



Snippets

Small animal newsletter

Issue 7

Spring 2008

Killing with Kindness

It may seem a shame that we can't share the food treats we enjoy with our pets, but some of these can be fatal, especially if given to smaller sized dogs and cats.

- Chocolate contains theobromine, which can cause tremors, vomiting, diarrhoea, in-coordination & seizures. The effect is dose related and worse reactions are associated with darker chocolate.
- Tea, coffee, & coke contain caffeine, a stimulant, which can cause similar symptoms as for chocolate.
- Raisins and grapes have recently been associated with deaths from kidney failure in some dogs, and it seems that certain individuals have greater susceptibility than others, so that even quite small amounts can be fatal.
- Some chewing gums contain Xylenol, an artificial sweetener, which can cause life-threatening hypoglycaemia, especially in smaller dogs.



Fortunately poisoning from these foods is relatively uncommon, and we see more problems from accidental access to rat poisons, or anti-freeze from car radiators that have not been cleaned up properly.



Lumps and Bumps

As you stroke your cat and dogs you may discover an unusual lump or tumour. Most of them may be seen in older animals and it is best to get these checked. There are two main groups of lumps— solid or fluid filled. Fluid filled lumps are usually of less concern than solid ones, but they can make your pet quite ill if infected, so need investigation.

Solid lumps can be benign or malignant, and often we can get more information about the nature of a growth by a simple needle aspirate from the lump. If cells are able to be exfoliated in this way and collected for analysis, we can confirm whether surgery may be appropriate. Surgery successfully removes most lumps, but success depends on the nature of the growth and on early detection. Malignant lumps can spread internally or into local tissues and often grow rapidly. These are obviously best removed as soon as possible to give the best chance of successful treatment.



Puppy Pre-School

Come join in the fun at puppy preschool run on Tuesday evenings at the clinic. Puppies have lots of playtime with dogs their own age and owners learn lots and take home valuable information and plenty of freebies.

A happy well adjusted dog is one that has a confident leader as their master. Dogs cannot provide for us in a world that they do not understand. By having a good set of rules at home the puppy can understand your role as leader and can enjoy a stress-free life.

We are constantly seeing the benefits of dogs that have attended our classes. They are happy to arrive at the clinic and are not stressed during their examination, they have lasting happy memories of puppy classes and of socialising with their friends.



Classes are run by Heidi, Danel and Natalie. For enquiries or to sign up call the clinic on 544 1200.

Need to get Fit? Get a Dog

Researchers in Perth, Australia looked at the influence of dog ownership on physical activity levels. Even though only a quarter of the dog owners walked their dogs five or more times per week, they found people with dogs participated in significantly more physical activity than people without dogs. (Source, American Journal of Public Health, January 2008).

Fireworks

Guy Fawkes Night is approaching and with it a time of great stress for many of our domestic pets. If only the fireworks were restricted to the 5th of Nov itself but every year the fireworks seem to start earlier and go on for longer. The key thing to remember, especially at the weekends around this time when parties may be planned, is to keep your pets indoors. Animals can often take fright and bolt. They then often end up in road traffic accidents or just become lost completely.

Some animals become seriously distressed, even when inside the house. They may scratch at the door, become frantic to get out (thinking they will escape the noise), shiver and shake uncontrollably and even howl. Here are several options for calming them:

1. Do not try to calm them or fuss over them when they are agitated. This merely serves to reinforce the fearful behaviour.
2. Draw the curtains and darken the room to minimise the flashing light.
3. Play some music, not loud enough to drown out the noise but something with a regular beat.
4. Try to engage your pet in a game of some sort to take their mind off what is going on outside.
5. Rescue remedy and other homeopathic remedies may have a soothing effect on some pets. We stock a variety so ask a member of staff for advice.
6. Conventional sedatives are not suitable for all pets and cannot be prescribed over the counter so you need to consult a vet about these.

Finally, there is a new product available to us which may be an aid in calming dogs during thunder storms and fireworks. DAP (Dog Appeasing Pheromone) is a plug in mechanism which releases pheromones or "feel good factors" into the air. It needs to be plugged in a few weeks before the firework season for best effect but please ask our staff for more info if you are interested in this product.



Hayfever Season!

Pets can display allergic symptoms, in the same way that humans do, to pollens, plants, dust mites, insects and foods. In spring and summer, the chances of such reactions are increased as plants flower and insect populations increase.

Typical symptoms of allergy include red, irritated itchy eyes, skin and sneezing. Allowing rubbing and scratching of skin and eyes usually causes worsening symptoms, ulceration of the cornea of the eye and trauma to the skin. This can introduce infection, adding to the itchiness.

We often need to give antibiotics to resolve this stage and medicate to reduce itchiness. Avoidance of the allergen is important but often difficult to achieve. Changing areas for dog walks to open country away from flowering plants in residential areas is preferable.



Treating for fleas regularly helps prevent this source of skin irritation, and some pets can be allergic to the saliva from fleas. As the seasons move on, symptoms often improve as weather changes bring plants out of flower.

T & C News

Client Christmas BBQ!!

Thursday 18th December

12 noon onwards (McGlashen Ave)

Drop by and share a festive glass of wine and a sausage with us!

