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The Arrival of Early Spring Weather Means it's Dog Park Time in Chicagoland *Pets/people benefit from outdoor exercise and making social connections*

It's barely March and not even officially spring yet, but warmer and sunnier weather has arrived! That means it's a great time for dogs and their owners to enjoy some exercise, fresh air, and socializing at their local dog park.

The Chicago Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) reminds pet owners that Chicago alone has more than 30 dog-friendly areas that are operated by the Chicago Park District. Additionally, many other adjacent counties and cities provide dog parks. Be sure to check out the following websites and learn about other jurisdictions by doing a simple search for the park district, forest preserve district or county in which you live:

- Chicago Park District: www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/dog-friendly-areas
- Will County Forest Preserve: www.reconnectwithnature.org/activities/dog-exercising
- DuPage County Forest Preserve: www.dupageforest.org/things-to-do/permits

Typically, before visiting a dog park for the first time each year, owners need to complete a permit application, provide proof of immunizations for their attending pets, and pay an annual fee.

“Community dog parks are wonderful places to visit and enjoy quality time with pets and family among other dog owners and their pets,” explained Ray McGury, Executive Director of the Chicago Veterinary Medical Association. “While any time is a great time to head to a dog park, springtime in Chicagoland – typically after a rough winter – is the best time, when everyone is anxious to once again get outside and be active.”

CVMA reminds pet owners to ensure that their dogs are up to date on vaccinations and preventative measures for fleas, ticks, and heartworm prior to visiting a dog park. According to Dr. Marina Jaworsky, CVMA

board president, "Getting a check-up for your pet is an important thing to do when the warmer weather hits.

Staying current with your pet's health needs is essential to keeping them protected from diseases that can spread from dog-to-dog, especially tick prevention in addition to parasites found outdoors. Also, make sure that your dog likes to socialize with other dogs and always be respectful of their boundaries."

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About the Chicago Veterinary Medical Association: Chicago Veterinary Medical Association is a professional network with a longstanding tradition that connects more than 1,000 veterinarians with comprehensive resources that support their continued development as champions of animal health while encouraging the fostering of the human-animal bond.

About the Chicago Veterinary Medical Foundation: The CVMF, established in 2009, is a 501(c)3 charity that works with Chicagoland veterinarians to provide financial assistance to pet families in need by helping with the costs of their pet's urgent, unexpected medical and surgical bills. The Foundation's work plays a vital role in strengthening the human-animal bond by helping sick and suffering pets get well again.