

MERRY

CHRISTMAS



All of the staff here at Ingleburn Vet Hospital would like to wish you a very Happy Christmas and New Year Holiday season. We will be open for business as usual right through this period, with the exception of these few days:

Christmas Eve – Open 8am till 6pm

Christmas Day – Closed

Boxing Day – Closed

New years Day – Open 10am till 12pm

Australia Day – Open 10am till 12pm

**PLEASE NOTE WE WILL BE CLOSING AT 6PM
CHRISTMAS EVE!**

**For Emergencies on Christmas Day & Boxing Day please
phone the Animal Referral Hospital on 9758 8666.**

Extended Sunday Hours!

Sunday trading hours have been extended. We can now provide an even better service to our clients due to our new Sunday hours. Our opening time of 10am will stay the same, but we now close at 5pm in the afternoon. Please remember that an appointment will still be necessary and the Sunday Surcharge of \$12 on top of our standard consultation fee will apply.

Puppy Preschool

Congratulations to our recent graduates: "Bentley & Porsche" Rigby, "Lidia" Ashley, "Missy" Stares, "Cooper" Pignataro, "Comanche" Rosenthal, "Oz" Gajewski, "Buddy" Smith, "Indy" Evans, "Zak" Clayton, "Elle" Henry, "Abby"



Losew, "Sam" Ross, "Banjo" Sarantos, "Buddy" Frew, "Rupert" Belak, "Diesel" Woodman, "Brandi & Harry" Hepplewhite, "Achilles" Garea, "Sook" Turner, "Xena" Field, "Jessie" Hill, "Buddy" Whalam & "Frank" Valpiani.

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.

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Do you have an appointment?

Just another reminder that appointments are required for all consultations including vaccinations. Most people are very good with this, and are making appointments. But we don't want you to be the one who has to wait, because for some reason you didn't know that we work by an appointment system.

Also, we have one small favour to ask. Due to time constraints and a sometimes busy surgical schedule for the day it important to note that if for some reason you are running late, or are unable to keep your appointment, could you please phone and let us know.

Your co operation in this matter is much appreciated!

News Alert!

There have been reports in the media recently suggesting unexplained illness and death in some cats may have been caused by an imported pet food.

Around 40 cats have shown signs of pelvic hind limb weakness progressing over weeks to paraplegia and /or tetraplegia. All cats had been fed with Orijen dry pet food, a commercial product made in Canada. Tests on the food to date have shown no nutritional abnormalities or known toxins.

There have been suggestions the food may be affected by an irradiation process required when passing through quarantine. However, no definitive casual link has been confirmed. The manufacturer, Champion Pet Food, has now withdrawn its product from the Australian market as a precautionary measure.

Also, there was a problem recently in the US where chicken flavoured jerky treats were causing kidney failure in dogs and recalled. Now there is a similar problem occurring in Australia, but it hasn't been proved yet to be related to any food. Dogs showing any signs of kidney failure need to be investigated.

Cats in Cages & Dog's on Leads!

At Ingleburn Vet Hospital we believe that the safety and well being of our patients is of the utmost importance. So it is for this reason that we request that all dog's (even puppies) are brought into the hospital with a lead and a collar. Cat's in particular are at an even greater risk of injury or escape if they are not securely transported in a cat carrier. Abiding by these simple rules will ensure a safe trip to our hospital for you and your pet!

What's New ???

We have just taken delivery of some new equipment that is causing some excitement here. Top of the list is new surgery table. This is a state of the art, stainless steel veterinary operating table that has height adjustment, rotates and folds into a V for patient positioning, but also is heated. Maintaining the body temperature of small dogs and cats during anaesthesia is often challenging and this table will make it much easier. We have a new patient monitor that tells us body temp during surgery, blood oxygen levels, breathing rate and ECG, making anaesthetics much safer. We have finally finished the runs for large dogs by having stainless steel gates fitted. These runs are easy clean and give large dogs more room in hospital. There is also a new anaesthetic machine for the X-ray department! All these changes are to make our patient care more sophisticated and safer, and to ensure that we continue to attract good quality vets and nurses as the practice grows.

Sealed Section

Intelligent, inquisitive, playful (and somewhat pongy!), seals are the dogs of the water world. They captivate us, intrigue us, and entertain us with their seal-ly little ways. They are mammals, so even though they spend a lot of time submerged, they must surface periodically to breathe air.

There are 3 families; the Otariids (or "eared" seals) such as the fur seals and sea lions, the Phocids (or "true" seals) such as the leopard seal and elephant seals, and the Odobenid (consisting only of the walrus). I never tired of feeding the seals at Sydney Aquarium, and watching as they responded playfully to our commands such as "speak", "scratch", "salute", "bubbles" and "kiss"!

All the seals at the Aquarium and those that breed in Australian waters form part of the Otariid family. They have external ear flaps and are able to rotate their hindflippers forward to allow them to be significantly mobile on the surface.

Ever wondered what the difference was between fur seals and sea lions? Both types of seals have an outer layer of stout guard hairs to keep them waterproof. In addition, fur seals have a dense layer of softer fur close to the skin, to trap air for insulation. Just as their name suggests!

The Phocids lack ear flaps and cannot rotate their hindflippers underneath their bodies, but rather trail them passively behind them as they draw themselves forward using their foreflippers. All seals have a thick layer of fat (blubber) underlying the skin to help them conserve heat.

During one of my recent weekend dives, I was seal-pressed to find 6 Australian sea lions suddenly surrounding us at 25m. They are incredibly agile, doing somersaults in the water, following us eagerly and playfully snapping their jaws close to my face. That moment will be sealed in my mind forever!

Sorry I'm blubbing on, enough from me fur now! Seal you all later!

-Leanne

Staff Training

At Ingleburn Vet Hospital it is our aim to provide our patients with up to date high quality health care, the various seminars and courses that our staff attend ensure that this is achieved.

Connie attended the Partners in Veterinary Education Conference at Sydney University in August where she learnt about the latest advances in orthopaedic surgery, diagnostic imaging and anaesthesia. She also attended a short-course seminar on updates in medicine and surgery in November.

Mark has attended various seminars recently he has been brought up to date on bladder stones in dogs, allergies and allergy testing, and also attended an information launch on a new long lasting injectable antibiotic.

Mark & Connie also attended a seminar on cruciate surgery in dogs by a leading specialist orthopaedic surgeon.

Mel attended a one day microchipping course which now enables her to microchip companion animals. She also attended an anaesthesia course in Canberra and a seminar on Tick Paralysis.

Leanne attended a seminar on diagnostic cytology

Ros attended 2 anaesthesia courses to further update her surgical nursing skills. She also attended a seminar on Tick Paralysis.

Liz has enrolled in both Cert II Animal Studies & Cert IV in Vet Nursing which she will complete at Richmond TAFE in 2009.

New "Hair Raising" Danger!

Recently there was a report of a cat which went into heart failure 24 hours after licking her owner's scalp. It was revealed that the cause of her heart attack was due to licking off the hair growth stimulant he had used on his scalp.

The popular men's baldness treatment known as Rogaine contains the drug Minoxidil which can cause a dramatic drop in blood pressure and cause the heart to beat too fast, potentially causing a fatal heart attack. It can be toxic to any animal, including humans which accidentally ingest it.

Fortunately for this cat, she was treated promptly and recovered. However, there have been other reports of animals dying from accidentally ingesting this drug.

Please keep this potentially dangerous drug away from your beloved pet. And if you happen to use it yourself, don't let your cat or dog near your scalp!

- Connie

New Product

All natural Veggie Ears. These are similarly priced and shaped to the old Pig's ear. They are however better for the following reasons:

- No artificial colours or preservatives.
- Low in fat – High in Fibre
- Nutritious and Delicious
- Extra large & Chewy

Why not grab a couple for your pet's Christmas stocking this year.

Breast Cancer

Breast cancer, better known to vets as mammary cancer or mammary tumour, can actually happen to any mammalian animal including other popular pets such as rats, mice, ferrets, rabbits and guinea pigs.

Unfortunately, mammary cancer is a common type of cancer in dogs and cats. In dogs, there is a strong link with mammary tumours and the female hormones produced by the ovary. It has been shown that female dogs which have not been desexed have a **seven-fold** increased risk of developing mammary cancer compared to female dogs which have been desexed.

Female dogs desexed before their first season have a close to **zero** risk of developing mammary cancer. The risk of developing mammary cancer unfortunately increases after each season. After the first season, the risk increases to 8%, and rises to an alarming 26% after the second season. For those that have a young adult female dog which hasn't been desexed yet, don't worry, it isn't too late! Even though the maximal benefit of desexing may have been missed, it has been shown that bitches desexed before the age of 2.5 years can still have a greatly reduced risk of developing this cancer. Additionally, there are numerous other benefits of desexing including pyometra prevention (a potentially life-threatening infection of the reproductive organ) which in itself is a compelling reason to have your dog desexed.

Approximately half of mammary tumours in dogs are benign but unfortunately the other half are malignant, or aggressive. There is no way of telling which ones are benign or malignant without surgery. We would need to perform a surgical biopsy and have the tumour tested by the laboratory. Malignant mammary tumours not only require extensive surgery but many cases also required additional treatment with chemotherapy as many of these tumours will have spread to the rest of the body by the time they have been discovered.

These statistics are no doubt alarming and is one of the reasons why we strongly recommend all non breeding bitches to be desexed. *These cancers can be prevented.*

Mammary cancer also occurs in cats. Unfortunately the majority of mammary cancers in cats are highly aggressive. The good news is that desexing, like in dogs, has a protective effect.

Mammary cancer can occur in male animals but this is very rare. If you are considering having your pet desexed and have any concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us and discuss these with our staff. - *Connie*

Got a behaviour problem?

Behaviour problems in dogs and cats are very common, and there are lots of different types. Many of these **can** be treated with correct diagnosis and retraining techniques. Medication is also available but often unnecessary. The most common behaviour problems include barking, aggression & biting, destructive behaviour, fears & phobias (eg. thunderstorms or fireworks) and urine marking. If you're having these or any other behaviour problems with your pets, make an appointment and talk to us about them.

Fight the seven signs of ageing

It can be easy to confuse the signs of arthritis with old age. But when your cat loses interest in playing and jumping, gives up on grooming and starts sleeping more, they're not simply ageing, they could be suffering.

Recognising a cat in pain isn't always easy. A cat with arthritis won't necessarily limp. Often the only signs of pain are subtle behavioural changes. The sort of changes that as an owner, you are best placed to notice.

Signs to look for include:

Disinterest in play

Hesitant to jump or making several smaller jumps

Avoiding or difficulty climbing stairs

Litter tray mishaps/inappropriate urination

Increased aggression or biting

Vocalising when stroked

Poor grooming

Unwilling to go out

More time sleeping

Reduced interaction with other animals

If you notice any of these signs, speak to one of our staff. Arthritis can be treated. With proper care you can improve not just their condition, but their quality of life. Because every cat deserves a comfortable old age.

Another reason to get a dog

Childhood obesity may be helped by having a family pet, according to Dr Jo Salmon from Deakin University. Dr Salmon has presented work showing that a smaller proportion of children in families who own a dog are overweight, compared with those in families who do not own a dog.

One of the keys to weight reduction is more exercise, and studies have shown that owning and walking a dog can substantially increase the amount of walking a person does.

Half the recommended level of physical activity for children can be undertaken just through playing with their dog.

Of course walking the dog is not the only way to increase physical activity, but it is an easy choice for nearly 40% of Australian households that have a dog. Especially when research has shown that for children – playing with pets rated next behind playing with friends as their favourite activity.

Do Not Use Dog Flea Products on Cats!!!!

Attention all cat owners - when purchasing flea control products for your cat this summer, be very careful **not** to use dog flea control products or any product with **Permethrin** on your cat. **Permethrin** is highly toxic to cats and can cause seizures and death! If you are unsure about any product you wish to apply on your cat, please seek advice from any of the staff here. We recommend Revolution for cats because it not only kills fleas, but also controls ear mites, intestinal worms and prevents heartworm, all in one safe monthly dose!

Paralysis Ticks

Summertime means heading outdoors with our pets in the great weather, but it is also the time when fleas, ticks and snakes are more likely to be sharing our space. Although paralysis ticks (*Ixodes holocyclus*) are not as common inland as in the coastal regions, it is still a concern for all our pets in this area. Ticks are especially of concern if you're planning to travel along the East Coast of Australia with your pet over the holiday period. Tick paralysis usually occurs after infestation with one or more adult ticks. Adult paralysis ticks are grey in colour, with a long snout. Engorged ticks (full of blood) will be oval in shape and measure up to approximately 1cm in size. Ticks that have not fed will be much smaller and rounder. They need to be attached for 3-4 days before the toxins will have effect (and symptoms can occasionally take up to two weeks to appear!)

The signs of tick paralysis are:

- Initially weakness and a wobbly/drunken walk especially in the hind legs
- This will progress to paralysis of the hind legs, and later of the whole animal
- Difficulty breathing
- Drooling
- Change in the dog's bark
- Dilated pupils
- Vomiting

To treat the paralysis, the tick must be killed and removed. Frontline spray is used all over the body to kill any other ticks the animal may be carrying and more often than not, the animal's fur will be entirely shaved off! A tick anti-toxin is administered to neutralize the toxins in the animal's body and the animal is sedated and kept in a cool, dark cage in a quiet part of the hospital.

A 3-4 day stay in hospital is usually required and strict rest for about a week at home after that. Unfortunately, even with the best care & treatment, tick paralysis can be fatal, therefore, prevention is the best cure.

If you are heading to a tick area this holiday season, watching for symptoms and **daily search and removal of ticks is the best prevention**. The use of a tick killing product such as Frontline plus (applied every 2 weeks), Frontline Spray or a daily tablet (Proban) is also recommended. If you find a tick, it should be first killed with a product such as Frontline Spray. Next slide a pair of partially open scissors between its mouthparts and the animal's skin and gently lever it off, being careful not to break the mouthparts.

For more information on tick and flea prevention, please talk to our friendly staff or visit our website.

New Product

At long last! A great new injectable antibiotic that lasts 2 weeks. This product has already been used on a few of our patients who really dislike having oral daily medications. It is a broad spectrum antibacterial agent that is particularly useful in treating dogs and cats with skin infections, wounds, abscesses and urinary tract infections.

Cruciate Rupture

Cruciate rupture is a common cause of hindlimb lameness in the dog.

There are actually two cruciate ligaments in the stifle (knee joint), although it is usually only the cranial cruciate ligament which ruptures. It extends from the tibia (shin bone) to the femur (thigh bone). The function of this ligament is to prevent the knee from being extended excessively, and ensuring that the tibia is unable to move forward in relation to the femur. This helps the stifle, or knee joint, to remain stable (along with all the other ligaments and attachments to the joint).

Factors that may contribute to cranial cruciate rupture include:

- Age (strength of the ligament decreases over time)
- Trauma
- Abnormal conformation (particularly involving the tibia, which could lead to increased strain)
- Obesity
- Poor development of surrounding musculature which further help to support the joint
- Breed (larger breeds such as the Rottweiler are more commonly affected)

Diagnosis is usually attained through history, physical examination and demonstration of a 'positive drawer sign'. This means that when pressure is applied, there is movement of the tibia in relation to the femur, indicating that the cruciate is damaged and is no longer able to prevent this from happening. There may also be some swelling around the stifle joint and often pain on full extension (straightening of the knee). A 'clunking' sound can sometimes be heard on manipulation of the joint and this may indicate meniscal damage. (The menisci are 'shock absorbers' which lie on the surface of the tibia and are sometimes damaged in conjunction with cranial cruciate rupture). Sedation may be required to gain full appreciation of the extent of joint laxity if the animal is very painful or tense. When tense, the contraction of the muscles surrounding the joint may cause it to appear more stable than what it actually is.

So what do we do once cranial cruciate rupture is confirmed? If the dog is small (<10-15kg), conservative treatment may be considered. This involves rest, with medications to help protect the cartilage and promote joint fluid production as well as some to provide immediate pain relief. In larger dogs, a successful outcome with conservative treatment is not as likely, and surgical repair is recommended in these animals (as well as those smaller dogs which have a poor response to conservative treatment). The surgery allows the damaged ligament +/- menisci to be removed and the joint is restabilised by way of placing a permanent suture to act as a fake ligament. Cranial cruciate surgery is normally very successful.

Hopefully this article will simply be light reading for the vast majority of you! However if your pet does rupture his/her cruciate, our vets will discuss the condition and treatment options further.