



THE PET GAZETTE

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438 CAMBRIDGE STREET
FLOREAT PARK W.A. 6014

Dr. Don Stewart, Dr. Greg Gale & Dr. Rebecca Vaughan

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Pet Health Tips

With the warmer months comes the festive season and the all Australian BBQ, both of which produce excess scraps and bones.

Some pet owners make the mistake of feeding leftovers to their pets which can lead to many problems such as obesity and intestinal health problems.

DON'T ever give a dog or cat cooked chicken/turkey bones, they may splinter and penetrate the gastrointestinal tract causing serious problems. **DO** give cats raw chicken necks, lamb flaps or lamb shanks - these help control tartar and gum disease.

DON'T give dogs chop bones - these can be swallowed by a dog and because of the bone

shape get lodged in the oesophagus, stomach or intestines. This can lead to serious damage and even death. **DO** give large raw marrow bones to dogs to chew on - these provide excellent work for a dog's teeth and gums.

Certainly obesity is a problem if your dog controls the amount of food and snacks he receives by begging or looking sad. Furthermore, as dogs are scavengers by nature, most will eat what is offered to them and suffer the consequences later.

This year after that large Xmas lunch or dinner, instead of snoozing, why not take the dog, and the rest of the family for a nice healthy stroll, Both pets and owners will benefit by fighting off those extra kilos.



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Summer Fly Bites

Some dogs are bothered by flies that bite their ears. In severe infestations, the flies cover the ears and leave behind bloody bite marks that seem to be irritating and can become infected. Some dogs cause hair loss by rubbing their ears to relieve the discomfort.

You can use a variety of salves, insect repellents, and insecticides

to kill the flies or keep them away. Use of stick insecticides, Vicks Vapo-rub or Vaseline can keep the flies off and antibiotic creams can soothe the bites, however, the best prevention is to keep affected dogs inside during the heat of the day.

Prevention is better than cure.



The Nose Knows

The canine nose is an awesome organ, perhaps a million times more sensitive than the human nose. A dog's nose can discern the presence of a friend or foe, find a submerged dead body, sniff out a bomb or drug cache, and locate objects bearing the scent of a particular person.

It hardly seems possible that the leathery patch at the end of a dog's muzzle could be such an important communication device, yet it is with his nose that your dog becomes acquainted with his surroundings. It is also the nose which makes him useful as a hunter, tracker, police dog and a fascinating family pet.

Here are some facts about your dog's nose:

- The canine nose is normally cool and moist, but not wet.
- If the nose is runny, suspect a foreign body in the nasal passage or illness, allergy or a tumour. Dog's don't get colds like humans do, but they do get respiratory infections.
- Dogs do sneeze, however generally from some irritation to the nose.

• Persistent Sneezing without discharge indicates a problem such as a polyp or tumour or inhaled foreign body. A dog with something in a nostril will generally paw at his nose and rub his muzzle against a hard surface.

• Owners should not try to remove a foreign body from a pet's nostril. The inside of the nose is easily damaged and the object may be too far back to be easily plucked with tweezers. Some dogs may need to be sedated to have the object removed.

• Both polyps and tumours can cause breathing difficulties if established in the nose. Polyps are not malignant, tumours can be. Early removal is recommended for these growths.

• A discharge from the nose generally means trouble. Several diseases involve nasal discharge, including distemper, bacterial rhinitis, infected sinuses, and kennel cough, so a trip to the clinic is definitely in order if your dog's nose begins to run.

• Some dogs experience loss of pigment on the nose leather or blistering of the nose. Treatment involves keeping the dog out of the sun and treating any ulcerated area with a steroid preparation.

Nose games are great fun for pet dog owners. A dog that finds his toy, a treat, or his owner by using his nose

is a dog that looks forward to interaction with his family and is less likely to be destructive when left alone. Training begins by placing the object in plain sight; then, as the dog understands "find it", moving the object further away. The goal is to be able to hide it completely between sofa cushions, inside a shoe in the closet, under a chair etc. and send the dog to look. A variation of the game involves placing a dog biscuit under one of three or four upturned flower pots or plastic cups, then telling the dog to "find it."

A pet can learn to find his leash, find Billy, or find the toy he left in the back yard. Pet owners interested in more than fun games at home might think about teaching their pet to track. For information contact a local breed, all-breed or training club.



A dogs sense of smell is a million times more sensitive than a human!

Shampoo Therapy

With so many shampoos currently on the market, it is difficult to know what is best for your four legged friend. Many owners wash their dog in human preparations. However, human shampoos are designed for human skin which has a different pH and fatty acid profile to dogs skin and so their use would be discouraged.

Woolwash is another shampoo treatment which is often used. Woolwash is very high in surfactant (soap) and so tends to be quite drying on the skin which can result in dandruff (scale).

So what should be used? For routine bathing, or for dogs with dry skin, a soothing oatmeal based, hypoallergenic shampoo that cleans the skin of dirt and allergens, such as **Episoothe, Aloveen** or

Allergroom is recommended. For longer lasting conditioning and soothing, **Resi-soothe** a residual leave on lotion, may also be required.

Ecto-soothe is another product that combines the ingredients for flea control with an oatmeal base, and so helps to form an important part of your pet's flea control program.

Please call in to discuss which product is suitable for your pet.

Summer Heat



With the warmer weather upon us, pet owners need to be particularly aware of the dangers that the summer heat can pose to their pets.

Animals are dependent on us for their safety and comfort and when the hot weather approaches we must make absolutely certain that we safeguard them from extremes of temperature.

The key elements for summer safety are shade, water, rest and ventilation.

Avoid situations where your animal is left in direct sunlight without any access to shaded areas. This applies to larger animals such as sheep and horses as well as to dogs and cats. In particular, smaller pets like guinea pigs, birds and rabbits must have their cages well shaded throughout the day so pay particular attention to positioning of their cages.

Troughs should be checked at least twice a day to ensure they are

functioning and avoid using water containers that could tip over. For smaller pets, ceramic or other heavy dishes should be used, preferably more than one, and they should be placed in a shaded area.

Birds will appreciate access to a deep dish for bathing and a spray of water regularly to cool and clean them.



Your pets feel the heat too. Free access to water must be guaranteed at all times. They also require a nice shady spot away from the summer sun.

Good ventilation is crucial. Hutches for small pets should be open-sided mesh and a wet sack placed over the top to encourage evaporation.

Avoid making pets exercise in the heat of the day as this can result in heat stress. Activity should be planned for the early morning and evening.

Most importantly, never leave dogs and cats in stationary cars wherever possible. As little as fifteen minutes in a car on a hot day can result in fatal heat stroke.

If you must leave a pet in the car, make sure at least two windows are open for ventilation, leave water available, park the car in the shade and ensure that you leave them for the minimum amount of time.

Do not under any circumstances transport animals of any sort in the boot of your car.

Noting the above guidelines, both you and your animals can enjoy those lazy summer days!

Cat Fur Balls

Cats are naturally very clean animals that groom themselves daily. If a cat is overgrooming and ingesting a lot of fur this can lead to problems.

Commonly cat owners report a cat gagging or vomiting up meals with a little bit of fur in it. This can be the first sign of fur balls.

If a large build up of fur occurs then constipation, loss of appetite and even complete obstruction of the bowel can result in a very serious condition.

If your cat has any bare patches of fur or has developed a rash on the skin then it would be wise to

have him/her checked, as medication may be needed to control the rash and this will in turn also help to prevent further fur balls developing.

To prevent fur balls we recommend that you use a good brush or comb to remove dead hair from your cat's coat.

The use of a regular cat laxative will ensure removal of any fur from your pets bowel.

Excellent laxative pastes that are very palatable are available from the clinic reception. Formulated hairball control diets are also available, which help to minimise this common problem.



There's nothing like relaxing after a good cleaning session! Lucky I've got those fur balls under control.



'Hugo' and his Snake Experience

'Hugo' is a 4yr old male ginger cat who presented to our clinic in mid November. He was moribund, (extremely flat and unable to support himself), profoundly weak, and had fixed dilated pupils that were non-responsive. He looked like a 'plastic' cat. Poor Hugo was critically ill.

His owners reported he had been out in the morning near Herdsman's Lake and when he returned home he seemed very weak and then rapidly went downhill. After examining 'Hugo' the only sign of any possible trauma was a patch on his left forepaw where a small puncture wound was evident, which 'Hugo' had obviously been licking.

A snake bite was initially suspected given the history, (Herdsman's Lake is notorious for Tiger snakes and Dugites) and the presenting signs. However, we had to first confirm snake envenomation had occurred as other toxicity's including puffer fish, tick paralysis, botulism, and some other poisonings can also present with similar signs. As such, a blood sample was collected to test 'Hugo's' clotting time. In a healthy cat, blood should not take over 2 minutes to clot, however 'Hugo's' blood took over 5 minutes to clot. We also obtained a urine sample which contained blood. These findings confirmed that envenomation had occurred. 'Hugo' was then premedicated with Adrenaline and an antihistamine, before the antivenom was

administered. This is because some animals can have life-threatening allergic reactions to the antivenom. Luckily, 'Hugo' did not react to the antivenom and the full dose was safely run through his drip into his vein. 'Hugo's' left foreleg with the probably puncture wound was also pressure bandaged and he was kept very still to delay absorption of the venom which is transported from the bite wound via lymphatics into the circulation.

'Hugo' had to be very closely monitored and his breathing closely watched. The venom of snakes in this area contains pro-coagulants, (which cause constant bleeding), neurotoxins, (that stop the nerves sending their messages, which can lead to respiratory failure), and haemolysins (which damage the blood cells.) Tiger snake venom also contains myolysins, (which damage the skeletal muscle). This is why snake bites are so deadly!

2 hours later another blood sample was taken and although 'Hugo' was still very weak, his clotting time was much improved. Treatment then consisted of flushing out the venom with many bags of fluids running through his drip. The next day Hugo was still very flat, although obviously improved and his clotting time had returned to normal.

Unfortunately, venom can have long lasting effects. However, the fluids were continued with nutritional support and careful monitoring. Every

day 'Hugo' seemed to improve - especially when his owners visited.

After 6 days of intensive fluid therapy 'Hugo' was nearly back to his old self, walking around freely, purring and displaying great affection for his owners. As such 'Hugo' was discharged with instructions to stay away from the snakes in the future, for his own good and of course his loving owners peace of mind.

So if you do walk your dogs, or live near Bold Park, the beach, Herdsman's Lake or Lake Monger, be on the lookout for snakes at all times. If you suspect your pet may have been bitten, then contact the clinic immediately, and bring your pet straight down. Try to reduce any unnecessary movement of your pet. If you suspect the bite occurred on a limb, apply a compressive bandage to the entire limb. Try not to panic yourself, but do remember that with envenomations, delays in treatment can invariably be fatal.



Summer is the worst time of year for snakes - keep your pets safely away from snake infested areas!



Louisa Mitchell & Friend

Staff News

We wish to extend a warm welcome to our new trainee Veterinary Nurse, Louisa Mitchell. Louisa was raised in the country town of Kukerin, and has just completed her year 12 studies as a boarder at St Hilda's.

Louisa has always wanted a

career involving animal care and has just commenced her veterinary nurse training at TAFE. Louisa has also worked at various other veterinary clinics and at the Cat Haven.

We are sure you will be as impressed with Louisa's friendliness and caring attitude as we have all been.