

**ACCES for Pet Health**

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**Medical Terms Demystified**

**By Patrick Miles, DVM**

I would like to take some time to address some of the more commonly used medical terms in veterinary practice. Occasionally during exams I use words that owners may not be familiar with, and often they are reluctant to ask for a definition. At ACCES, we also provide a case summary to owners at discharge that includes the initial history, physical exam findings, and treatment protocol. These records can also contain abbreviations or shorthand that is difficult to interpret if you are not in the medical field. The following are some terms and abbreviations we use most frequently in our clinic.

**lethargic**- usually refers to a pet's disposition and indicates a decreased energy level

**palpate**- to feel; performed on a limb or body cavity to detect an abnormality

**stranguria**- straining to urinate

**neoplasia**- referring to a cancerous process or development of a tumor

**distended**- often used to describe an abdominal cavity that is enlarged with gas or fluid

**hematuria**- blood in the urine

**ataxia**- a neurological condition that causes an animal to stumble or be off balance

**nystagmus**- rapid movement of the eyes, can be horizontal or vertical

**agonal**- deep, gasping breathing pattern exhibited during cardiac arrest or euthanasia

**hyperthermia**-elevated body temperature(not fever);can be due to heat stroke or seizures

**catheter**- most often an intravenous catheter to administer fluids; can also be urinary

**inappetance/anorexia**- decreased or absent appetite

**blocked** (cat)- condition in male cats when the urethra is obstructed by debris or stones

**obstruction**- a mechanical blockage in the GI tract; can be a foreign object, tumor, or stricture

**fecal**- referring to the exam performed on a stool sample to check for parasites

**cystocentesis**- the process of obtaining urine from the bladder with a small needle and syringe

**radiographs**- x-rays

**dyspnea**- respiratory difficulty, either from airway blockage, lung disease, trauma, shock

**subcutaneous**- route of administration of fluids, under the skin over the shoulders

**obtunded**- describes an animal that is mentally dull or not very responsive to stimuli

**anemia**- decreased red blood cells

There are also a number of abbreviations we use in medical files:

BAR- bright, alert, responsive; refers to an animal's disposition during exam

DNR- do not resuscitate

WNL- within normal limits

NSF- no significant findings

NPO- nothing per os (withhold food/water)

TPR- temperature, pulse, respiration (initial vital signs taken during exam)

CBC- complete blood count

U/A- urinalysis

CRF- chronic renal failure

CHF- congestive heart failure

IBD- inflammatory bowel disease

IMHA- immune mediated hemolytic anemia

Posted by **Christina Ryan** at September 29, 2010 12:00 a.m.

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