



Animal Folklore and Useful Tips... in a Nutshell

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For the Nogales International

Folklore: an often unsupported notion, story, or saying that is widely circulated

While visiting our local veterinarians, conversation developed leading to today's topic "Animal Folklore and Useful Tips." Several myths exist in the community having to do with the causes that lead to illness or disease in animals. The purpose of this article is to help dispel these myths through knowing the facts.

Myth: As summer approaches and the temperatures increase, your dog may develop rabies because of getting overheated. Incorrect, as a matter of fact, rabies can only be transmitted by another rabid animal. What you may be noticing is the dog's mouth frothing as he or she pants trying to cool down.

Myth: Scorpion stings cause severe toxic reactions and/or death. Generally, a scorpion's sting is similar to that of a wasp, self-limited and resolving over time. As with some things, exceptions may occur.

Myth: Spaying or neutering your animal causes obesity. Actually, research supports the fact that obesity is largely caused by overeating and/or under exercising (that also applies to humans) assuming there is not an underlying medical condition. Spaying your dog should be done starting at four months of age. Some folks believe it is necessary that the animal first have a litter before being spayed. Not so...have your animal spayed and at the same time help reduce the problem of unwanted strays in the community. While on the subject, you may be wondering 'what about neutering Spike?' It is a good idea to get him neutered as early as two months of age. This assists in reducing aggressive and territorial marking behaviors.

Myth: If your dog eats bread, worms (roundworms) may develop. Fact, roundworms can be found in a puppy if the mother is infected with them. These worms may be transmitted from the infected mother to the puppy during the gestation period or while the puppy is suckling.

Myth: If your dog eats fish, scabies might develop. Fact, canine scabies, also known as sarcoptic mange, is caused by burrowing mites, is very contagious and can be transmitted to other dogs. Also, the canine mite can infest humans and cats, pigs, horses, sheep and various other species.

Finally, useful tips...

- Puppy vaccines should be given at 6-8 weeks of age, not at 3-6 months as some believe. Rabies vaccines are given starting at 12 weeks.
- As we approach the rainy season, you may notice toads hopping around. If your doggy licks or tries to bite the toad, he or she may encounter a slimy toxic material in their mouth that causes stiffness and a wobbly walk. A simple and effective treatment, wipe teeth and gums (inside and out) with a clean rag to remove the slimy material, rinse mouth with water (such as from a hose) and your canine friend should recover in about 20 minutes.

Remember, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of gold. If your animal is acting unusual or sick, call your local veterinarian for assistance. There you have it...in a nutshell.