

Issue 37, Spring 2007

Puppy Preschool

Congratulations to our recent graduates:

Floyd Tendler, Jack Laing, Banjo Pringle, Ciara Nuttall, JD Cutmore, Indy Russell, Buster Hepplewhite, Bubba McPake, Comanchi Orr, Abhi Neelakandan, Pippa Mackintosh, Trixie Thompson, Chloe Dodson, Pippie Ormsby, Chotu Srikantiah, Howzat Christie, Bronson McCauley, Caesar McSherry, Piri Atkin, Molly Ring and MJ Poll.



Welcome to our Spring Newsletter.

This newsletter contains the latest in hospital/staff news, product information, our puppy preschool graduates and some seasonal tips. Following is a list of the major articles of interest for this spring;

- Dental Health Month
- Introducing the new pup to your cat!
- Feline Cystitis
- Warm weather safety tips
- Biting, stinging and crawling insects.
- Hanrob – The Ultimate Pet Destination.

Your feedback is always welcome.

-Bronwyn



Dental Health Month

October is **Dental Health Month** again. If you only have your pet's teeth checked once a year then this is the time to do it. This October we are promoting oral care for pets with a waiting room display, giveaways, a colouring competition for the kids and free dental checks for your pets.

Remember, when you book for a **“free dental check”** your pet will receive a thorough oral exam by one of our staff members, a dental health report card, advice on preventative oral care and a quotation for any dental work that may be necessary.

We are booking these appointments in 10 minute intervals, so keep in mind, if you have any other health concerns for your pet, a different appointment with a vet for another time will be necessary.

Dental checks are also part of our Annual Health Check, so if your pet is due this October for his/her vaccination don't forget to ask for your dental health report then too. During Dental Health Month we are giving away storage tins with any cat or dog oral care dry food from the Hill's Pet Nutrition range. (While stocks last)

If you have any questions relating to this service or general oral care for your pet please phone the hospital and speak to one of our nurses or visit these websites at your leisure www.ingleburnvet.com.au/dental.htm and www.petdental.com

Moving House?

Don't forget to update your address and phone contact details with us. This is especially important for owners of microchipped animals. We can also advise you how to update your details correctly with the council, so if your pet goes missing, you can be reunited quickly.

Staff Training

- **Ros** – has attended various seminars/courses over the past few months:
 - ❖ *Asepsis and disinfection in hospitals*
 - ❖ *Pathology procedures*
 - ❖ *Tick paralysis and Flea prevention*
 - ❖ *Acupuncture, Hyperthyroidism and Hip Dysplasia*
- **Mandy** – attended 2 seminars this September:
 - ❖ *Tick paralysis and Flea prevention*
 - ❖ *Developing nursing Care plans*
- **Libby** and **Mark** both attended a seminar by Symbion Vetnostics in June relating to challenging medical cases as well as a surgical update.
- **Melody** – In July attended a Symbion Vetnostics seminar outlining renal failure in cats and eosinophilia in small animals. She also attended the 32nd WSAVA congress for 2007 in Darling Harbour during August. The congress enlists speakers from all over the world to discuss and impart knowledge on various veterinary topics including; feline medicine, neurology, surgery and ophthalmology.
- **Melanie** – Will be lending a hand as a volunteer this September with the Orang Utans in Borneo, whilst on her honeymoon. She should have some interesting stories to share in our next newsletter.
- **Ian Porter** – Joined our team in August for 3 weeks as a veterinary intern. He is currently in his 5th year at Sydney University studying Vet Science. Some of you may have seen Ian helping out around the hospital and treating some patients at that time. We wish Ian all the best with his final exams this year.

New Products

Glyde – Oral powder for dogs.

This new formulation of Chondroitin with Glucosamine and green lipped mussel powder may reduce joint inflammation and help relieve arthritic symptoms. Glyde is suitable for use in active or ageing dogs.

Triple Crown Everlasting Dog Treats.

This range of fun balls and treats are sure to delight your best friend. They are sturdy, tasty and will keep your dog amused for hours. Come and see the range on display in our waiting room.

Science Diet Savoury Chunks.

Hills Pet Nutrition has released their new range of science diet savoury chunks for cats in neat little single serve pouches.

Insect Bites in Spring

Spring is a beautiful time of year, when we and our pets come out of winter hibernation and begin to explore parks, bushland and beaches. Such adventures can also expose our pets to biting and stinging insects. This article is a brief overview of the more common insect-problems we see in spring.

Flying insects such as bees and wasps give a nasty sting, typically on the face, lips or forelegs. The most common reaction is swelling and pain associated with the site of the sting – this can be quickly helped by a visit to the vet for anti-histamine treatment. However, stings inside the mouth or back of the throat can be life-threatening as the swelling could quickly close over the airway, making it difficult for the pet to breathe. This is an emergency situation, and veterinary assistance must be sought immediately.

Spider bites occur less frequently, but can also cause pain and swelling. Some animals also show other signs such as lethargy, vomiting and general unwellness. If you think your pet has been bitten by a spider, it is always advisable to seek veterinary attention.

Ticks and fleas also become more prominent in Spring. We recommend year-round protection against fleas, to help prevent infestations developing in your yard and home during the warmer months. In addition, many dogs are allergic to flea bites and can develop severe skin irritations which may require extended treatment with antibiotics and other medications.

There are different types of ticks that will attach to pets. Of most concern in this area of Australia is the Paralysis Tick, whose saliva can cause progressive paralysis and eventual death. If you think your pet has a tick, it is best to come into the hospital so that the tick can be removed safely and your pet checked for any signs of paralysis.

Finally, flies cause many problems for pets in the warmer months, with dogs commonly affected. The most frequent problem is 'fly-bite' which causes non-healing, bleeding ulcers on the ear tips – these become repeatedly infected causing pain and scarring. There are many fly repellent products available, but it is advisable to use a veterinary product specifically formulated for pets, and not human or household repellents. *-Libby*

New Puppy vs Your Cat!



Your new puppy and your furry feline friend can live in harmony together and become the best of mates, without feeling like we, as owners, are living in a war zone. Removing fluffy from the curtain rails, from under the bed, or seeing booby traps being set by the cat late at night, or even waking in the morning to find your new pup shaved with a bulls-eye painted on his back, may make us think twice. But folks it doesn't have to be like this. Simply by taking some time to prepare for the first meet and greet, and being considerate to both of our friends will significantly allow for future success. Following a few basic but simple steps will allow the transition to go smoothly:

Step 1

If possible place your cat into a safe room, away from the dog, and then bring your new puppy into the house, allow the puppy to explore the house in his/her own time. Both your dog and cat will be aware of each others presence simply by smell. Allow your puppy to become relaxed, and excitement levels to subside. Restrain your puppy for the first meeting. This can be done by placing a collar and lead onto your puppy, or a harness, for small puppies you may also be able to use just your hands, but if you chose this method don't allow your puppy to escape from your grasp, and chase the cat. By controlling the pup, this allows your cat a quick and easy retreat if needed. It also allows you as the owner to have complete control of the situation.

* Remember as the owner, to only reward your puppy for good behaviour, not bad. If it looks like pup wants to chase the cat, quickly distract him/her with a squeaky toy to take interest away from the cat and towards the toy, this will allow your pup to be rewarded, but not for the chase.

Step 2

Let the cat out of the room where it is being kept, it is most important that we as owners behave as normally and calmly as possible. Talk to your cat gently giving reassurance. Encouragement may also be given with food. Under no circumstance drag the cat, or force the cat to approach the dog. The greeting action must be done in the cats own time. You may need to repeat this numerous times until your cat is accustomed to the puppy's presence, for some of our four legged friends this can take some time so be patient. In between time, allow for both your dog and cat to have separate retreats if required. This is more important for your cat, in particular where they can utilize areas of height so they can feel safe.

Now remember as your pup grows, so will his/her self confidence. Some adjustments may need to be made at this stage, to prevent any altercations that may arise. As pup becomes more playful and strong, placing him/her on to a lead maybe the best option for some of you, remembering for every step we take, reward pup for **NOT** chasing the cat, instead of the CHASE.

-Ros

Feline Cystitis



Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease

Anyone that has ever had a cat with a urinary tract problem knows that it is no laughing matter. It needs to be treated quickly and aggressively to prevent life long problems. Diet plays an important part in the cure.

The term "cystitis" literally means inflammation of the urinary bladder. Although this term is rather general, there is a common form of cystitis that occurs in male and female cats. This disease is also known as Feline Idiopathic Cystitis (FIC). It affects the bladder, resulting in the production of bloody urine that may or may not contain microscopic crystals. The cat often urinates frequently, passing only a few drops of urine at a time. This is often confused with constipation.

Clinical Signs

Many cats will start urinating in places other than the litter box, and often on hard surfaces such as tile floors, counter tops, sinks, bathtubs and even your bed! Cats avoid the litter box as urinating causes pain and thus is associated with the litter box. Cats should not be scolded for abnormal behavior such as this. They are trying to tell you that they are in pain and discomfort. Until any form of urinary disorder is ruled out, you cannot say this is a behavior problem.

Most cats with cystitis exhibit blood in the urine and discomfort with urination. The discomfort is usually mild but can become much worse if it is not treated. Male cats may develop enough crystals in the urethra (the narrow tube carrying urine out of the body) to cause an obstruction. This obstruction prevents elimination of urine from the bladder. If the obstruction is not relieved within 48 hours, most cats will die from the retention of toxins that were not removed by the kidneys. Because the urethra is relatively larger & shorter in the female cat, the emergency posed by complete obstruction is almost always found in male cats. Both male and female cats can develop urinary bladder stones which have to be removed surgically.

Causes/Transmission

We are not sure of the cause of this problem. Bacterial infections are the most common cause of cystitis in dogs and humans, but almost all cats with cystitis do not have bacteria in their urine. It used to be thought that early neutering was a contributing factor to feline idiopathic cystitis (FIC) but that theory has been disproved as the urinary tract is completely developed at birth and thus castration at a young age has no effect on its development. Things that do contribute are obesity, decreased physical activity, a total dry food diet and decreased water consumption. However, despite extensive research, the actual cause remains elusive.

Diagnosis

Often, diagnosis of (FIC) is relatively straightforward based on history, clinical signs, and evaluation of a urine

sample. However, sometimes further investigation with radiographs, ultrasound and blood tests is warranted.

Treatment

Each cat with cystitis is treated according to the changes in the urine (pH, crystals, blood, etc.), the type of crystals present, the presenting clinical signs (straining, increased frequency, etc.), and the presence or absence of a bladder stone or urethral obstruction.

If neither a bladder stone or urethral obstruction is present, medication will generally relieve the discomfort. A urinalysis is necessary to determine the kind of medication to be used. A special diet will also help to dissolve crystals in the urine (if present) and hasten recovery.

If the cat has an obstruction of the urethra, a catheter is passed into the bladder while he is under a short-acting general anaesthetic. Once the obstruction is removed and the urethra flushed the catheter can then be removed. The cat is discharged from hospital when it appears unlikely that obstruction will reoccur, usually 1-3 days later. Caution must be taken however, as repeat obstructions can still occur at this point. If he is experiencing kidney failure and toxemia, intravenous fluids and additional hospitalization are needed.

Following initial treatment, you will be asked to return the cat in 7-10 days for a recheck of the urine. This is very important because some cats will appear to feel much better but the urine is still bloody or contains crystals. If medication is stopped based on the cat "looking better" the cat can relapse. Rechecking the urine is the only way to ensure wellness.

Many cats have a recurrence of cystitis. This is the reason that a prescription diet like Hill's feline c/d or Waltham Feline Urinary tract diet should be fed in the future.

Complications

The most common complication of a urethral obstruction is bladder atony. Atony means that the muscles of the bladder wall are unable to contract to push out urine. This occurs when they are stretched to an extreme degree. Not all cats with obstructions develop atony; in fact, most do not. However, if this occurs, longer hospitalization is necessary. The muscles will nearly always rebound and become functional again, but this may take several days to as long as a week.

Another complication that occasionally occurs is kidney damage. Although feline cystitis does not directly affect the kidneys, if the bladder becomes extremely enlarged, urine may backup into the kidneys and create enough pressure to temporarily or permanently damage them. If this occurs, prolonged hospitalization will be necessary to treat the kidney damage. However, with aggressive treatment, most cats will recover their normal kidney function.

It should be noted that both complications, bladder atony and kidney damage, are the direct result of the bladder becoming extremely enlarged. Both problems may be prevented by prompt recognition of the problem and prompt medical care. If your cat is urinating inappropriately, don't delay. Seek veterinary advice immediately.

Warm Weather Safety Tips



With the warmer weather well on its way, something few of us may have thought about is bushfire safety for our pets. Not only do we need to worry about our family, friends and possessions, but what about our beloved family pets? Bushfires pose a hazard to any of our pets, even when a fire isn't close to our homes.

Firstly, the hot and dry weather (that makes the danger of bushfire greater) means the risk of dehydration and other effects of the heat is greater for our pets too; therefore we always need to ensure an adequate supply of fresh drinking water and cool shade/shelter. If your pets can stay inside while you're out, in air-conditioned rooms with water and food, this is great. Having your pets inside is also better because they are less likely to be exposed to smoke from fires, as it can be irritating to their lungs, just like us. This is even truer for our pets that have breathing conditions.

Another good way to prepare is to have your pets permanently identified and registered, with a microchip. If they were to become lost as a result of a fire or another reason, it can often be the only way to return them to you if someone else found your pet.

What you do with your animals whilst on holiday is important too, if you don't take them with you, boarding is a good option. Trained staff would be available to ensure your animals are well looked after and given adequate water, food and a cool environment.

Fire services throughout the country constantly remind us to have a family evacuation plan, in case of a house fire or bushfire. Something else to consider are your pets – can you *safely* evacuate them with you? Remember, if you can, it must be safe for you to do so. It is worthwhile ensuring you always have adequate cages, collars, leads and such to safely take your pets with you.

You might not think this could happen here, or where you may go on holiday and so forth, but it is far better to be safe than sorry. But even without being evacuated, risks still exist for our pets. One case I saw some time ago was a person who walked their dog to the vet, on a hot summer day, as they were due for their vaccination. Unfortunately several kilometres in the midday sun made the poor dog hyperthermic (too high body temperature), and could not be vaccinated that day. Instead, the dog was treated for its high body temperature, which luckily was reduced and made a full recovery afterwards.

If something was to happen to your animal, such as signs of heat distress, breathing difficulties, burns or such, it is best to seek veterinary care immediately.

More information is available from the NSW Rural Fire Service (<http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au>) or the NSW Fire Brigades (<http://www.fire.nsw.gov.au>).

-Ian Porter

Pet Holiday Accommodation

On a regular basis we are asked about suitable boarding facilities for our clients pets. In the past our usual plan of action here was to give phone numbers and names of various local boarding facilities in the area and ask that our clients go and see for themselves whether the facility would be suit their pets individual needs.

Recently we decided to change this and have looked into a boarding facility that we feel sure will suit everybody's individual needs. Mark has had a tour of the facility and has found **Hanrob – The Ultimate Pet Destination**, to be of a very high standard.

They have provided the very best pet care for 25 years. Spacious indoor, outdoor or luxury suite accommodation are just some of the options available to your pets. They will cater for active dogs, aged pets, and even those requiring special medical attention. Access to veterinary care is also available 24hrs a day.

Playtime sessions are offered to all pets to enrich their holiday experience. Grooming and professional training can also be a part of their stay.

Checking your pet in and out is easy too. Hanrob's Pet Taxi service operates between the Hanrob facility and Ingleburn Veterinary Hospital. Simply drop off your pet here to us and he/she will be transported to their own holiday destination in air conditioned comfort. When it's time for you to return from holidays, your pet will also be dropped back here for you to collect again.

To enquire about rates and availability just phone Hanrob direct and they will handle all necessary queries and bookings. The facility itself is located at 1800 Princess Hwy. Heathcote NSW 2233. Ph 8508 3222.

Email enquiries to info@hanrob.com.au or just browse their website www.hanrob.com.au.

We have enclosed a post card with this newsletter giving you all the relevant Hanrob details. Place it in your Pet care file at home or even stick it on your fridge so it's handy when you next need to find boarding for your pets.

Frontline Prize pack winner!

We are pleased to announce that the winner of the **Frontline Prize Pack** drawn on Tuesday 28th August was "**Charlie**" **Gallen** of Ingleburn. Congratulations Charlie! Good luck to everyone else entered in the Trip to Dr Harry's farm which is drawn September 10th, winners in each state will be notified by mail.

Frontline Spring Giveaway

This Spring we have cat and dog food/water bowls to giveaway with every packet of Frontline plus purchased. Remember to ask for yours. (While stocks last)

Public Holiday Hours
Monday Oct 1st – 10am till 12pm
For emergencies outside of these hours
Please phone
9829 1947