



Welcome to the Christmas edition of our newsletter.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our clients and their pets a very Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year. Many thanks for your ongoing loyalty and support to our hospital and we look forward to servicing your pet's needs again in the New Year. We have had a very busy year treating sick and injured animals as well as promoting health issues and preventative treatments for your pets and look forward to a short break over Christmas, before knuckling down to enjoy another busy year ahead of us. Our Christmas and New Year holiday opening hours can be found in the next column. This newsletter has the usual seasonal articles, some product news, staff updates and some minor articles of interest.

As always, we'd appreciate any comments that you have on our newsletter, and any suggestions for future issues.

-Bronwyn

Ask the Vet" On-line

Just a reminder about our "Ask the Vet" service. You can ask a question about any aspect of pet care and receive a response by e-mail from one of our vets. There is a page on our web site with a simple form in which you can submit your question.

For full details, visit www.ingleburnvet.com.au and click **Ask the Vet** in the menu on the left side of your screen. We will attempt to respond to all questions within 24-48 hours, though response time may be longer on weekends. If your pet is ill, or you have a more urgent need for an answer, please phone during office hours, or make an appointment.

There is no charge for this service. However, it may not be practical for us to give detailed responses to complex problems (such as behavioural problems).

We hope that many of you will find this service useful.

Christmas Holiday Hours

Monday Dec 24th – 8am till 6pm

Please note we are closing early Christmas Eve.

Tuesday Dec 25th – Closed

Wednesday Dec 26th – Closed

Monday Dec 31st – 8am till 8pm

Tuesday Jan 1st – 10am till 12pm

Saturday Jan 26th – 10am till 12pm

For emergencies please phone **9829 1947**
OR The Animal Referral Hospital at Strathfield
on **975 88 666**

Puppy Preschool

Congratulations to our recent graduates:

Daisy Weigand, **Tess** Cross, **Jed** Reid, **Zowie** Wrigley, **Meaty** Tierney, **Indiana** Jones, **Monty** McIlwain, **Lollie** Mason, **Daisy** Schweitzer and **Brea** Utterson.



Puppy Preschool is an early socialisation and basic training program for young puppies (under 12 weeks of age) and their owners. We recommend it for all pups.

Staff Training

Mark recently attended a seminar on renal failure given by the specialists at the Animal Referral Hospital. These introduced some new ideas on managing chronic renal disease especially monitoring blood pressure more aggressively.

Mark also attended a seminar on physiotherapy in pets given by a human physiotherapist who prefers to work on pets! She had clever ways of exercising and assessing older dogs and suggested more physiotherapy post surgically.

Dangerous Pet toys

Fluffy may love her ball of wool, and Rover may chase after that darn stick all day long, but we must be cautious when offering toys to our pets. Many household items that become pet toys, either with or without your knowledge can be dangerous – even fatal to your furry or feathered friend. If not used in the appropriate manner, some store bought toys can also cause problems. Take note of some of the following potential toy hazards:

1. Who hasn't thrown their dog a stick down at the local park? Sticks can splinter and cause choking or vomiting or they can perforate the mouth, throat or intestines if swallowed. Instead use hardy, non splintering chew toys to play fetch or allow your pet to gnaw. Some examples of good toys include Kong's and the Triple Crown everlasting treat ball range. Raw bones like brisket or lamb shanks and chicken necks are also readily available and safe to offer with supervision.
2. Soft latex toys can be shredded by a chewing pet. If the toy includes a squeaking mechanism, this can be easily swallowed or choked on.
3. Super balls can cause intestinal obstruction if ingested.
4. Towels, socks, underwear and hosiery, can be chewed and swallowed by a rambunctious pet, causing intestinal obstruction.
5. Some dogs like to chew on or eat rocks – bad idea! Rocks can cause broken teeth and serious intestinal obstruction!
6. Be careful if you offer your pet raw hides, if these are swallowed whole they can cause intestinal obstruction as well. Some are preserved with arsenic, which is highly toxic to pets. Some even have bacterial contamination!
7. Some cats enjoy hiding out in plastic bags, but if they get their head caught in the handles and panic, choking or suffocation can occur.
8. String, yarn, rubber bands, hair elastics etc often offer enticing play for cats, but these can be accidentally swallowed whole, possibly lodging in the intestinal tract causing blockage. If only partially swallowed, this too, can result in severe problems. For instance, one end of the string can wrap around the cat's tongue while the rest of the string is swallowed. Remember, if you see your cat with string or something caught in its mouth, NEVER try to pull it out, in case the rest is lodged internally. Seek veterinary attention immediately.
9. For birds, bells can be problematic. Some larger parrots can pull apart a bell and ingest the clapper causing a choking hazard.

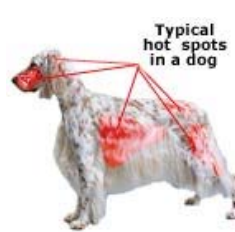
The most common hazards here are inappropriately sized toys for pets, if common sense and supervision is practised, most store bought toys and some household items can offer hours of enjoyment for our pets. If you need advice on a particular item that you unsure about offering to your pet, please phone the clinic for help.

Hot Spots

Also known as acute moist dermatitis, hot spots are usually a disease of dogs with long hair or those with dense undercoats. It is often caused by a local allergic reaction to a specific antigen. Insect bites, especially from fleas, are often found to be the cause. Other causes of hot spots can include: Allergies, mites, and ear infections. Hot spots are circular lesions, usually found on the head, over the hip and along the side of the chest. They will be moist, raw, inflamed and hairless, and can be quite painful. Animals usually lick, bite or scratch the area, and thus irritate the inflamed skin even more. In fact, hot spots are sometimes called 'pyotraumatic dermatitis' because the self-trauma is a major factor in the development of hot spots. Hot Spots can change dramatically in size in a very brief period of time. What was the size of a 10cent coin may easily be eight inches in diameter in six hours!

Occurrence

The lesions are rare in the colder temperatures of winter.



They occur in equal frequency in both inside and outside dogs. Many dogs develop several of these lesions over the course of their lives. However, this is not a long-term disease. A lesion will suddenly appear, be treated and be gone in less than a week.

Another lesion will suddenly appear later the same summer, the next year or never be seen again in the same dog.

Treatment

Treatment must be directed at stopping the growth of the hot spot and eliminating the cause. In many dogs the initial cause is fleas, but lesions below the ear may often indicate an ear infection. Whatever the cause, if it can be detected, it must be treated simultaneously with the hot spot. The first step in treating hot spots is clipping the hair over and surrounding the lesion. This allows air to get into the inflamed tissue and makes it easier to treat. The surface of the lesion is then cleaned with a non-irritating solution such as dilute chlorhexadine solution, or "Pyohex" shampoo. If the dog is very sensitive this may need to be done under sedation. In more severe cases the animal may be placed on oral antibiotics and given pain relief, and or anti-inflammatories. It is also important to prevent the dog from traumatizing the area further. Elizabethan collars may be used if the lesion is on the top of the head, for instance. Nails can be clipped and socks can be put on the hind feet to reduce trauma from possible scratching.

Prevention

Many dogs that have repeated problems with hot spots can have the incidence greatly reduced by keeping their hair clipped short during summer, giving them frequent medicated baths and following a strict flea control program. Depending on the location of the hot spot, cleaning the ears regularly may also be beneficial.

Kids, Pets and Worms.

It's common for pet owners to tell us they worm their pets and kids at the same time, and everybody seems to know that people can get worms from pets. The worms that can cause problems in people are unfortunately also the most common worms in young animals, and it's common to have young pets and young children together.

Roundworms - If a child swallows a roundworm egg, and this is apparently very common, the larvae that hatch burrow out of the intestines, through the body and can lodge in various organs, such as the eye or brain. This can cause permanent damage. However, worming the children doesn't prevent this problem because these worms will die anyway since they are in the wrong host. The problem is that they have done damage already.

Hookworms - can burrow into the skin, especially on the feet and cause dermatitis and abdominal problems.

Hydatid tapeworm - is a risk if you feed raw offal from sheep or native animals to dogs.

So, what to do? The aim is to stop the children getting worms from pets. One way is to worm pets more often than was traditionally done in the past. The common advice is to worm adult dogs every 3 months, but a good thing about some of the products we are using now is that our pets get wormed monthly. **Revolution**, (for cats) **Sentinel** and **Interceptor** (for dogs) treat intestinal worms every month. Dogs in rural areas may need to be tapewormed every 6 weeks.

Pups and kittens are a special problem because they are more susceptible to roundworms and hookworms and even get them before they're born and in their mother's milk. Pups need to be wormed every week for the first 4 weeks of age, then every 2 weeks until 12 weeks old, then monthly. Kittens need to be wormed every 2 weeks until 12 weeks old then monthly. If you are buying a new pup or kitten, it's important to ask about their worming history, as a guide to their health, and for your family's safety. Hygiene is critical. Keep your pup or kitten clean. They can be washed from almost any age, provided they are kept warm and dried off well. Teach the family to wash their hands after playing with the pets. So, in summary, you need:

Good hygiene and frequent worming.

Too much Xmas Cheer!

With Christmas and New Year approaching, let's take a minute to talk about some of the problems too much Christmas cheer can bring to our four legged members of the family.

Tinsel and decorative wrapping are pleasing not only to our eyes, but to the eyes of our four legged companions (especially cats) and can cause havoc with the digestive tract, such items if ingested by your pet can become lodged in the digestive tract and require surgical removal.

Christmas is a time of over eating and drinking for some family members, but can in fact cause health risks to your pet such as pancreatitis, (*Inflammation of the pancreas*) vomiting, diarrhoea and dehydration.

*Poisoning- Alcohol (*many pets are attracted to it*), nuts, candy and spicy sauces can be toxic and cause vomiting, diarrhoea and dehydration.

*Chocolate even in very small amounts is toxic and can cause vomiting, diarrhoea, rapid breathing, seizures and disorientation.

*Holly and mistletoe although not big in Australia are extremely poisonous when eaten.

*Ham bone's and meat are high in salt which can also lead to pancreatitis, gastrointestinal problems.

*Chicken bones when cooked can splinter and break into sharp pieces and cut or tear the digestive tract.

*Fireworks many of our four legged friends have loud noise phobias so providing them with a quiet place to hide away when the festivities get too stressful can be a great idea. (*medications are also available to help with noise phobias*)

And remember to ensure your pets are microchipped and have collars and name tags on in case of any escape acts. When choosing a Christmas gift for your pet, be sure it is safe. Treats should be healthy pet treats and given in moderation. We want all want the holiday season to be a joyful time for you and your pet. Remember don't forget to relax and spend some quality time with friends and family even the furry kind!

-Mandy

Product News

Feline Greenies are out of stock at present, this is a supply problem due to them being manufactured in Australia from now on, the factory just has to be built first! We aim to be able to supply them again by April or May next year, in the meantime we are trying to source some other yummy treats for our feline friends so please be patient.



Bioboost is a naturally derived fermentation product containing a combination of microbial metabolites, bioavailable vitamins and minerals. Daily use of Bioboost is suitable for senior dogs, active dogs of all ages, dogs recuperating from surgery, dogs on antibiotic therapy, dogs with digestive disturbance or use as a daily supplement for health and well being.

Sentinel Spectrum – This summer when you purchase a 6 pack of Sentinel for your dog it comes with a **Free** packet of “**Capstar**”, an oral treatment for the fast acting knockdown of adult fleas. So if your pet picks up any fleas whilst out and about you can be rid of them just as quickly as they arrived. This promo is for a limited time only while stocks last.

We currently have a number of copies of an extract from the book written by Frank Robson, “**Lucky for me**”, to give away. It is a tale of adventures with a seafaring, cat-hating, tree climbing dog. The story tells how hard-living journalist Frank Robson fell under the spell of a small dog called Lucky. To find out more about Lucky, watch the Lucky trailer and share your dog stories, visit www.luckyforme.com.au. The book is now available at all major bookstores.

-Bronwyn

Mel's Orang Utan encounter

After taking the plunge into the abyss of marriage, my husband and I decided to do something different for our honeymoon. We travelled over to the Island of Borneo, into the Malaysian State of Sabah to visit some orphaned Bornean Orang Utans (*Pongo pygmaeus*). After flying fifteen hours and travelling one hour to the sanctuary we were greeted with a nice peach tea drink to combat the exhaustion of the 32 degree morning and 100% humidity (a big shock after living the last 8 years near Katoomba).

Our first goal was to visit the nursery where orphaned babies are brought to commence rehabilitation and training to live in the wild. The Shangri-La Rasa Ria Resorts Nature Reserve is a joint conservation effort with the Sabah State Government to help facilitate rehabilitation programmes for endangered animals geared towards their eventual release into natural habitats. It has partnerships with the Sarawak Nature reserve where older Orang Utans are rehabilitated and where the orphans from Shangri La go when they reach 6 years of age. The Nature Reserve houses 6 orphans, Yoda (2), Juwi (4), Genji (4), Siti (5), & Austin (6), who we managed to see over the week we were there. They are fed twice daily to supplement their foraging, as they spend up to 60% of the day looking for food, whilst the rest of the day is spent resting (sleeping, playing, making nests, etc) and exploring the 64 acre park (approximately the same size as 25 football fields) which is only a small percentage of an adults home range.

The Orang Utans are a solitary species, with the adult male spending less than 9% of its life with another of its kind. The females spend a little more time in groups and can spend up to a quarter (25%) of her life with another Orang Utan. The courtship with a male lasts 6 to 10 days before she initiates the separation (protecting her food source) to bring up the baby Orang Utan alone. The baby will remain with the mother for up to 5 years, and they have a life expectancy around 45 years. Males can reach up to 100 kilograms and are the ones with the large fat pads on the cheeks which begin to grow when they hit puberty (15yrs), whilst the females get up to 45 kilograms.

It is amazing how alike to humans the Orang Utan are with a 96.6% DNA match! Only hairier and with an extra pair of hands...

They spend majority of their life in the forest canopy freely travelling around without coming into contact with the ground. It is the exploitation of palm oil by humans that has led to the destruction of their forest habitat. As the Orang Utan look for food in the deforested areas, the plantation managers have historically killed the adults (by shooting or machete) leaving the young to die. It is these young that are saved and brought to the sanctuary for protection. Education of the plantation managers has led to a relocation program being implemented in a small part of the island.

Our trek into the Borneo Rainforest to see the children at play was just on a kilometre up a very steep hill on a worn goat track to the observation platforms. Groups do not exceed 20 people, and no noise is to be made (digital cameras must be turned to silent).

Contact with the Orang Utan could lead to a reversal in the rehabilitation efforts of the program. This visit is up to a maximum of one hour (twice daily) as human contact is to be minimised to avoid them becoming familiar and venturing into towns seeking food. Due to the heat and humidity most visitors would only hang around for the first 20 minutes, which is saddening as these great apes are one step away from extinction. But the upside is with a smaller group they would relax a little and play more often, trying the Rangers patience by trying to mingle with the Humans.

My Husband and I came away from Sabah with 2 additional family members (Juwi and Yoda) from the adoption program. Juwi was chosen to adopt as he was by far the cheekiest and flirtatious of the group, and Yoda as he was the youngest and most innocent (well, in the way a juvenile can be innocent). As a result of our interest into the keeping and rehabilitation of the great apes, we were privileged to receive a behind the scenes look at their behaviour and were left bruised for many days from the playful time we had with them, children with four arms are hard to control.

Any one interested in checking out the nature reserve can visit the web site <http://www.shangri-la.com/en/property/kotakinabalu/rasariaresort/health/activity/exploringnature>

If you are interested in the preservation of endangered species, we encourage you to donate to charities and preservation organisations such as the WWF, Taronga Zoo, etc, so that work can continue to keep the animals a part of our future.

-Mel

Ticks & Snakes

Another summertime concern is the risk of snakebites and tick paralysis.

Snakebites

The best defence against the risk of snakebite is to clear away any debris that can hide snakes. The symptoms will vary depending on the type of snake and the type of animal affected. If you suspect your animal may have been bitten, get it to a vet immediately where it can be monitored. If you do find a snake, do not try to kill it or catch it. Keep your animal locked up and contact Sydney Metropolitan Wildlife on 9413-4300.

Ticks

Ingleburn is a low-risk area for paralysis ticks. However, if you are taking your pet on holidays with you, we advise that you check out the risk factors in that area. Even if you go on holidays without your pet, ticks can hitch a ride home with you.

Symptoms can vary, but affected animals typically suffer from weakness in the hind legs, followed by further paralysis. Sometimes the animal may appear to have something caught in its throat. Other early signs include vomiting, or a change in their voice.

In both cases, early diagnosis and treatment are vital for saving an animal's life. The majority of animals can be saved if diagnosed early, but the anti-venom for both is expensive and the intensive care that is required makes it a costly experience for pet owners.

-Melody