Preface
Infection Control in Veterinary Small Animal Practice

This issue of Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice addresses the topic of “Infection Control in Veterinary Small Animal Practice.” Infection control has been acknowledged as a cornerstone of human medicine for decades. Attention to, and progress in, this area is regarded as one of the most important advances in human health care. Despite this recognized prominence, veterinary medicine has been slow to adopt infection control principles. This is particularly evident in small animal practice. Although there are likely a number of reasons for this deficiency (e.g., lack of perceived importance, minimal local or national regulations), perhaps one of the greatest obstacles has been limited published practical guidance and recommendations for all scopes of practice, from the smaller single veterinarian private practice to larger referral or teaching hospitals. In this issue, we have carefully selected topics and authors to address these information gaps, ensuring practical guidance is finally available for all small animal veterinary clinic types and sizes.

The topics were carefully selected to cover (in our minds) all key areas of infection control pertinent to small animal practice. The first articles in this issue introduce the topic, providing evidence for the utility of infection control in our practices and directing practitioners and staff toward key areas to address identifying and preventing the major types of hospital-associated infections in veterinary patients: urinary tract infections, pneumonia, bloodstream infections, surgical site infections, and infectious diarrhea. The next articles target crucial strategies aimed at reducing hospital environmental, equipment, and staff contamination by pathogens and antimicrobial stewardship approaches to reduce the occurrence of multi-drug-resistant organisms. The final articles address veterinary workplace safety, including zoonotic disease risk for immunocompromised clients and staff, as well as legal implications for such hazards. Together, these eleven articles provide the key elements and practical examples for the development of a clinic-specific infection control plan, allowing for a safer environment for patients, staff, and clients.
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