

FREE!!
PLEASE TAKE ONE



YOUR
VET



WINTER 2015



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
Dr John Strange

OUR NURSING TEAM:

Are 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.

Lydia, Carli, Ingrid, Claire, Nat, Lynn, Elli and Leeanne make up our team of veterinary nurses. Sarah, Louise and Vivienne work in our cattery.

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.

THERAPY DOGS

The tail that never stops wagging showing nothing but pure joy to be with you; those beautiful eyes gazing up at you with complete adoration; the cool, wet nose nudging your sleepy face as you wake.

We know that dogs are dedicated companions that offer unconditional attachment and acceptance. But why does being with a dog make us feel so good?

When a dog shows us affection, it's a very uncomplicated, non-challenging interaction with no consequences. There is mounting evidence in human and veterinary medicine that the emotional bond between people and companion animals can have a positive impact on emotional and physical health. A therapy dog is a dog that is trained to provide affection and comfort to people in hospitals, retirement homes, nursing homes, schools, hospices, disaster areas, and to people with learning difficulties. Research indicates that interaction with therapy dogs can temporarily affect the release of various neurotransmitters in the brain; levels of oxytocin (linked with bonding) and dopamine (involved in the reward-motivation system) are increased, while cortisol levels (an immunosuppressant associated with stress) are decreased.⁽¹⁾

And, according to results of a recent clinical study, therapy dogs may improve the emotional well-being of some cancer patients.⁽²⁾ The research found that patients receiving intensive simultaneous radiation therapy and chemotherapy for gastrointestinal, head or neck cancers experienced increases in emotional well-

being and quality of life when they received visits from a certified therapy dog during the course of their treatment. Increases in emotional well-being were significant over the course of the animal-assisted visits, even as patients underwent marked and significant declines in both physical and functional well-being.

Just as we realise that a well-balanced diet, quality sleep and regular exercise are vital to our health, it's becoming clearer that animals can also improve the quality of our lives.



References: (1) Animal Assisted Therapy in Mental Health. *The SCAS Journal*. 2010; (2) http://www.oncologypractice.com/fileadmin/content_pdf/aats/supplement_pdf/JCSO_Jan2015_digitaledition_lores.pdf

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TOOTH RESORPTION IN CATS

Many cat owners look at the activity and attitude of their pets and assume that they have a perfectly happy and healthy animal. Unfortunately, many of these same cats can have a very problematic mouth, due to a serious and very painful condition that causes teeth to resorb, dissolve and even break.

While most veterinarians will acknowledge that brushing a cat's teeth can be difficult for owners, they will stress the importance of routine oral assessment of your cat's mouth. These exams help find preventable problems as well as some more concerning issues which may often go unnoticed otherwise. One of those concerns that is becoming more common is Feline Tooth Resorption.

Feline Tooth Resorption is a common and painful condition found in domestic cats. The teeth become functionally destroyed as a result of tooth resorption. Tooth Resorption, or 'TR' is seen in a growing percentage of cats over the age of six years and studies have shown that well over 50% of adult cats develop tooth resorption. The same strange condition is also seen in dogs and in people, but it is not nearly as common.

In general, most cats will appear normal, but observant owners may note that their cat prefers to chew food on just one side, stops grooming, starts salivating excessively, tends to throw their dry food into the back of their mouth or develops a preference for soft foods. If left to develop, the process will lead to extreme pain due to the exposure of the root canal. As TR progresses, some cats will develop bad-tempered or aggressive attitudes and lack a normal appetite. Eventually, your veterinarian may discover that the erosion has exposed the tooth to the bacteria of the mouth and this is when it becomes extremely painful. Dental x-rays are the only way to diagnose TR as they show changes in the density of the roots and crowns of the teeth.

The exact cause of tooth resorption has not yet been clearly defined and unfortunately there is no effective treatment that can save the pet's teeth. A normal clean and polish will not work and any tooth that is showing any signs of resorption needs to be extracted. Early recognition through comprehensive

back your loving, friendly companion. As cats tend to be highly functional despite being in pain, owners are often unaware that their pets are experiencing such discomfort. But, regular visits to your veterinarian can help identify issues early so book a thorough oral examination for your pet today.



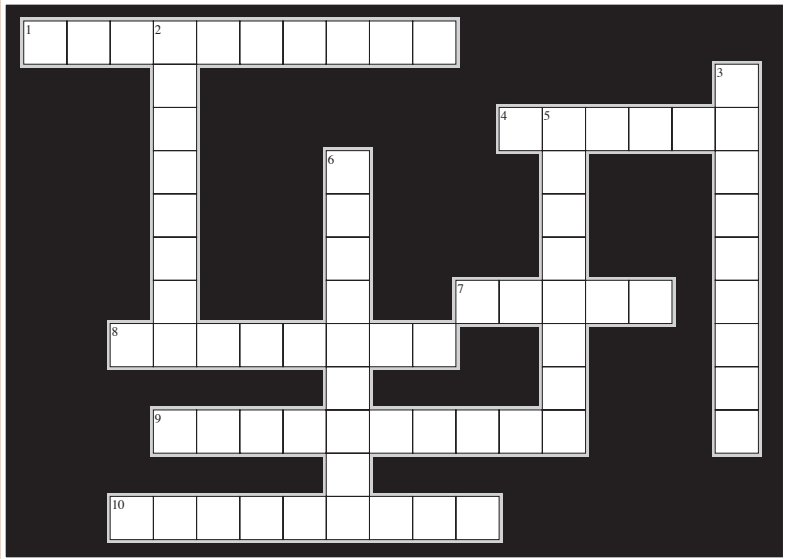
Clever CROSSWORD

Across:

- 1. A fish lives _____.
- 4. Panther, bengal or lion.
- 7. Like some men's backs.
- 8. Investigate thoroughly.
- 9. Pets make great _____.
- 10. A very large spider found in tropical and subtropical America.

Down:

- 2. It's good to get some every so often.
- 3. All babies are _____ in their parents eyes.
- 5. Love, hate, fear, etc.
- 6. Quick to notice or perceive things.



EACH OF THE WORDS CAN BE FOUND IN THIS ISSUE OF YOUR VET. ANSWERS ARE SHOWN ON THE BACK PAGE.

BE A RESPONSIBLE PET OWNER

Owning a pet comes with great responsibility, regardless of the type you choose. Pets are not casual accessories that can be simply thrown aside and forgotten.

Pets are long-term companions that need ongoing love, care and devotion. Owning a pet is a great privilege and very rewarding, but the benefits of pet ownership come with responsibilities:

- **THINK** – Avoid impulsive decisions and choose a pet that's suited to both your home and lifestyle. Just because something is cute, does not mean it will be the perfect fit for you. Adopt only the type and number of pets for which you can provide appropriate food, water, shelter, health care and companionship for.
- **INVEST** – It is important to recognise that pet ownership requires an investment of both your time and money. Regular visits to the vet and groomer are absolutely necessary for your pet's wellbeing. Insuring your pet may also be important to your pet's health as emergencies can happen at any time.



- **OBEY** – Be sure to clean up after your pet in public places and obey all local laws, including licensing, leash requirements and noise control. Always keep an ID tag on your pet and consider getting your pet microchipped as well. This may help identify them if they are lost or stolen.
- **CONTROL** – Limit your pet's reproduction through spay/neuter, containment or governed breeding. Studies have shown that pets that are spayed and neutered live healthier, longer lives. In addition, spayed and neutered pets are less likely to develop behavior problems.
- **PROVIDE** – Ask your vet for advice on what type and amount of food is right for you pet. Keeping your pet on a regular, portion controlled diet will help with weight management which can prevent weight related health problems. Most pets require regular exercise as this helps them to release their energy and without it your pet may develop behavioural issues. It is also incredibly important that you provide appropriate mental stimulation as well as correctly socialise and train your pet.
- **LOVE** – Most pets need companionship. They are often traditionally pack creatures and need the warmth and love that comes with living indoors with their family. You are the centre of your pet's universe. They crave your love, attention and care so make sure you show them the love and devotion they show you.

LATEST RESEARCH - DOGS RECOGNISE EXPRESSIONS!

When those beautiful big eyes gaze into ours it often feels like they can see right into our soul. We smile at our beloved furry companions and it seems like they smile back. But do our four legged friends really understand what we're feeling?

We tend to show our emotions through our facial expressions but how does that help our pets understand our mood? Are they actually able to interpret our expressions and make sense of them? It would appear now that the answer may be yes! A recent study indicates dogs can learn to distinguish a smile, even on the faces of some strangers.⁽¹⁾ The researchers believe this provides the first reliable evidence that an animal other than humans can discriminate between emotional expressions in another species.

In this new study, the researchers trained dogs to discriminate between images of the same person making either a happy or an angry face. In every case, the dogs were shown only the upper or the lower half of the face. The dogs had to draw conclusions about the smile just by seeing the eyes. This was only possible, because the dogs were able to imagine how the other half must have looked like. The researchers explain that dogs that remember angry or happy human faces from their day-to-day-life use these memories to fill in the missing half automatically in the tests. It is suggested then that they must be capable of distinguishing between faces and facial expressions. The study found that the dogs were able to select the angry or happy

face more often than would be expected by random chance in every case. The findings show that not only could the dogs learn to identify facial expressions, but they were also able to transfer what they learned in training to new cues.

Not only were the dogs able to distinguish between angry and happy expressions in humans but they could tell that these two expressions have different meanings. They were able to do this not only for people they know well, but even for faces they have never seen before. What exactly those different meanings are for the dogs is difficult to state but it appears likely that the dogs associate a smiling face with a positive meaning and an angry facial expression with a negative meaning. The researchers reported that the dogs were slower to learn to associate an angry face with a reward, suggesting that they already had an idea based on prior experience that it's best to stay away from people when they look angry.

Their research will continue to explore the role of experience in the dogs' abilities to recognize human emotions. They also plan to study how dogs themselves express emotions and how their emotions are influenced by the emotions of their owners or other people they interact with.

Reference: Corsin A. Müller, Kira Schmitt, Anjali L. A. Barber & Ludwig Huber. *Dogs Can Discriminate Emotional Expressions of Human Faces*. *Current Biology*, 2015; DOI: 10.1016/j.cub.2014.12.055



PET SPIDER ANYONE?

Tarantulas are not for everyone, but these large, hairy spiders are gaining popularity as interesting, low-maintenance pets. They are unique, quiet, and need little space, and keeping tarantulas as pets can make a fascinating hobby.

There are about 800 species of Tarantulas world-wide. Australia has native tarantulas that have specific names – such as whistling, barking and bird-eating spiders. While you are permitted to own native tarantulas, it is illegal to have overseas species of tarantulas as pets in Australia.⁽¹⁾

These mostly large and hairy spiders are surprisingly gentle, and are mostly harmless towards humans. Like all spiders, tarantulas are venomous, but their bite is more like a bee sting, and most will not bite unless provoked. However, the venom can cause an allergic or anaphylactic reaction in the same way that some people react to bee stings. So while tarantula bites are unlikely to be fatal, you still want to avoid being bitten! Tarantulas are not designed to be held as they can easily spook and squirm from your hand. Falls are nearly always fatal for tarantulas, as their abdomens rupture easily so it's best to keep handling to a minimum.



Caring for a tarantula may be a long commitment as some females live 20 years or more while male spiders generally only live for a year and a half as adults. If you decided to double up be aware that one pair of tarantulas can produce as many as 300 young at a time!

References: <http://museumvictoria.com.au/spidersparlour/tarant4.htm>

UNDERWATER FRIENDS

Fish can make awesome pets for people who don't have the time or space to devote to a higher-maintenance companion animal. Fish don't ask much of you and they are incredibly soothing to watch.

Fish are generally easier and less expensive to feed and care for than other pets, however, they do require a proper environment and knowledgeable owners. It pays to start simple, with a few hardy fish that are easy to maintain. After some time and experience, you may want to consider investing in a more challenging aquarium. Research your fish before you buy them and ask for advice about how to look after them properly.

It is important for fish to be kept in a filtered tank. Fish in bowls tend to be less active and die young, but a filter will keep the water oxygenated and clean, and provide a current for them. Maintaining the heat of the aquarium is also absolutely vital and must be closely monitored to prevent fluctuations which can kill fish.

People are often surprised that fish can actually be a lot of fun. If you spend plenty of time with it, it will soon come to you when you get near its tank. Some types of fish will interact with their owners, are playful, and can even be trained to do tricks! Here fishy, fishy, fishy . . .



PRACTICE UPDATE

Dr Caroline is currently on long service leave from North Road and will be missing from our team until mid- August this year. She has an exciting few months ahead, with lots of travelling and volunteer work planned! Caroline will be travelling to Africa where she will enjoy the incredible sites as well as volunteering with a vet involved in wildlife conservation near Kruger National Park, and also in Botswana where she will assist with a canine desexing program. Later in the year Caroline is planning to assist with an animal management program in the rural and remote indigenous communities of Australia. Her first half marathon is also on her agenda mid-year; she is currently training alongside her Border Collie, Angus! So Caroline is going to be a busy lady, we look forward to many interesting stories on her return!!



We welcome **Dr John Strange** to our team of veterinarians. Dr John graduated with honours from the University of Melbourne in 2004. He has worked in a mix of veterinary practices since then including country Victoria, small animal clinics around Melbourne and also a stint doing locum work in the UK. He joins our team after recently moving back to the Bayside area. John enjoys the mix of small animal medicine and surgery, and has a particular interest in ultrasound imaging. John and his wife share their home with 3 entertaining birds, Billie, Jack and Meche. Welcome to the team John!



Dr Byron and his wife **Jacqui**, also a vet, recently attended the World Small Animal Veterinary Association conference in Bangkok after some well-deserved R&R and tan-rejuvenation in beautiful Koh Samui! The conference is held annually in a different country each year and brings vets together from around the world, exchanging ideas and attending lectures from international veterinary specialists covering a diverse range of interesting and relevant topics in veterinary medicine and surgery .