

# HORIZONS

A Resource Guide to Active & Mature Living

February 5, 2009

Arizona Daily Star

## New Year, New You

## ...But What About Your Pet?

**By Jan Woods**  
**Hospital Administrator**  
**Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson**

Every New Year's Eve millions of Americans resolve to see their primary care doctor, lose weight, exercise and eat healthier. But, have you ever thought about your pet's New Year's resolution? Believe it or not, your pet needs your help making and keeping their New Year's resolution too!

**Does your pet receive a physical examination from your primary care veterinarian a minimum of once a year?** An annual or semi-annual physical examination by your primary care veterinarian is a great way to keep your pet healthy. Regular examinations help to prevent emergency visits to a local veterinary emergency room such as Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson. Physical examinations can also help catch potential problems before they become real problems. An undiagnosed problem in its early phase can quickly become life threatening if left untreated. Resolve to schedule annual or semi-annual examinations for your pet today.

**Does your pet have shiny white teeth and fresh breath?** Did you know that plaque and tarter can cause infection and inflammation of your pet's gums and supporting tissue? Plaque and tarter that has been allowed to build up on your pet's teeth can cause bad breath, bleeding, inflammation and receding gums, and loss of teeth. A semi-annual dental check up, cleaning and treatment by your primary care veterinarian is extremely important to your pet's life long health. Your veterinarian can suggest ways for you to begin a dental regimen at home, which may include daily brushing of your pet's teeth or a diet change to combat plaque and tarter buildup. If your pet experiences a dental emergency or needs oral surgery the specialists at Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson are here for you and your pet, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

You can help your pet achieve the shiniest teeth and freshest breath in doggy day care by brushing your pet's teeth daily and seeing your primary care veterinarian for dental check ups regularly.

**Does your pet need to diet, control weight and exercise?** Obesity is one of the most common medical conditions affecting dogs and cats in the United States today. Recent statistics show that 30 to 40 percent of pets are overweight, with 25 percent of those obese. Just like people, excess weight causes health issues in pets such as diabetes, lung and respiratory problems, joint and cartilage damage, arthritis and heart disease. Overweight pets also have trouble walking and running. Be sure and watch your pet's diet, avoid giving table scraps and calorie laden snacks. Measure your pet's food. Consider feeding twice a day, instead of allowing your pet to self feed throughout the day. Create an easily obtainable exercise routine and watch your pet's weight throughout his/her lifespan as a stable weight is desired. An average size cat should weigh between 8 & 10 pounds, while an average size dog's weight varies according to breed and size. There are numerous fun and exciting ways for you to exercise with your cat or dog. Be sure to ask your veterinarian and your primary care physician for diet, exercise and weight recommendations prior to starting any new weight and exercise program.

In no time you and your pet can make your New Year resolutions a reality by scheduling routine primary care examinations regularly, eating healthier and exercising together. Here's to the new you and your new pet.

**Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson**  
**4909 N La Canada Drive, Tucson AZ 85704**  
**520-795-9955 [www.vscot.com](http://www.vscot.com)**

