

JULY  
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# The Better Pet Gazette

highlandsveterinaryhospital.com.au

## *caring for your* older cat



**As your cat approaches their later years, you should be on the alert for any changes in their normal behaviour or their daily habits.**

Sometimes the changes are gradual, and as we all know, cats are notorious for keeping their problems to themselves. But the sooner you notice any issues, the easier it is to treat.

Cats are considered a senior at 10-14 years. If your cat is suffering from joint and mobility problems, you may need to alter their home environment to make it easier for them to get around, like lowering the sides of their litter box or bed. An older cat requires increased daily water intake, so leave out more than one drinking station. Frequent smaller meals will help your cat's digestion system, too. Your senior cat may require help with their grooming, they may not be able to reach some areas and your help with a brush will make them feel good.

Keep in mind your cat may require nutritional supplements to help them cope with the challenges of creaky joints and the like. Please feel free to talk to us about some excellent products for feline mobility, like Solencia®.

Remember, cats love their comfort – they will adore being doted on and patted, as well as simple games to play. Their days of exploding from under the bed to attack your toes are gone, but as they age, the days get more sublime, and your cat just adores being adored!

*For more tips on how to look after your elderly feline friend, check out page 4.*



*The Better Pet Gazette is a monthly newsletter full of informative articles and tips on pet health as well as updates on what's happening at the practice. We hope you enjoy the read!*

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*need an appointment?*  
**BOOK ONLINE**



*Meet Earl, the Pomeranian, who was in to see us recently. Earl is what is known as a 'party' colour, being white, brown and black which is quite an unusual colour for this breed of dog.*



**Helping Paws**  
HIGHLANDS VETERINARY HOSPITAL

*Be in it to win it, and help pets in need!*

We are running a raffle with great prizes (donated by local businesses) to help raise money for those in need during these difficult financial times.

Pet health emergencies don't always happen at the best time, which puts stress on the owners. Helping Paws is a new initiative to overcome this and to allow pets to get the treatment they need immediately.

If you would like to be part of this, we invite you to purchase a raffle ticket and be in the draw: **just \$2 per ticket or 3 for \$5!** Donations are gratefully accepted as well.

Winner will be notified at the end of June, 2024.

Here are some of the great prizes on offer:

- \$25 Big W Gift Voucher
- Dog toys
- Dog travel bowl
- Dog food bowl
- Dog harness
- Dog collar
- Travel pack
- Pigs ears
- Poop bag carrier
- Travel coffee mug



## One habit your dog may have that will drive you insane ... is why does your cute, adorable pup persist in eating your cat's poo??

Living with a cat and a dog means that you always have a lot of fun and they are adorable company. Their antics will often have you in stitches. However, why do many dogs seem to know the moment your kitty wants to go, and then track kitty to the litter box with high expectations? The name for this disgusting (to us), but common habit is coprophagia. Why does your dog indulge? Well to a dog, cat poop is a real treat, and poop can be packed with protein.

However, it's not a good idea to encourage this behaviour, as they may pick up harmful parasites. At best, this can cause diarrhea and at worst, can be life-threatening. What can you do to discourage this unpopular habit of your poop-eating pooch?

Here are some tips:

**1.** Train your dog – when Rover zeros in on your cat's litter box, firmly say something like 'Leave it'. You must be consistent with the training.

**2.** As a backup to this, try using a water sprayer when they go near the litter box.

**3.** Change the litter box or clean it regularly so the smell doesn't attract the dog(s) in your household.

**4.** When your kitty goes to the litter box, make sure you keep your dog occupied with a toy, game or even a treat.

**5.** The moment kitty is finished, beat your dog to the litter box and clean it out. A clean box is boring to a dog.

**6.** Make the litter box inaccessible to your dog. Put it up out of your dog's reach, such as in a cabinet that your dog can't poke it's head into. Or use a baby gate to keep your dog out of an area.

**7.** Be aware that your cat may feel confined if you have the litter box inside a box or an enclosed area. You will have to experiment to find what works for your pets.

**afterpay**

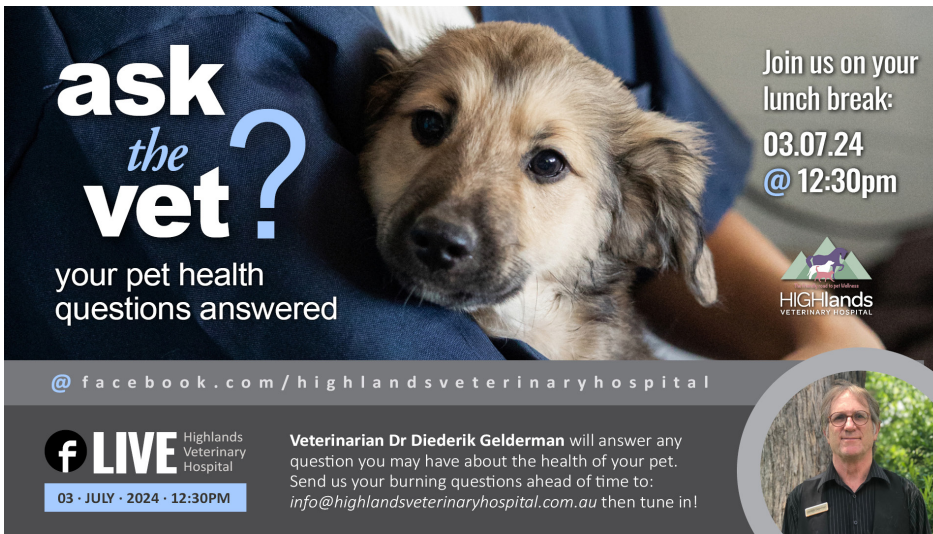
*We now offer clients the option to pay using the Afterpay system. This means that payments can be spread over a 4-6 week timeframe. There are no fees when you pay on time and it is as simple as downloading the Afterpay App to get set up.*

*We all have those moments when the unexpected can blow our budgeting to pieces, such as a health issue with our beloved pets. Being able to use the Afterpay system can act as a short-term solution to enable us to get back to normal.*



# upcoming

## f LIVE TALK



**ask the vet?**  
your pet health questions answered

Join us on your lunch break:  
**03.07.24**  
**@ 12:30pm**

@ facebook.com/highlandsveterinaryhospital

**f LIVE** Highlands Veterinary Hospital  
03 · JULY · 2024 · 12:30PM

Veterinarian Dr Diederik Gelderman will answer any question you may have about the health of your pet. Send us your burning questions ahead of time to: [info@highlandsveterinaryhospital.com.au](mailto:info@highlandsveterinaryhospital.com.au) then tune in!

### Your chance to ask Dr Diederik questions about your pet's health!

Our July Facebook Live talk will be a question-and-answer session with Dr Diederik, whereby pet owners will get a chance to ask him about their pets. Is your furry friend acting strange, have they changed their habits, what age is best to get certain medical procedures done, and so on? Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to get answers to your most pressing pet-related questions! Whether it is a health related or a quirky behavioural habit that has you scratching your head, feel free to ask away...

Please join in on Wednesday, 3 July at 12.30pm on our Facebook page [here](#). All of our previous talks can be found in the Live section under the More menu.

### JUNE FACEBOOK LIVE TALK RECAP

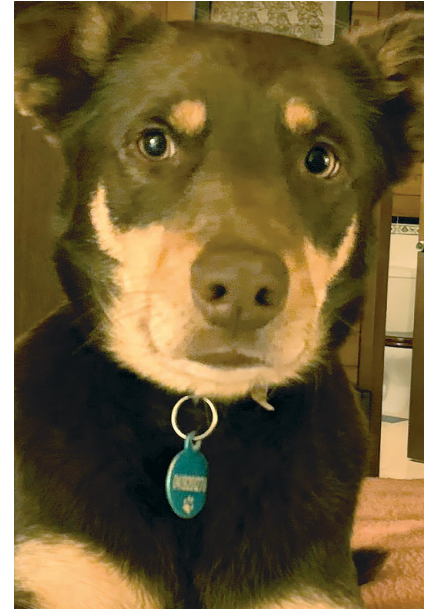
#### "Poison Patrol: Keeping Your Pet Safe!"

Pets are so curious that they are often a danger unto themselves. This Facebook Live Talk provided pet owners with a lot of valuable information about the variety of seemingly household products that could prove detrimental to our pet's health. Ideas covered by Dr Diederik



include situational awareness, household cleaners and products as well as vital information about signs of poisoning and what measures to take in an emergency. Quick intervention is the key to pet poisoning. The earlier you act the better it is for your pet!

You can view this recorded episode of Facebook Live [here](#) as Dr Diederik shares some great ways to manage your pet's allergies.



### Bundy was brought into HIGHlands, as he wasn't eating and was acting out of character.

We discovered that Bundy was suffering from one of the worst cases of chronic constipation that we have ever seen! He was hospitalised and given MULTIPLE general anaesthetic enemas and IV fluids. This helped break down and move along the compaction that was caused by what he had eaten.

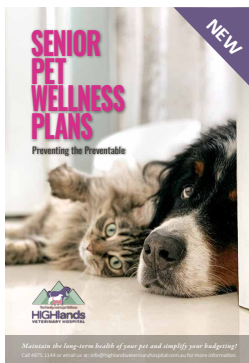
It turns out that at some stage Bundy had found some bones, as many shards from cooked bones were found in his stools. It was a mystery where Bundy had found the bones, as he came from a home of careful vegetarians! But with dogs, anything that resembles food is fair game... even if it comes at a very painful price. Bundy is feeling a lot better now, thanks to the team at HIGHlands!

# tips

## for looking after your senior cat

Here are some suggestions for you to make your elderly cat healthy and more comfortable in its latter years:

- **A warming pad** on their bed will keep them cosy in cooler months.
- **Keep their beds away** from drafty areas.
- **Their diet may need adjusting...** don't worry, we can offer some dietary advice here.
- **Accommodate your cat's slower movement** when playing and interacting with family members.
- **Gentle handling** of your pet is the best approach.
- **Watch weight gain**, as this puts extra pressure on their joints.
- **Keep up with vaccinations** and parasite protection.
- **Regular ear, eye, and nose checks** along with dental care (6-12 months).



Check out our two **Senior Wellness Plans** for your pet - they both offer substantial discounts compared to when individual services are purchased separately. What's more, as a Thank You for your participation, get some free extras: nail trim, veterinary consultation, and nurse consultation.



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Interactive dog feeders and puzzles keep your dog busy, burn off energy and help their brain stay active!

Don't let your pup get confused about how to find the yummy treats inside - give them a hand. This encourages learning. These toys have different levels, from very easy - like licking a tasty paste out of a hollow rubber feeder or hide-and-seek with their owners, to advanced toys such as Smarty Paws (a 3-in-1 game) to finding hidden treats or licking a treat from a tasty frozen soup. Here are the top suggestions to get you started:

- Dogs are natural seekers, so hide-and-seek is always a fun game.
- Kong toys are a popular and an easy game, dogs love getting the treats out of the toy. Try stuffing it with peanut butter.
- Sniff-a-Bone is a good and easy one to start with - it's a rubber treat mat to sniff dry treats out from the mat.
- More demanding is the Treat Turban, where the dog uses their head or paw to rotate the toy to free the treat.
- Teach your dog to pick up the pegs you throw on the ground and deposit them in a basket. They get 'paid' with treats for each peg.
- Any toy that teaches them to push buttons, flip the floppy bits, or seek treats from a toy is fun for them.

Just remember that the toy or feeder must be robust - you don't want your dog to eat the plastic toy! There are so many toys and feeders available, often it is trial and error to get one your dog loves.



*"Cats rarely complain, therefore it might be challenging to tell when they are experiencing arthritis pain."*

**Cats rarely complain**, therefore it might be challenging to tell when they are experiencing arthritis pain until their food bowl is less than half full.

Arthritis is a common condition among aging cats, causing discomfort and limiting mobility. As loving pet owners, it's our responsibility to provide the best possible care for our furry companions, especially when they face health challenges like arthritis.

Easy home improvements can help your cat feel more comfortable and mobile if they have been identified as having arthritis or appear to be having problems moving around. Our blog **"Helping Your Arthritic Cat"** gives easy tips for implementing lifestyle adjustments to improve your cat's quality of life.

Empower yourself with knowledge and compassion to give our arthritic cats the love and care they deserve - and make every day a little easier for them!