aspc.org](http://www.apcc.aspc.org).

Don't forget that holidays and visitors can pose a special challenge to your pets. Your home looks warm and inviting decorated with holly and mistletoe and poinsettias. The Christmas tree and ornaments can all cause digestive upsets or intestinal damage. Pets are curious and they want to explore anything that is different in their home. And, like small children, they like to put things in their mouths. Family gatherings bring a host of new people who may want to share their food with your pets. The tasty treats can lead to a variety of stomach upsets including vomiting, diarrhea, and even life-threatening pancreatitis. Some people think it is safe to give

dogs large bones, but they are unsafe no matter what their size. Bones can cause broken teeth, mouth injuries and severe bleeding issues, and they can get stuck anywhere in the digestive tract. Uncooked bones are a source of bacteria dangerous to pets and people.

Watch your pet! Be aware of anything they might get into, and be cautious in what you give them.

Observe them for signs they may have swallowed something: abnormal behavior, vomiting, diarrhea, drooling, muscle trembling. Know what is normal for your pet and what is not. A quick phone call to us at MRVH or the emergency clinic can give you the information to decide if you are having a medical emergency that warrants a veterinary visit. Don't wait!



*We would like to thank all of our clients that have donated food to Mosby's Pet Food Pantry. We can accept any kind of pet food - even open bags! Thanks!*





# MIDDLE RIVER

## VETERINARY HOSPITAL

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Hours: Mon. & Thurs. 7:30 a.m.-7:00 p.m.  
Tue., Wed. & Fri. 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

## MEET THE STAFF

### Dr. Kathryn Dobyns

Dr. Dobyns is our only full-time veterinarian. She serves on the Boards of Directors of Cats Cradle and The Mosby Foundation. In her free time, she plays violin with the Rockbridge Community Symphony Orchestra and volunteers at Augusta Health with her therapy dog, Ripton. She is taking agility lessons with her 3 year old fluffy white dog, Hunter. She also has 1 black cat, Shiloh, and retired hospital kitty Weebles-Wobbles.

### Tish Holden

Tish is one of our Licensed Veterinary Technicians. Away from work, she spends time with her daughter Allee, son Blake, hubby Keith, her Jack Russell Terrier, Poppy, 2 handsome cats Cracker and Ken, and her 2 chinchillas Wally Kringle and Emma.

### Dian Thompson

Dian is our office manager and head receptionist. At home, she and her husband Cecil keep busy caring for their numerous pets on their "mini-farm." On sunny days, you'll find them trail riding on their quarter horses, Jack, Peppy, and Buster.

### Marsha Graham

Marsha is one of our Licensed Veterinary Technicians. She also volunteers at the Staunton-Augusta Rescue Squad. Marsha cannot have pets in her apartment, but she enjoys pet-sitting for others.

### Heidi Green

Heidi is a full-time receptionist. She spends her free time with her boyfriend Chris and their adorable little dogs Homer, Charlie and Riley.

### Beth Stover

Beth is another of our Licensed Veterinary Technicians. She also runs her own pet-sitting business. Beth and her hubby JJ enjoy riding their horses and playing with the many other critters on their "mini-farm".

### Caitlyn Painter

Caitlyn is a part-time Veterinary Assistant. She is a full-time student at Mary Baldwin College; she is studying clinical science. She spends her spare time with her boyfriend Geoff. Her 4-legged family includes 3 cats – Coors, Jodi and Alaska – and a black Lab, Casey.

### Audrey Kulbacki

Audrey is graduating from BRCC in May with a degree in Veterinary Technology. She spends her spare time with her hubby, Shawn and their dog Mocha and kitty Leonidas.



### Spock

Spock lives at the hospital and works as the official greeter. In his spare time, he monitors the hospital and ensures that all the patients are well cared for. Spock also volunteers with the Animal Assisted Therapy program at Augusta Health.