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**CONSULTATION BY APPOINTMENT**

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# The Allergy Cycle

**T**here are many different types of allergies, and Springtime seems to be the worst time of the year for our pets. Pollens, grasses, fleas and other insects can make Spring and Summer a nightmare for your pet. Your pet may be scratching like crazy and digging open sores on tortured skin. These sores can cause infections, foul odours and misery - and the cause could well be part of your pet's natural environment.

There are a number of reasons why your dog/cat may be scratching. Perhaps he/she has an allergy to fleas and mite infestation, or the allergy may even be from a plant or an ingredient in commercial dog food.

**Pets with skin allergies tend to have sore, red hot patches of skin that may break out in welts as the animal scratches to relieve itself.**

Pollen and dust granules are inhaled by dogs just as they are by humans, but instead of producing sinus congestion and a sore throat, they cause the skin to itch, the hair to fall out and with prolonged scratching, possible infections. Allergies can lead to stomach and intestinal problems, including vomiting and diarrhea, so its nothing to be sneezed at!

### **INHALANT ALLERGIES**

Some inhalant allergies are seasonal. If affected by inhaling grass pollens, the dog may start to scratch and bite his body, lick his paws, shake his head, and rub his face along the carpet for relief from the itch. However, many dogs

suffering from allergies itch somewhat year-round because they are also affected by household dust, mold spores and other irritants.

Treatment for inhalant allergies range from keeping your pet comfortable with specific shampoos, to drug therapy to interrupt the itch/scratch cycle until the skin can be healed. Inclusion of Omega 3 and Omega 6 fatty acids in the diet can also keep the skin supple and healthy.

Environmental controls include frequent vacuuming and dusting of areas where the pet spends his/her time and keeping their bedding dust free.

### **FLEA ALLERGIES**

One of the most common allergies we see in pets is flea allergy. Dogs with flea bite allergy are often frantic to ease the itching and may chew themselves raw. A typical area for scratching is around the tail base.

**Spring is the time for fleas to start breeding and if your pet is scratching because of fleas, you need to start controlling their fleas now, to stop a plague this summer.**

Top of the list for avoiding flea bite dermatitis is to control fleas. First line of defense is regular grooming, right down to the skin, to find fleas or flea droppings. There are an arsenal of different products available to control fleas. Each one may work effectively in different situations. We suggest that you call in for professional advice from our trained staff to determine the best treatment for your particular situation.

### **FOOD ALLERGIES**

It is often difficult to ascertain if problems are caused by true food allergies. However if food is suspected a hypo-allergenic diet with novel protein and carbohydrate sources, as well as other nutrients can be prescribed especially for your pet.



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# Pet Profile

## The Dalmation



**T**he Dalmation is amongst the most easily recognised of dogs, due to its spotted coat.

A consummate working dog, and one with many talents.

Through history he has been a hunting dog, a coach follower, a guardian, a draft dog, a shepherd, a war dog, a circus performer, and a vermin dog - in short he has performed just about any job man has asked him to do.

**A Dalmation's mind is geared to long working days, for he craves activity and, if denied, can become neurotic and destructive.**

Dalmations are born white, with perhaps a patch of colour on the ears; the spots gradually appear over the first few weeks of the puppies' lives.

This breed is not as easy to care for as it may seem, for although its coat is short, it sheds constantly and can leave white hairs clinging to everything. However, daily grooming will help.

Like most large and medium breeds, Dalmations are subject to hip dysplasia, and they are also prone to skin problems, deafness and bladder stones.

There's a wide range of temperaments in the breed, from shy to aggressive, from silly to

stable. Some are smell and sound sensitive, and they lose their concentration when their senses are bombarded with sounds or tantalised by particular odours.

As would be expected by its versatility, the Dalmation is an intelligent breed and can be trained to do almost anything if the owner is persistent, consistent and firm. They never run out of energy, but once the owner builds a rapport with the dog, the Dalmation is a loving comical dog that is a great deal of fun to have around the house.

Obedience training is critical for this breed, initially with puppy pre-school classes, then basic obedience.

It is recommended that experienced dog families take on this breed, as it demands much more attention than many others.

## Pancreatitis

**P**ancreatitis is an inflammation of the pancreas. The pancreas produces enzymes that help digest food, and also produces the hormone insulin that helps to regulate blood sugar levels.

The cause of Pancreatitis is unknown, however, it can be associated with a high fat diet, obesity, the administration of corticosteroids, and certain drugs and toxins. We commonly see pancreatitis post (the often accidental) ingestion of a highly fatty meal (such as a barbeque).

Animals with Pancreatitis may appear depressed, lethargic, off their food, vomit and 'hunch up' in the abdomen with pain. They typically have a fever, diarrhoea and may have an increased respiratory rate. This is because

enzymes that are normally released into the intestine to digest food a instead released into the abdomen and begin to digest the pancreatic tissue as well as surrounding tissue. If the attack is severe, acute shock and death can occur. Pancreatitis is commonly seen in the middle aged female dog and is less commonly seen in cats.

**To diagnose this condition, you vet will conduct a thorough physical exam, take a detailed dietary history and then a blood sample, x-rays and even an ultrasound may be required to help differentiate this condition from other diseases.**

This mild form of the disease is best treated by resting the pancreas from its role in digestion. This means withholding all oral food and water. Intravenous fluids, antibiotics

and drugs which will help to control vomiting and the associated gut pain may also be required, especially in the severe form.

**The prognosis depends on the extent of the disease when presented. Dogs that present with a shock and depression have a guarded prognosis, but most of the milder forms have a good prognosis.**

It is important to realise that recurrent bouts can occur. This can cause scarring of the pancreas, which can lead to problems with digestion. As such, special diets have been formulated to help minimise any recurrence. These diets are low in fat, yet highly palatable and capable of being fed long term to help control the condition.

# Truly Mans' Best Friend



## A touching story of a faithful dog

**G**reyfriars Bobby, was a small shaggy terrier owned by a farmer in Scotland.

When the farmer died in 1858, Bobby followed the funeral and stood, whining softly, as the coffin was lowered into the grave.

As the mourners turned away Bobby did not follow, but lay there with his eyes fixed mournfully on the grave. He remained there all night and the next day was discovered, wet and cold by the sexton who drove him away. That night, when doing his rounds at the cemetery, he found the little shaggy dog had returned and although soaked to the skin and shivering had huddled against the same grave. The following morning one of the grave diggers recognised the dog as belonging to the farmer who was buried there.

The story of the little dog was told in the bar of the local inn, and patrons arranged shelter for the dog and provision of table scraps. The story captured the imagination of the public after being written up in the local paper and people crowded to the churchyard to see Greyfriars Bobby.

**Bobby learned to go to the Inn at noon every day to be fed a plate full of scraps, but would return to the churchyard to take up his vigil.**

Bobby was declared a stray and was about to be impounded when the Innkeeper guaranteed his yearly license fee and accepted responsibility for the dog. The Mayor presented Bobby with an ornate collar which had been purchased with money donated by the public and many artists sketched or painted Bobby.

On the 14th January 1872, Bobby was found dead in his bed along side his

masters grave. For nearly fourteen years he had kept his vigil and no-one knew how old he was when the farmer died.

Edinburgh mourned Bobby, its greatest tourist attraction, and a memorial was erected in the churchyard in his memory.



**Greyfriars Bobby, may have looked similar to the above breed.**

## Pet Care Reminders

### Worm Dogs & Cats Regularly

Both dogs and cats may have intestinal worms and should be wormed throughout their lifetime. there are many excellent products available which are easy to administer. We can help you with your choice.

### Heartworm Medication

Heartworm is a parasite which is transmitted by the mosquito and is now present in most areas of Australia. If untreated it is a fatal condition. Fortunately there are preventative medications available and choices of daily, monthly or even annual medication - there is one to suit every owner and budget. It is important to speak to us before commencing any preventative medication as some may be harmful to dogs already infected.

### Booster Immunisation Yearly

Puppies and kittens receive the first in a series of vaccinations against infectious diseases at about 6 weeks of age. Adult dogs and cats should receive booster vaccinations annually to maintain immunity.

### Birds Need Worming Too!

Cagebirds also get intestinal worms, and it is a good practice to worm them every 3-6 months. Ask us for more information on products available.

### Pet Grooming

Don't wait until the last moment. Some breeds such as Poodles, require clipping every 6 weeks. Other breeds such as West Highland Terriers, Schnauzers etc. require stripping or clipping approximately every 3 months. All dogs with a long or double coat require a minimum of grooming once a week by the owner to keep the coat clean

and tangle free. Breeds which moult seasonally should be booked into the groomer well in advance. Don't forget the long-haired cats benefit from a professional touch also.

### Holiday Care

Don't forget to book the dog and cat into the boarding kennel/cattery WELL in advance for peak holiday times, such as school holidays.

### Flea Treatment A Must!

Start flea treatment EARLY before the hot weather. The choice of treatments is vast - we can advise on the best plan for your pet. Remember never combine products, never use products that have reached their use-by date, and never use products on cats that are meant for dogs and visa versa.



# Our Diabetic Cat

**G**inger is a 14 year old male, ginger and white domestic shorthaired cat. He originally came into our clinic as he had not been eating for the past 2 days, although he had been drinking and urinating more than usual. Ginger seemed very depressed, was very weak in his hindlegs and had lost a lot of weight. He was not grooming and appeared dehydrated.

**Ginger was admitted to hospital and xrays, a blood profile and urine sample were taken He was also placed on a drip to help combat his dehydration and given oral electrolytes.**

The results of the testing indicated that Ginger had an elevated blood glucose (sugar) concentration and had glucose and ketone in his urine. All these findings together pointed to a diagnosis of diabetes. Diabetes mellitus refers to a medical condition where there is an excessive quantity of sugar (glucose) in the blood This is caused by a relative or absolute deficiency in the hormone insulin, which is secreted by the pancreas, which normally helps to regulate the blood glucose concentration.

Ginger was very ill, and as his body was not producing the required amount of insulin we had to supplement it, by injecting insulin just under the skin and taking frequent blood samples to measure the concentration of glucose in his blood. Ginger was also inappetent and so we had to force feed him on a high calorie wet meal, as his glucose level began to decrease. Slowly Ginger appeared brighter and began to eat and drink on his own accord. This was one cat with a strong spark for life!

Ginger was hospitalised for a couple of days to ensure his blood glucose had stabilised. this involved feeding prescription food in fixed amounts and times each day, after which an injection of insulin just under his skin (just like a vaccination)

was given. Poor Ginger had to have these injections twice daily and have his blood sampled every 2 hours.

Ginger was later discharged with insulin, syringes, and many instructions on managing a diabetic cat. His loving owners diligently followed all these instructions, however Ginger was not partial to the prescription food we had supplied and decided against eating it. This complicated the control of his diabetes and he unfortunately had to be rushed to the emergency centre and be re-stabilised, and his insulin levels re-adjusted.

**Diabetic cats can be notoriously difficult to stabilise, with many changes in insulin dosages required. Ginger was unfortunately no exception.**

Ginger re-presented to our clinic within the next few days and instead of having a very high blood glucose (hyperglycaemia) he had a dangerously low blood glucose (hypoglycaemia). He was weak and lethargic and very unsteady. A low blood glucose can be rapidly fatal as the body then does not have any energy to run essential processes such as breathing, pumping the heart and providing energy for the brain. Ginger's owners recognised this change and immediately gave him sugar and rushed him to the vet where he was placed on a glucose

drip and offered food. This increased his blood glucose and our next task was to then re-stabilise Ginger and find the appropriate insulin dosage required. Ginger spent a week in our care, as his blood glucose levels were rapidly changing. However, after much dosage and food trialling we seemed to find a happy medium where Ginger was stable, eating and happy to be able to finally go home.

To enable his owners to monitor Ginger's status, we provided some urine dipstix to monitor the amount of glucose in his urine.

**Normally there should be no glucose in the urine, it is only when the amount of glucose in the blood exceeds a certain amount that spills over into the urine.**

We will also need to keep monitoring Ginger's blood glucose levels on an 'out-patient' basis to ensure he is managing on the current dose and feeding regime. As you can imagine looking after a diabetic cat is a full time occupation, but luckily for Ginger his family is only too obliging to cater for his every need. But, with a cat like Ginger, we can understand why.



**Ginger the diabetic cat**