



YOUR VET



AUTUMN 2017



... for happy, healthy pets.

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OUR VETS

**Dr Andrew Milledge
Dr Wendy Milledge
Dr Caroline Thursfield
Dr Jenny Tong
Dr Byron von Hoff**

OUR NURSING TEAM

Always eager to help you with your appointments, food supplies and any other questions you may have about the care and welfare of your pet.

Carli, Ingrid, Melissa, Bec, Tennille, Chloe, Claudia, Sarah, Jaimie and Leeanne make up our team of veterinary nurses. Veterinary science students Olivia and Vivienne work in our cattery on the weekends.

CLINIC HOURS

The clinic can be contacted between 8.00am and 7.30pm weekdays, between 8.30am and 4.00pm on Saturdays and between 9.30am and 4.00pm on Sundays.

Consultations are by appointment during the following hours:

Weekdays: 9.00am – 1.00pm 3.00pm – 7.30pm

Saturdays: 9.00am – 4.00pm

Sundays: 10.00am – 4.00pm

AFTER HOURS

Please phone the clinic on 9596 4804 for after hours emergencies, you will be directed by a recorded message to appropriate treatment options.

EXERCISE AND DOGS

As the heat of summer abates and temperatures start to drop, it's much more pleasant to get outdoors and exercise with your dog.

Dogs make great walking and running buddies – they're always available and are usually very keen to get out and about. It's not surprising to learn that they too enjoy the physical and emotional benefits to exercising. In fact, they experience the same "runner's high" that people do after a period of high intensity exercise and it has a very positive effect on their mood and behaviour. Before grabbing that leash and collar and heading out on the footpath, there is a little bit of preparation to be done.

It's a good idea to have your dog's health checked; a visit to the doctor is advised before starting any exercise program and your dog is no different. Your vet can advise about foot and nail care, proper nutrition for increased activity, injury prevention and talk about any individual issues that may affect your canine exercise buddy.

Some dogs just aren't suited to running because of their anatomy. Short nosed breeds including the Pug and Bulldog can easily overheat if they exercise too much. You also need to take into account your dog's age – young dogs need to wait until they're physically mature to start running or going on longer walks. Older dogs may benefit from the use of a joint support product with their meals and again your vet can show you some options that will help to keep their joints in good condition.

Even though the weather is easing there will be days when it's still too warm to exercise. Dogs don't sweat like we do; instead they stay cool by moisture evaporating from their tongue and mouth as they pant. It's better to err on the side of caution if it's warm because heat stroke can still occur in autumn.

Keep an eye on your dog's feet as you build up your distance. Too much too soon can abrade their footpads and be very painful.

Choose the right equipment. Your dog can wear a fixed collar, a head halter or a chest harness but avoid using check chains because if they pull, it can restrict air flow and as already mentioned, the movement of air in the respiratory tract is important in keeping them cool. A four foot (1.2m) or six foot (1.8m) webbing leash is a good choice. Chain leashes can hurt your hand and retractable leashes don't allow enough control when running.

If you'd like to learn to run with your dog, use a suitable beginners training program. The Couch to 5k program available online and as a smartphone app is perfect – it starts with short runs interspersed with walk breaks and as you progress, the runs gradually get longer and the walk breaks get shorter. Keep in mind that the program is a guide, not a rule book. If you or your dog struggle with a session, it's fine to take an extra day to rest or to repeat that session.

Exercising with your dog opens up new experiences. Many walking and running groups welcome people with dogs. You'll make new friends and discover new routes in your area and the exercise will improve the health of both you and your canine family member.

Reference: Raichlen, D., Foster, A., Gerdeman, G., Seillier, A. and Giuffrida, A. (2012). Wired to run: exercise-induced endocannabinoid signaling in humans and cursorial mammals with implications for the 'runner's high'. *Journal of Experimental Biology*, 215(8), pp.1331–1336.



FLEAS IN THE COOLER MONTHS

Summer is over but it's essential that pet owners don't get complacent about flea control.

These blood sucking little parasites can still be a problem for dogs and cats during the cooler months of the year and cause skin itching and inflammation. This means you definitely need to continue your pet's flea control throughout autumn and winter. It's a good idea to regularly re-evaluate products that are available and make sure you're using the best for your pet.

Before you buy any flea control product, read the label carefully. Some have age restrictions and shouldn't be used on very young animals. Others are only recommended for dogs so they must never be applied to cats; because of differences

in their metabolism cats can become very ill if treated with dog flea products.

Flea shampoos have been a popular choice for a long time. They are good for washing your pet if they're dirty before applying a topical product, but on their own they're not reliable enough. This is because when you rinse off the lather, you also remove the killing effect. You'll also need to make sure the weather is warm enough for a bath. Flea rinses that are diluted and left on your pet's coat are a better option because they do kill fleas for longer. Flea collars are also available and they can be a good hands-off option for both dogs and cats.

There are many brands of spot-on products that you can choose from. They're easy to use because the liquid is simply squeezed on to skin at the back of your pet's neck

once a month. Some spot-on liquids are also effective against other parasites such as intestinal worms and heartworm. You'll find some brands have products for both dogs and cats but again, make sure you use the right product on the right species.

Another option is to use flea treatment given by mouth. Most of these are only registered for use in dogs. There are products that kill fleas quickly but don't last long which have a great knock-down effect if your dog has a heavy flea burden. Most oral treatments last one month but one product keeps fleas under control for a full three months.

Don't forget that effective flea control also involves controlling the immature stages in your pet's environment. Washing bedding in hot water and vacuuming carpets regularly will help to remove eggs, larvae and pupae before they develop into adults. Foggers and flea sprays usually contain not only insecticides to kill adult fleas but also growth regulators to break the flea lifecycle.

It can be tricky to navigate the multitude of flea control options available to choose from. Does your pet also need tick protection and which products are best for that? Will it be easier for both you and your pet to use something that also controls intestinal worms? This is where your vet can help. Our staff can show you a number of products that would be suitable for your pet and lifestyle and demonstrate how to use them safely and effectively. Please feel free to call us or come in to the clinic for a chat.

Reference: Boland, L. and Angles, J. (2010). Feline permethrin toxicity: retrospective study of 42 cases. *Journal of Feline Medicine & Surgery*, 12(2), pp.61–71.

Clever
CROSSWORD

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND IN
THIS EDITION OF YOUR VET.
SOLUTION IS ON PAGE 4.

Across

1.

Do this regularly to carpets to help control fleas.

4.

Dog's sweat by moisture evaporating from their _____.

5.

A breed of dog than can overheat if it exercises too much.

8.

Not using this to perform dental treatment on your pet increases the risk of an injury.

9.

Combine this with mental games to tire out a puppy.

10.

During a full moon it's easier for dogs to see these marauding creatures.

11.

A type of sugar level that increases in cats when they are stressed.

Down

2.

Not knowing what the large globe in the sky is, may cause dogs to become this way.

3.

Bacteria attaches to the teeth and can cause an accumulation of this.

6.

Insulin is used to treat this illness.

7.

A flea is one of these organisms.

12.

Diabetes in more likely to occur in a cat that is _____.



THE FULL MOON AT EASTER AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGES IN DOGS

The date of Easter weekend isn't the same each year. This is because Easter is the first full moon after the March equinox (the day when the length of night and day are equal).

Many hospital staff and members of the police force say they are kept particularly busy on the night of a full moon because of an increase in the number of incidents and people behaving strangely. In fact, the word "lunatic" comes from "luna" which is Latin for moon.

Is it the same for animals? Do veterinarians see changes in animal's behaviour when the moon is at its fullest? A veterinarian from the United States evaluated the number of animals admitted to the Colorado University Veterinary Clinic over a period of ten years. She found that more dogs and cats were presented to the emergency clinic over the three days of a full moon. This suggests that perhaps there may be some truth to the theory that the full moon alters animal behaviour however two more studies show just how difficult it is to prove. Scientists in Bradford, UK found that more people went to hospital because of dog bites when the moon was full, however researchers in Sydney, Australia showed no correlation between the moon and the number of dog bites. The results of these two studies are complete opposites when

it comes to canine behaviour during a full moon.

In spite of the lack of scientific evidence to support changes in behaviour when the moon is at its biggest and brightest, many people still feel their pet acts differently during this time. Dogs may bark more or they may appear restless. This however may not be due to the moon itself. It's possible that the increased brightness in the sky makes it easier for dogs to see that marauding possum on the fence or other wildlife wandering through the yard. Alternatively, dogs may be confused because they don't quite know what that large white globe in the sky is. It's also possible that any changes in behaviour are purely coincidental. If there are more accidents and incidents during these few days, it may be because the bright night encourages people to go for a stroll with their dog instead of staying indoors when the night is dark. After all, correlation does not equal causation.

Have you seen changes in your pet's behaviour during the full moon? If so, we'd love for you to tell us about it!

Reference: Wells, R., Gionfriddo, J., Hackett, T. and Radecki, S. (2007). Canine and feline emergency room visits and the lunar cycle: 11,940 cases (1992–2002). *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 231(2), pp.251–253.

DIABETES IN CATS

Diabetes isn't uncommon in cats and is similar to type 2 diabetes in people in that it is often related to weight and diet. Symptoms include increased thirst and appetite as well as weight loss.

Treatment initially is twice daily injections of insulin and being very consistent with your cat's food and exercise. It's challenging to manage but studies have shown that cats can in fact go into remission where they no longer need insulin injections. Early diagnosis and treatment, weight loss and dietary changes all play a role in being able to stop those insulin injections.

Diabetes is more likely to occur in obese cats as they get older and particularly those that live a sedentary lifestyle. There is some suggestion that a pre-diabetic state exists in cats, where their glucose metabolism isn't normal but they don't yet have full blown diabetes. If it does exist, it's not easy to detect.

While it's simple to measure your cat's blood glucose level during a visit to the clinic, results may not give an accurate measure of what's actually happening with your pet. This is because glucose levels in cats increase with stress. A higher than normal blood glucose level can purely



be associated with a car trip in a carrier and being brought into a consulting room. Instead of relying solely on blood glucose measurements, it's better to look at risk factors such as weight, diet and exercise and modify them to keep your cat healthy.

A yearly or twice yearly examination helps us to identify chronic illnesses early and start treatment sooner. We can talk about your cat's risk of developing diabetes during their exam and help you to make changes to their diet and lifestyle to avoid it. When it comes to your cat's health, prevention of illness is definitely better than cure.

Reference: Reeve-Johnson, M., Rand, J., Vankan, D., Anderson, S., Marshall, R. and Morton, J. (2016). Diagnosis of prediabetes in cats: glucose concentration cut points for impaired fasting glucose and impaired glucose tolerance. *Domestic Animal Endocrinology*, 57, pp.55–62.

ANAESTHESIA FREE DENTAL TREATMENT

Some surveys suggest that as many as 85% of dogs have some degree of dental disease by the time they're three years old. This is a significant health issue for our much loved pets and definitely needs attention.

There have been a number of advertisements online recently offering dental treatments for pets without the cost or risk of a general anaesthetic. It sounds good in theory, but all is not as it seems. It's very important that any dental treatment is performed by a veterinarian while a pet is under general anaesthesia. There are a number of reasons for this.

Firstly, not all pets lie still to have their teeth cleaned. Some will struggle and apart from the stress associated with being held down, this increases the risk of cuts and lacerations to their tongue and cheeks, caused by the tools used to scale the teeth. There has been one case where a cat suffered severe injuries to their tongue during an anaesthesia-free dental treatment and these injuries resulted in the loss of that pet.

Secondly, it's not possible to fully examine the teeth when a pet is awake. The pocket between the tooth and the gum needs to be probed and measured, and there may also be the need for x-rays to examine the roots of the teeth. A mouth full of pearly white teeth may look good but it doesn't mean that your pet's teeth and gums are clean and healthy.

When your pet has their teeth cleaned at a veterinary clinic, they sleep through the procedure so there is no stress and no risk of injury to their mouth. Every tooth is examined both above and below the gum line and x-rays are taken if necessary. The teeth are then cleaned with an ultrasonic scaler and are polished so that rough areas are smoothed out. This helps to prevent bacteria attaching to the teeth and slows the accumulation of more plaque. When your pet awakes from their anaesthesia, they will have a clean healthy mouth and fresh breath.

If you're concerned about your pet's teeth, we can examine their mouth and talk about how to treat any dental disease and prevent its recurrence with regular teeth brushing. Modern anaesthetic techniques are very safe and we're happy to spend time with you to explain our procedures and ease your mind. With proper treatment under anaesthesia, you can be sure your pet is receiving the best and most appropriate care for their teeth and gums.

Reference: Harvey, C., Serfilippi, L. and Barnvos, D. (2015). Effect of Frequency of Brushing Teeth on Plaque and Calculus Accumulation, and Gingivitis in Dogs. *Journal of Veterinary Dentistry*, 32(1), pp.16–21.

HOW TO HELP YOUR PUPPY ADAPT TO THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

The new school year has just started and for those families who have welcomed a new puppy into their home over Christmas, it is a period of adaptation for their pets too.

These young dogs have enjoyed the company of their family for several weeks but now have to learn to spend time on their own. They can take a little while to get used to this. There are ways of easing this transition for them which will make life less stressful for both human and canine family members.

The first thing to do is to make your departures very low key and don't make a big fuss of your pup when you get home. Be calm and relaxed and wait for them to settle then say hello and give them a cuddle. Those dogs that look forward to attention when you come home are often more stressed when you're away.

It's a good idea to provide your pooch with their own safe place or den. This may be a crate or a small room. Make it comfortable with a bed, fresh water and a chew toy. Calm music or even an audiobook can also help them to relax. Feeding your pup their breakfast with a food dispensing toy will keep them occupied – they'll need to push and play with the toy to get their food and they're less likely to feel lonely and bored.

Exercise is an important tool to help dogs cope with alone time. Exercise releases chemicals in the brain called endocannabinoids and this can give them a sense of calm and relaxation. Providing enough exercise and the right type of

exercise for a young dog is tricky because they can have too much of a good thing. Excessive exercise can damage growing joints and may lead to problems in later life. It's a good idea to combine controlled exercise with mental games to tire your pup both physically and mentally. Puppy pre-school is great for keeping their mind active and helping them to grow into a calm and well-adjusted adult.

Depending on your budget, you may wish to look into using a doggie day care centre or even asking a pet sitter to visit your pup if they're going to be alone for some time, at least until they are more mature. This is particularly useful if your pup is housed indoors and still needs to go outside to the toilet frequently. Alternatively, you may know someone with a sociable dog who would be interested in sharing pet minding duties.

These suggestions are often enough to help a pup transition to their new schedule when many family members are out at school or work for long periods during the day. However, some young dogs struggle with this and need extra support. If your pup doesn't cope well with this change, please talk to your vet before they become too distressed. It's often easier to resolve these issues and prevent the development of severe separation anxiety, if they are dealt with straight away.

Reference: Tiira, K. and Lohi, H. (2015). Early Life Experiences and Exercise Associate with Canine Anxieties. *PLOS ONE*, 10(11), p.e0141907.



PRACTICE NEWS

North Road Veterinary Centre is very proud to be able to offer cat boarding, dog grooming and puppy pre-school for our four legged friends. We have offered these services for over 25 years, and continue to provide them at a gold standard level.

Cats can board short or long-term with us in our intimate purpose-built indoor boarding facility, and also have access to a fully enclosed outdoor garden area to laze about. It is fully staffed by our lovely vet nurses, who pride themselves on giving your feline friend extra special care and attention. Inspections by appointment are always welcome. Our boarding facility is very popular, and is booked out well in advance during school holiday periods, so get in early if you are planning that special holiday break!



Clea, our dog groomer, has been part of the team at North Road for over 15 years. She has extensive experience in all breeds, and provides a meticulous approach to grooming and exceptional pet care. She is available weekdays for dog grooming, but does book out quickly, so we advise booking your pet's hair day well ahead!



At North Road we believe early socialisation is vital for all puppies between two and four months of age to help them develop into well-behaved and sociable dogs. Our puppy preschool classes are conducted by Tegan, a qualified and experienced dog trainer and instructor. The program runs each month as a two week course and is conducted on Sunday mornings at the clinic. Puppies 8–14 weeks of age are welcome to attend, bookings are essential and are made by calling us during office hours.



North Road Veterinary Centre can be found on Facebook, follow our page to keep up to date with the daily happenings of the clinic!

www.facebook.com/northroadveterinarycentre