

Welcome to our **Autumn** newsletter.

This issue comes packed with lots of staff news, important dates for the Easter Break, the latest product news and promos and a few articles of interest.

We will take this opportunity to wish all our clients and their pets a safe and happy Easter.

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

-Bronwyn

Staff Training

Bron and **Ros** attended a seminar in February relating to behavioural signs and how behaviour can influence disease. This seminar looked at the role of veterinary staff and in particular the veterinary nurses role in behaviour counselling, with special emphasis on preventative counselling for new puppy and kitten owners.

Bron will be attending a Practice Development workshop in April. The workshop will be delivered by qualified HR specialists, and is part of an ongoing series commencing with recruitment and selecting the right staff for the practice.

Ros will complete her Veterinary Technicians course this March, with final exams some time this month, good luck Ros!

Ros, Mandy and **Mel** attended a seminar held in Canberra recently, giving them further training and knowledge on the ever important topic of critical care nursing, oxygen therapy, and first aid.

Ros also attended a workshop in Sydney giving her extra training on Grief support and Pet Loss.



Public Holiday Hours

March 21st Good Friday – Closed

March 22nd Easter Sat – 9am – 12pm

March 23rd Easter Sunday – Closed

March 24th Easter Monday – 10am-12pm

Friday April 25th – Anzac Day – 10am-12pm

For emergencies please phone **9829 1947**

OR The Animal Referral Hospital at Strathfield on

975 88 666

How often do pets visit the vet?

Pets age much more quickly than we do. The old saying is that one year equals 7 dog years. This is an approximation, and varies with species, breed and age, but it is more or less true for both dogs and cats. So how many years has it been since your pet's last check-up?

Annual Health Checks are strongly recommended for all dogs and cats. Older pets or those with chronic health problems will need to be checked more often. After one calendar year, your pet will be equivalent to 5-10 years older, and a lot of changes can occur in their bodies over this time. Minor problems can often go unnoticed at home, until they become more serious. Most problems can be treated more successfully (and more cheaply) if they are recognised early.

We aim wherever possible to diagnose and treat all health problems before they become serious. Our vets perform health checks routinely as part of your pet's annual vaccination. This usually involves discussing any concerns that you may have, as well as an examination of your pet's major body systems. You'd be surprised how often we discover problems that had gone unnoticed at home. These annual visits really are important to your pet's health.

Some time ago we introduced some enhancements to our vaccination and **annual health checks**. When you receive your **vaccination reminder** in the mail, the reverse side will have a **short questionnaire** for you to fill in and bring along with you to your appointment.

This simply involves ticking a few boxes, and should take only a minute or two. Your answers will help both you and us to focus on any areas of concern with your pet's health.

The examination will target any problems discussed and will also generally cover the following areas:

Teeth & mouth, eyes, ears, skin, feet/nails, lymph nodes, bones/joints, heart & lungs, abdomen and genitals.

Once we're satisfied that your pet is in generally good health, the vaccination will be given.

After the examination, you will now also be given a short **written report on your pet's health**. The report will highlight any abnormalities found, along with treatment recommendations.

These reports are being provided **at no extra charge** to your pet's normal vaccination fee. So next time you get a vaccination reminder for your pet (or if you haven't had them vaccinated for 12 months or more) give us a call and make an appointment. There's a lot more in it for you and your pet than just a jab with a needle!

Staff News

* This January we said farewell to **Melody Leung** as she embarked on a journey back to Hong Kong. We will miss her terribly and hope to have her back one day, on a part time basis. Good luck Melody, with your future employment.

* Some of you may have met our Locum Vet **Ronad Stanley**. Rony is on a working holiday in Australia from Ireland, she spent a good part of January and February with us here lending a hand whilst Libby took some annual leave.

* Welcome back **Connie Lam!** Connie has returned after completing a 12 month internship in small animal surgery and medicine at the Adelaide Veterinary Specialist and Referral Centre. During this time, she worked closely with registered specialists in small animal surgery, medicine, ophthalmology and dermatology and gained invaluable skills and experience with often complex cases. She has developed an interest in small animal medicine and hopes to complete further study in this area. She looks forward to meeting the Ingleburn clients and pets again! We are very pleased to have her back on the team and look forward to working with her again.

* We would also like to welcome **David Antakley** to our team, he joined us recently as a cleaner/kennel hand. David's duties have him taking care of the dog and cat hospital wards and ensuring our entire premises inside and out are hygienically clean and disease free.

* We recently shared our hospital with a 5th year Vet Student named **Candy Wong** who some of you may have met while she was doing her final year rotations. Candy helped out with some surgery and consultations. We wish Candy all the best for her future as a veterinarian.

* Now last but not least we welcome **Leanne Huynh** to our team of vets. Leanne graduated from Sydney University in 2007, with honours and comes to us as a new graduate, ready to learn from our team of experienced vets. Leanne has a passion for marine and aquatic animals and may also teach us a thing or two!

Do you have a favourite vet?

No, we are not running a popularity contest! We just wanted you to know that you can ask for a particular vet, if you prefer, when you make an appointment. We encourage you to do this when you are bringing your pet back for a recheck. It's usually better for everyone, if the recheck is being done by the same vet who dealt with your pet's problem last time. (But if you'd rather see one of our other vets for a 2nd opinion that's fine too!)

If you'd prefer to always see the same vet, let us know and we can flag your records and try to meet your wishes. Please remember though, that with our hospital being open from 8am till 8pm weekdays, plus weekends, your preferred vet can't be here all the time! Please phone in advance to make an appointment with your preferred vet. Our vets are Mark Fetterplace, Libby Duhs, Connie Lam and Leanne Huynh.

The vet roster is provided below as a guide only, and is subject to change. You can also find the vet's roster on our website at www.ingleburnvet.com.au/staff

Monday : Libby & Mark & Connie
Tuesday : Connie & Mark & Leanne
Wednesday : Libby & Mark & Leanne
Thursday : Libby & Connie & Mark & Leanne
Friday : Libby & Connie & Leanne
Weekends : Mark *or* Libby *or* Connie *or* Leanne

If you don't have a preference, we will simply make an appointment to see the first available vet on the day. The choice is yours.

My Experience as a Locum in Ingleburn Vet Hospital

Being an Irish vet, I've had my fair share of experience with cows, calving, lambing, horses as well as dogs and cats. Having practiced for the last 18 months in Connemara (which is about as rural as you can get) on the west coast of Ireland, I decided to head to Australia for a year, to see how the Aussies practice Veterinary.

On my first day in Ingleburn, everyone was extremely excited when a stray cockatoo came into the clinic. I had never had the pleasure of being "up close and personal" with such a fancy bird before, and was very eager to examine it. The staff were all walking about looking quite bemused, I didn't quite understand why but I soon found out. When it came to examining the bird, I took one look at its massive talons and beak and then proceeded to get the fright of my life when the bird started to vocalise- it was a noise unlike any I've heard. Needless to say, I was rendered totally useless, and stood a safe distance away, with both fingers stuck in my ears, while two of the staff confidently took over the examination.

One of the most important things I had to come to terms with, were the diseases that are exotic to Ireland but common here in Australia. The one top of the list being heart worm, or, in Latin, *Angiostrongylus vasorum*. This is quite a nasty little creature, spread by mosquitos and eventually sets up home in one of the heart chambers, which is very detrimental to cardiac function and is often fatal. Prevention is paramount and must be started from puppyhood. Unfortunately for the dog, if prevention is not started from an early age, or if there is an interruption in the preventative treatment, the dog could be carrying heartworm. Using preventative therapy at this point often leads to the dog becoming very ill, so a test must be carried out before going back on heartworm medication. Even in the short time I spent here, I've seen quite a few dogs with heartworm, and it can become a difficult and debilitating disease.

I've really enjoyed my time spent here. I've been introduced to a few indigenous species, such as the Tawny Frog-mouth and some blue-tongued Lizards. The hospital itself operates to a very high standard, both in the expertise maintained by the staff and the diagnostic equipment they carry. I've learnt a lot, about veterinary, the Australian way of life, and never to attempt a cockatoo examination without industry standard earplugs!

-Rony Stanley

Heartworm Prevention in Cats

Did you know one mosquito bite can infect your cat with heartworm, a potentially destructive and insidious disease? Pfizer Animal Health are currently working to get this important message out to cat owners through an educational campaign. Our message centres on the five **myths** and misunderstandings about feline heartworm:

#1— Only dogs get heartworm.

Heartworm disease is not just a canine disease. Heartworms affect cats differently than dogs, but the disease they cause is equally serious.

#2—Indoor vs. Outdoor Cats

It only takes one mosquito to infect a cat, and because mosquitoes can get indoors, both indoor and outdoor cats are at risk and should receive heartworm preventive medication. In one study, 28 percent of the cats diagnosed with heartworm were inside-only cats.

#3—It's a Heart Disease

The name "heartworm disease" is a misnomer, as it mostly affects the lungs and not just the heart. Signs are often mistaken for feline asthma, allergic bronchitis or other respiratory diseases.

#4—Adult Heartworms vs. Larvae

Cats do not need an adult heartworm to exhibit clinical signs; in fact, larvae are the main cause of the problems. Studies show 50 percent of cats infected with heartworm larvae have significant disease of the small arteries supplying blood to the lungs.

#5—Diagnosis

Diagnosis is difficult as blood tests do not rule out heartworm disease. There is also no effective treatment to remove heartworm in cats once it is present. It is a definite case of "prevention being better than cure".

The good news is that heartworm disease is 100% **preventable** in dogs and cats.

Revolution is a simple, effective, monthly treatment which provides your cat with protection against the ravages of heartworm. It also has activity against some intestinal parasites, which infect millions of people around the world every year in addition to providing a complete flea product.

Please speak to our hospital staff about this important information.

-Article prepared by Pfizer Animal Health

Hide those Easter Eggs!

A timely reminder is due once again. Chocolate eggs are part of Easter celebrations for most of us. But, chocolate can be harmful to your pets in more ways than one. Not only is it fattening, but chocolate also contains the chemicals theobromine and caffeine, which are poisonous to dogs and cats. Dark and cooking chocolate contains the greatest amounts – about 10 times as much as milk chocolate.

If your pet does get a hold of your secret stash of chocolate eggs, you may have cause for concern. Less than 100g of dark chocolate would be harmful to a 15kg dog. A sensible amount of milk chocolate will be harmless, so don't worry about the occasional treat.

The symptoms to watch for: Vomiting and Diarrhoea which can occur usually 2-4hrs after ingestion. Nervous

system stimulation from the theobromine and caffeine leads to hyper-activity, loss of balance, tremors and seizures. The heart rate can become rapid and irregular and excessive urination can occur. Heart failure, weakness, coma, and death can occur after 12 to 36hrs. If your pet has ingested a reasonable size portion of chocolate, it is advisable to seek veterinary advice immediately.

Product News

* **Joint Guard powder and Liver Treats** for dogs, to help reduce joint inflammation and provide some relief for our arthritis sufferers. The powder should be sprinkled on or mixed with your pet's food, it contains Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulphate. The treats can be given to cats and dogs to help maintain vitality and mobility.

* **Paws & Claws Fish oil capsules** Fish Oil is a natural source of Omega -3 fatty acids. These are the building blocks of all living cells and are essential nutrients for joints, heart, skin, coat and brain. These capsules are easily given as a treat, with accuracy of dosing and no messy liquids to contend with.

* **Iams healthy naturals adult dog food range.** This new dog food range takes the best of nature to provide unsurpassed nutrition with nine key ingredients: high quality protein, carrots, tomatoes, peas, spinach, apples, fishoil, flaxseed and wholegrains. And as nature intended, it has no added fillers, artificial colours, flavours or preservatives. Pop in for a free sample for your dog to try, we are currently stocking the 3kg size bag only, but it is available in an 8kg and 15kg size also.

* **Dogs on Holiday** the 5th edition are now available here at the hospital. It's a great resource to keep at home for those of you who holiday with your pets. It provides a fantastic guide to the best hotels, caravan parks, beaches/parks, vet surgeries, plus holiday tips and emergency advice for your pets while you are away from home. We have a few copies here for sale at \$24.95 each.

* During the month of March Novartis Animal Health (the makers of Sentinel Spectrum) are giving away **free** beach balls and squeaky balls for your dogs. To receive one all you have to do is purchase a 6 pack of **Sentinel Spectrum**. (While stocks last)

* This Autumn **Eukanuba** is providing **\$5 OFF** all 3kg or larger bags of their dog food range, or a 1kg or larger bag from their cat food range. Simply purchase one of these products to receive a **\$5 OFF** coupon to use with your next purchase.

Puppy Preschool

Congratulations to our recent graduates: *Charlie Frost, Pink Piggott, Charlie Gates, Chico Lanza, Chopper Cullen, Molly Jones, Sora Sasse, Winston Bateup, Quincy Ng, Misha Kendell, and Remy Viney.*



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.

There are lots of articles on dogs & cats... Let's talk about Humpbacks once in a while!



We've been surrounded by animals most of our lives, some of us are even lucky enough to own our own pets, like dogs or cats. But have you ever stepped off land for a second, onto a boat, and experienced the exhilaration of seeing an animal as big as a bus throw itself out of the water and come down with an enormous splash? Welcome to the world of the whale!

I have been whale-watching several times, holding my breath as I witnessed whales rolling, blowing, splashing and, of course, breaching, where their 40-tonne bodies come out of the water in a spectacular display. I love animals, but Humpbacks are my favourite. Imagine an animal growing to an average of 15 metres! That's nothing compared to the Blue Whale, however, which can grow to 33 metres... the largest living animal in the world!

Humpbacks live for at least 50 years and give birth to a single calf every 2-3 years. I was wreck-diving in Mooloolaba in Queensland one day, 23 metres below sea level, and my heart almost stopped when I heard a male Humpback singing in my ears. I couldn't see him, since he could have been up to 100 kilometres away. But once I heard his eerie songs echoing in my ears, I wanted to sing back, "That was beautiful; I'll be holding my breath until whale meet again".

If you take my advice and jump on board a boat to go whale-watching, you will probably come face-to-face with Humpback whales. During the winter months, they will be on their northern migration to the warm, tropical waters to mate & give birth. During the summer months, they will be on their southern migration to the cold, krill-rich waters of Antarctica to feed.

Sadly in Antarctica, whales are being threatened by whaling. Here in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary, whales are being hunted for 'scientific' research, while environmental groups like Greenpeace work hard to try to protect these beautiful animals. I am a proud member of Greenpeace and I am also a public speaker for the organisation, a voluntary hobby, where I love to deliver talks about all our campaigns about animals, including whales, and the environment around Sydney.

Fortunately humpbacks are spared from the menu for now. Minke and fin whales continue to be hunted. Before they can disappear from our waters, sail the seas on a whale-watching boat, with a camera in one hand, a grin on your face, and have a whale of a time! That's enough from me for now; if I was a whale I think I would be called a blubber-mouth! Back to cuddly dogs and cats...

-Leanne

Cardiovascular disease in King Charles Cavalier Spaniels



Anyone who has lost a pet understands how difficult that grief can be to manage. This article is dedicated to two special friends, 'Charlie' Johnson and 'Zach' Luck, who recently passed away due to heart disease.

Heart disease has numerous causes, and affects many of our canine friends. Unfortunately, several dog breeds are predisposed to the development of heart disease, including **King Charles Cavalier Spaniels (KCCS)**.

The canine heart is made up of four chambers, separated by one-way valves, which pump blood in one direction around the body. The right-side of the heart (2 chambers) pumps blood to the lungs (to collect oxygen and release waste products); and the left-side of the heart (2 chambers) pumps blood to other organs in the body.

While the causes of heart disease are numerous, KCCS are predisposed to the development of **degenerative valvular disease** (endocardiosis). The most commonly affected heart valve is the **mitral valve**, on the left-side of the heart. As degeneration occurs, the valve becomes distorted and unable to close or function normally.

The signs of mitral valve disease in KCCS are varied, and depend very much on the severity of disease. Many patients develop only mild and slowly progressive valvular disease which has little effect on the dog's lifestyle. The only finding in some affected dogs is a **heart murmur**, audible with a stethoscope at the time of the annual health check.

However as the valvular degeneration progresses, other problems related to a poorly-functioning heart can occur – including **heart chamber enlargement** and fluid build up in the lungs (**pulmonary oedema**). These are signs of **congestive heart failure**, and can manifest as weakness, weight loss, lethargy, collapse, excessive panting and coughing, and death in severe cases.

No medication is currently available to prevent, reverse or slow down degenerative valvular disease. The treatment we are able to give centers around **controlling the signs** of congestive heart failure. Often combinations of drugs are used to aid in fluid loss (**diuretics**), dilate blood vessels (**ACE inhibitors**) and assist in heart function (**pimobendan**). Occasionally other medications are added on an individual case-basis. Diet, weight loss (where needed) and controlled exercise also play a role in managing the signs of congestive heart failure.

At this time, cardiopulmonary bypass surgery (which is needed for valvular surgery) is very difficult to perform in small animals and the costs of doing so are prohibitive. Heart transplants in dogs are not performed as it is unethical to kill a healthy dog to provide such a gift. Perhaps in the future we will have the ability to humanely and safely replace heart valves, or even artificial heart transplants, in our canine companions – anyone who has lost a friend to this disease certainly looks forward to this day.

-Libby