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Pet Visitation in Facilities

by Maureen E. Hook, Ph.D.

Perhaps you've never thought about an end-of-life illness, and what it would actually mean to you. Of course family would be allowed to visit you in the hospital, but what about a beloved pet? At present, most hospitals across the country do not allow pet visitation. But a few pioneering hospitals are beginning to allow it, and it has made a significant difference to those people with a serious illness. For example, a woman in her 70s in Boca Raton, Florida was in the hospital about a year and a half ago. She was delirious from severe pneumonia and was hallucinating that she was in jail. Her husband had the idea that she might be calmed down if their pet Maltese, Delilah, were allowed to visit. At first, he was told "no" by the hospital, but their doctor intervened, and Delilah was allowed in his wife's hospital room. It really affected his wife positively, and she soon took a turn for the better, though the visit was not allowed to be repeated during her stay. Apparently, the hospital was afraid of the precedent it would set.

Fortunately, this is not the case everywhere. A few hospitals across the country are allowing pet visitation. To name a few, they include: University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore, University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics in Iowa City, Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, two hospitals affiliated with the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and more than a dozen others. There are certain exceptions, for instance--if someone has an open wound or infection, the visit will not be permitted. However, in most cases, the pet is allowed to visit in these facilities, as long as certain rules are followed--dogs must be brought in on a leash, cats come in a carrier,

Pet Visitation in Facilities (con't)

permission has been obtained from a hospital roommate (if one exists), and a covering is placed on the bed where the pet will lie down.

There is not a lot of research yet on the subject, but small studies are verifying the value of pet visitation in hospitals. One done at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) found that both visitations by pets and even animals previously unknown to the patient had beneficial effects. The patients' blood pressure lowered, as did their levels of cortisol, a stress-related hormone. At VCU, it was reported that a patient battled bladder cancer for 7 years, before dying of it at age 91. He was forever grateful that he was allowed visits with his Yorkie named Minnie. His widow said, "Minnie would come into Harry's room and his eyes would light up. It was like bringing home to him. It just made such a difference." Hopefully, word will spread, and pet visitation will be allowed everywhere.

(Source = Judith Graham, "When Best Friends Can Visit," The New York Times, April 10, 2013)



Insects and Diet

Hook Law Center: Kit Kat, do people really eat insects?

Kit Kat: Yes, the United Nations reports that already 2 billion people in the world consume bugs, because they are available and nutritious. Insects are high in protein, vitamins, fiber, and minerals, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization. It is us Westerners that are the different ones. But in other parts of the world, they have discovered they can help feed the hungry, and they're tasty too. Mostly, they can be fried or steamed, which are easy cooking procedures. It is a food source that has a lot of potential, especially for feeding animals.

Locusts, for example, can enrich grain, says Doug Yanega of the University of California-Riverside. He also says that some scorpions, water bugs, and honey bees taste wonderfully. He would also include cicadas in

that group, which is good news since a bumper crop is due to the hit US any day now. We may be calling 2013 the year of cicada, if scientific predictions hold true. But we cats have always enjoyed our bugs! One of my mom's cats, Tempe, loved moths. She would smack her lips after eating one, just like it were an ice cream cone! So stay tuned, insects may be the next delicacy on the menu at fancy restaurants!

(Source = Dan Vergano, "Some salt with your spider? UN says bugs good for you," USA Today, May 13, 2013)

Upcoming Events

- Hook Law Center will be presenting at the VSB Trusts and Estates Section - Virginia State Bar - 75th VSB Annual Meeting in Virginia Beach on **June 14, 2013**.
- Hook Law Center will be presenting a seminar on Estate and Long-Term Care Planning at the Norfolk Yacht and Country Club, 7001 Hampton Blvd., Norfolk on **June 19, 2013 at 11:30 a.m.**
- Hook Law Center will be presenting a seminar at the Airport Hilton, 1500 North Military Highway, Norfolk, VA 23502 on **July 17, 2013 at 8:00 a.m.**
- Hook Law Center will be presenting at an Advanced Elder Law Seminar in Richmond, VA on **September 11, 2013**.

Moving On! Services LLC is a company that specializes in personal property dispositions. They are sponsoring a Scarf Up & Wig~gle® drive in which scarves, hats, and wigs are donated to the Women in Cancer Treatment program. The drive lasts until **June 15, 2013**. Please leave any donations at either our Virginia Beach (295 Bendix Rd.-Suite 170) or Suffolk (5806 Harbour View Blvd.-Suite 203) locations. Jennifer Pagano, a Client Benefit & Care Coordinator at Hook Law Center, serves on the task force for the drive. We thank you in advance for any donations you are willing to give!

Currently, more than 5 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease and that number is expected to grow to as many as 16 million by 2050. Our future is at risk unless we can find a way to change the course of this devastating disease.

This year, to help those affected by Alzheimer's, **Hook Law Center** is participating in the Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's to raise funds and awareness. Everyone either has someone in their family, or they know someone whose life has been changed forever by Alzheimer's. For those individuals whose lives were taken by this unrelenting thief of memories and destroyer of lives, and for the many patients and their families, we invite you to donate and support the research that will beat this heartless thug of a disease into submission.

The Alzheimer's Association is the world's leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research, and funds we raise will go directly toward supporting their efforts. We know **Team Hook Law Center** can make a difference with your support! It's easy to give online using the link below.
http://act.alz.org/site/TR/Walk/VA-SoutheasternVirginia?team_id=87329&pg=team&fr_id=3766

The end of Alzheimer's starts here – with a gift from you.

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

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