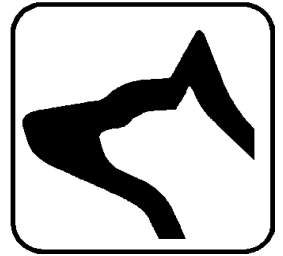


Companions



The Newsletter of the **Bucklands Beach Veterinary Hospital**
www.bbvet.co.nz

No. 34

Ph: 5348118

Welcome to this month's Christmas newsletter.

We would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and good wishes for the coming New Year. And what a year it has been! Economically difficult for all of us but we still love what we do looking after all of your pets and would like also to thank everyone who has supported us in that endeavour. For many of you, we know at times, it has not been easy.

You are all part of our extended clinic family and if there is anything that you would like us to write about or discuss please let us know. Any ideas would be great, and would make my job easier!



Senior Pets.

I know we have covered this subject in previous newsletters but just a reminder... our pets don't complain when they are in

pain or feel mildly unwell and it is important for us, their carers, to look out for them.

Your pets are considered senior when they reach 8 years of age. While at this age they may still appear fit and well, some are not and may spend longer periods sleeping, tire easily, become increasingly less mobile, have a poor appetite, start to cough especially early morning or after exertion, experience noticeable weight loss and/or excessive drinking.

Research and statistics indicate that when patients are seen on a regular basis for a physical examination and check their internal functions with blood tests, their general well-being as a group is improved. Blood testing offers a means of establishing individual parameters that change with time. Early treatment of abnormalities detected at these visits can result in your pet returning to normal with a subsequently longer life expectancy.

Sadly and I say this from bitter experience it is not until our special friends pass away that we really appreciate just how much we enjoy having them around.

Fleas, fleas, fleas....

Summer is here and again we are seeing many dogs and cats with fleas. Fleas can be the

bane of a pet's (and owners'!) life and over summer the problem can dramatically escalate. Warmer temperatures enable the flea to complete its life cycle



more quickly resulting in a flea population explosion. To find fleas on your pet do look along the back especially above the base of the tail. Often live fleas may not be seen on the pet but telltale flea faeces will be found. These resemble tiny bits of dark comma shaped crumbly specks of dirt. Unlike soil if you add a drop of water to the flea dirt it will turn red as this is composed of dry blood.

Fleas affect our pets in many different ways. Some animals may carry a large flea burden with little ill-effect while others who are allergic to the flea bites will suffer with excessive itching and discomfort from only 1-2 fleas. The most common symptoms seen include over grooming and subsequent hair loss and scratching. Often this is on the back towards the tail.

All pets should be protected against fleas especially in the summer. There are a number of excellent products available (see the flea control roundup in newsletter 32). One piece of equipment that I think is a must in the battle against fleas is a flea comb, which is used every day to look for fleas and flea dirt.



FLUTD – Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (or blocked bladder).

It is at this time of the year that we see increasing cases of blocked bladders in male cats, and the risk of this can be reduced by ensuring that your cat drinks sufficient water.

Increasing water intake will help to dilute the urine, reducing the concentration of stone-forming minerals in the urine, making your cat urinate more often, so reducing the time available for crystals or stones to form.

Here are a few tips to encourage your cat to drink more:

- Add water to the food, whether wet or dry
- Place a bowl of water next to the food and in several other places throughout the house
- Change the water in the bowls frequently to keep it fresh
- Try rain water or distilled/ bottled water instead of tapwater.
- Put a shallow bowl under a

slowly dripping tap to allow a drink of fresh water whenever the cat wants one

- Make flavoured ice cubes. Add some water to a small amount of cat food and slowly simmer for approximately 10 minutes. Strain the contents through a sieve, pour the fluid into ice cube trays and freeze, or use meat or fish broth. Don't add salt to the water.

Arthritis

Arthritis is inflammation and/or degeneration of joints. It can occur in all joints of the body including the spine. Our pets rarely complain as they get older, but can in fact be in significant discomfort. From personal experience I find the discomfort associated with arthritis is often worse in the summer when it is hot and humid. In some animals this also may be true, although for others the cold weather causes increased stiffness.

Signs of arthritis are due to gradual loss of the joint cartilage and exposure of the underlying bone, causing lameness, stiffness after resting, joint tenderness, and crepitation (a grating sensation when moving an affected joint). The only signs your pet may show are a reluctance to go for walks, a tendency to sleep more and perhaps be a bit grumpy.

Articular cartilage can heal, though often poorly. Treatments range from rest, nutraceuticals, like SYNOQUIN and Cosequin, nutraceuticals (added to food, for example Hills J/d for

Joint Disease), pain-relieving medication and joint surgery. We can advise you of the treatment best suited to your pet. There are many different products available. Many can be used in combination. "Trial and error" is often required to find the treatment most suited to your pet. However, now there is also another option which is beginning to be used in dogs.

Stem cell therapy

This is a non invasive treatment that uses your pet's own body to heal itself. Stem cells are found throughout the body and have the ability to divide and change into many different cell types. We now have access to technology to collect these stem cells bring them out of dormancy and then use them in areas that need repairing in much greater numbers than the body can normally attract to these affected areas and in so doing realise a far greater beneficial effect.

It is safe and because we don't use embryonic stem cells it is ethical. We collect adult stem cells from fat tissue. Results to date overseas have been very encouraging and if you would like to know more about this procedure please contact us.



Long term and repeat prescription medicines.

Some of you will have a pet on long term medication. It may be your cat is in kidney failure or has an overactive thyroid gland, or it might be that your dog is epileptic or has arthritis or is in heart failure... to mention just a few of the more common conditions for which we offer long term treatment.

We strongly recommend that as a minimum these animals have regular examinations (and basic blood screens if appropriate) to check that the medication is working correctly, and just as importantly not doing any harm.

As Veterinarians we have a legal obligation to only dispense restricted drugs "*at the time of a consultation or where the animal has been seen recently or often enough for the veterinarian to have sufficient personal knowledge of the condition/health status of the animal.*"

Many of you will know, I have had a few problems with my heart and although I am now really well, I still have to regularly take quite a few pills. They are what keep me well but they can also do harm and I have a check up and blood tests every 6 months and there is no way I would miss those checks. They really make the difference between me being well and not being 100%.

So if when you ring for a repeat script and the nurse (after speaking to a vet) says "I think it is time for a checkup/

blood test", please take up the offer. Unfortunately I know it comes down to cost a lot of the time, but even a short revisit/check up is preferable to just assuming all is well.

Dental Disease.

We commonly see animals, with bad teeth and periodontal disease. They don't complain, as we so often have discussed, but do remember they may be in some pain and of course the associated infection can result in seeding of that infection in other organs; in cats especially the kidneys and in dogs commonly in the heart valves.

Do remember we offer a FREE dental check for both dogs and cats if you are concerned about their dental health. At that visit we will also discuss how to keep the teeth clean.

On that note... remember we also offer free weight checks and advice regarding weight loss.



Summer is here.

It is starting to get hot so please remember to leave 2 or 3 bowls of water about for your pet to drink from and if going out in the car please don't leave your him/her in the car for any length of time even

if you leave a window open. It still gets very very hot!

Dangerous Foods

Some foods which we eat can be dangerous for our pets...

Chocolate: Contains theobromine, which is a cardiac and nervous system stimulant. Ingestion of chocolate, particularly dark or cooking chocolate can lead to heart arrhythmias, tremors and seizures.

Sweet Biscuits and Cakes: Are high in fat and sugar with low nutritional value.

Sultanas, grapes and raisins: Can lead to acute kidney failure in dogs.

Onions (and to a lesser extent Garlic): Can cause damage to red cell membranes and result in a haemolytic anaemia. Signs generally develop days after ingestion and include breathlessness, weakness and blood coloured urine.

Avocado: Contains a toxin called persin which leads to gastrointestinal irritation, including vomiting and diarrhoea.

Raw egg whites: Contain avidin which can interfere with the absorption of biotin (a B vitamin). Chronic biotin deficiency can lead to poor growth, lethargy, and dermatitis.

Macadamia Nuts: Can cause weakness, tremors or paralysis in the hindlegs. A toxic dose may be a little as one nut per kg bodyweight.

Bucklands Beach Veterinary Hospital

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VETERINARIANS

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Karen Hill

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“I dunno, maybe deep down I want to bark up the wrong tree.”

Office Hours

Monday — Friday 8am — 7.30pm
Saturdays 8am — 5pm

Consulting Hours

8am—12noon 2pm—7pm
9am—12noon 2pm—5pm

After Hours Service

Our after-hours service is provided by the Manukau After Hours Veterinary Service. This clinic is fully staffed and equipped to deal with accidents and emergencies outside of normal clinic hours.

2/586 Great South Road, Papatoetoe

(277 8383

(*cnr Great South Road & Regans Road, opp Caltex Service Station*)

PET TRIVIA

Q: Where does a cat go when it loses its tail?

A: The retail store!

Q: What do you call the cat that was caught by the police?

A: The purrpatrator!

When you are from the country your perception is a little different!!...

A Clevedon farmer drove to a neighbours' farm house and on arrival knocked on the door. A boy aged about 9 opened the door.

“Is your Dad home “ said the farmer. “No he has gone to Howick.” answered the boy.

“How about your brother Howard is he here?” “No he has gone with Dad”, replied the boy.

The farmer stood there moving from foot to foot and mumbling to himself.

“I know where all the tools are if you want to borrow one or I can give Dad a message.” Said the boy.

“Well” said the farmer uncomfortably. “I really wanted to talk to your Dad. It’s about your brother Howard getting my daughter Susie pregnant.”

The boy thought for a moment. “You would have to talk to Dad about that. I know he charges \$500.00 for the bull and \$50.00 for the pig but I’m not sure how much he charges for Howard.”

Merry Christmas,

From Ian, Graham, Iain, Paul, Joanne, Deb, Kerry, Kim, Nicki, Sam, and Karen!