CITY.BEACH Veterinarians

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OUR VETS:

Dr Neville Robertson
BVSc(Syd), MVS(Murd)

Dr Alan Wade
BSc, BVMS(Murd)

Dr Meg Green
BSc, BVMS(Hons)

OUR NURSES

We have a group of talented, versatile and fully trained nurses. Our nurses love animals and are passionate about animal care. They run the puppy classes, weight clinics and help us keep your pet health and happy during their stay with us. Our nurses can help you with all of your pet's needs.

OUR HOURS

Monday to Friday	7.30 am to 7 pm
Saturday	8.30 am to 4 pm
Sunday	Closed

Consultations are by appointment.
We are closed on Public Holidays.

AFTER HOURS

For urgent attention after hours including Public Holidays please call Perth Vet Specialists Emergency Care (PVS-EC) on 9204 0400. This is a dedicated local emergency centre in Perth Vet Specialists centre located at 305 Selby Street North, Osborne Park. Alternatively call Murdoch Pet Emergency Centre (MPEC) on 1300 652 494.

OUR WEBPAGE

City Beach Veterinarians has a new web page! Visit the site for information about your pets health, us and many other interesting items. Let us know what you think. Our web address is **www.citybeachvet.com.au**

SEASONAL ATOPY MAY BE THE CAUSE OF YOUR DOG'S SCRATCHING

Atopy can be regarded as the canine equivalent of hay fever in humans. It is a seasonal allergic reaction to substances such as inhaled pollens, house dust mites and animal danders (tiny particles of saliva, skin, fur etc).

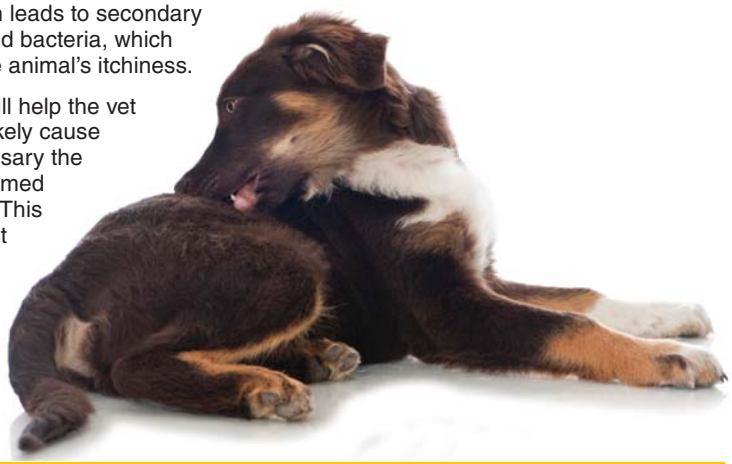
However, whilst humans respond with sneezing and runny noses, animals show their allergic reaction by itching and licking. Atopy can be genetic (inherited). It is more common in certain breeds such as West Highland White Terriers, Staffordshire Bull Terriers and Golden Retrievers.

Dogs with atopy usually have itchy ears, feet, armpits and groins. Some dogs may just have recurrent ear infections or an obsession with licking between their toes. Atopy often starts in spring and summer and gets worse each year. Eventually the itching may become a year-round problem. A lot of scratching often leads to secondary infections with yeast and bacteria, which further contribute to the animal's itchiness.

Your pet's symptoms will help the vet establish if atopy is a likely cause of its itchiness. If necessary the diagnosis can be confirmed through allergy testing. This may involve a blood test or an intradermal skin test. Allergy testing is complex and needs to be specific to your geographical area, so your vet may need to refer you to a specialist veterinary dermatologist. If the substance (allergen) causing the itchiness can be identified, a specific vaccine can be made up for your animal. This is administered in gradually increasing doses to try and desensitise your pet and reduce its itchy response to the allergen.

Atopy rarely goes away completely and it is likely that your pet will need at least intermittent treatment for the rest of its life. Medications such as corticosteroids, antihistamines, essential fatty acids, antibiotics and medicated shampoos can all be used in various combinations to help reduce the itchiness and keep your pet comfortable.

Regular check-ups with your vet will help determine the appropriate treatment and also make sure there are no concurrent problems such as fleas or food allergy.



INSIDE

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- WHO AM I?
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- FAT BIRDS
- CLEVER CROSSWORD
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- THE SPRING QUEEN

DO YOU HAVE TOO MANY CATS?

Cats are great companions. They have individual and quirky personalities and can be a great comfort to have around. It can be tempting to build up your cat family and take on more than just one of those cute faces. It is great having multiple cats that get along well. They play together, explore together, groom each other and sleep next to each other. However, more often than not, cats just don't like other cats and it is wise to take this into consideration before committing to multiple cats in your home.

Cats like to have their own space - Space to eat, sleep, scratch and go to the toilet. If they feel like their territory is being imposed upon, they will get stressed. This stress may show up in different ways. For some cats you will see excessive aggression or territory marking by spraying or inappropriate toileting. This is an obvious sign of stress for the cat, but will likely be very stressful for you as an owner trying to deal with the behaviour. In other cats the indication of stress can be subtle such as recurrent bladder irritation, vomiting or over-grooming.

If you do want to have multiple cats, the best chance that they will get along is to get two kittens from the same litter. The next best chance of success is to get two kittens of a similar age. If you are planning on adding to your family of cats then be prepared for an adjustment period. Ideally, you may be able to get a cat on a 'trial' basis initially.

If you already find yourself in the predicament that your cats are showing signs of stress then you many have too many cats. Re-homing one of the cats is an option. Otherwise you can ease the stress by providing separate facilities for your cats – comfortable beds, different places to eat and separate access to litter trays. You can also have a chat to your vet about other changes you can make around the house to reduce tension such as pheromone sprays. In some cases anti-anxiety medication can be successful.

CRACKED AND SORE FEET IN DOGS

There can be many reasons that your dog is suffering from cracked and irritated foot pads. It may have walked on a number of irritants such as rug shampoo, floor cleaner or garden spray – these can all cause a reaction that can make your dog chew its paws, which results in cracking. Other possibilities are allergic reactions from something eaten or breathed in, yeast infections similar to athletes foot, zinc deficiency or an autoimmune disease.

Allergies can be tested for by your vet by taking and testing either skin or blood samples. From there the proper course of treatment or prevention can be recommended.

Your Vet can diagnose a yeast infection by assessing swabs taken from the paw. This is then able to be treated with an antifungal medication.

There can be many factors to consider when diagnosing a zinc deficiency. A dogs history, skin biopsy, breed tendencies to the condition, diet and age can all be factors that your vet will take into account. In rapidly growing dogs feeding a diet high in cereal or calcium may produce this deficiency.

Another condition that causes foot suffering is nasodigital hyperkeratosis. It is an ailment affecting either the nose or foot pads (or both) of older dogs. With this condition keratin (the tough, fibrous outer covering of foot pads) grows excessively. Often, the hard, cracked pads appear to have "keratin feathers" around their edges. A vet can diagnose this ailment by analysing a section of pad tissue. Although hyperkeratosis can't be cured, it can be controlled. The veterinarian can carefully trim excessive keratin and instruct the owner on techniques to hydrate the pads, retarding excessive keratin growth. One such technique is to soak the pads each day in a 50 percent propylene-glycol solution over a period of several days.

Lastly, an animal can suffer from an auto-immune disease of the skin (pemphigus), in which the immune system goes haywire and mistakes skin cells for enemy invaders. In the most common type of pemphigus, pus-filled sores - which eventually break and form crusts - develop on the foot pads, bridge of the nose, and ears. Again, a vet can test for pemphigus by analysing a sample of the affected skin. If pemphigus is the culprit, the veterinarian may treat it with immune-suppressing drugs.

Who am I?

1. *I am a small parrot, native to Australia. Males and females are colour coded – the male having a blue pigmentation across his beak, the female brown. I come in many fancy varieties making me a popular showing bird.*
2. *I am descended from Scottish herding dogs. I starred in a television series and several movies in which I showed an uncanny understanding of the English language!*
3. *I am a small rodent and a popular children's pet. I am an unusual breed as I do not have a tail.*
4. *I am a breed of dog with characteristic wrinkles and folds of loose skin. It is thought I may have originated from Tibet or the Northern provinces of China 2,000 years ago.*
5. *I am a breed of cat characterised by long fur and a shortened nose giving my face a slightly squashed-in appearance.*
6. *I am a German breed of dog that comes in three different sizes – giant, standard and miniature. I can come in a variety of colours but the most popular coat colour is a mix of black and grey called salt and pepper. I usually have a beard and eyebrows.*
7. *I am a breed of cat that is said to originate from the Lake Van region in Turkey. I am a lively, active cat that can have some 'un-feline' attributes such as an attraction to water and, in some, the ability to retrieve like a dog. I have a very soft coat that is mainly white apart from coloured points on my head and tail.*
8. *I am a short legged, German breed of dog. I was originally bred to flush animals such as badgers and rabbits from their burrows. My coat can be smooth haired, long haired or wire haired. I have a long body that can predispose me to back problems.*
9. *I am a breed of guinea pig with a 'bad hair day'. My coat has whorls of hair.*
10. *I am a large, docile breed of horse. I was traditionally used as a draft horse to pull heavy loads but am often now seen representing a brewery in competitions and displays.*

Answers are shown on back page.

KEEPING NATIVE ANIMALS AS PETS

In Australia there are complex rules and regulations covering the keeping of native wildlife as pets. The regulations vary in each state. There is much debate for and against the keeping of native animals as pets. Let's look at some ups and downs.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF KEEPING NATIVE WILDLIFE AS PETS

Some of the benefits of allowing people to keep natives as pets are that it allows Australians to have access to some of the wonderful and diverse creatures native to Australia. It can help to save some animals from dwindling numbers and contribute towards people's education and understanding of them. Native animals are kinder to the environment and, unlike cats and dogs, will not destroy other native animals if they escape captivity.

NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF KEEPING NATIVE WILDLIFE AS PETS

Those wary of the idea are concerned that some native animals are simply not suitable for domestication. Existing animal welfare problems would increase. Many Australian native animals have complex and highly specialised dietary requirements, which ordinary homeowners could find difficult to provide.

WHICH NATIVE ANIMALS MAKE GOOD PETS?

Ultimately, it depends on what you want from a pet and what is practical and kind to the animal. Most native animals are not as outwardly affectionate as say a dog, but many bond well with people and some show affection. Reptiles and birds are particularly suitable, as well as some mammals. Green Tree Frogs, Bearded Dragons and other large skinks, Hopping Mice and Pythons are recommended. Flying Foxes can be smelly, but they are very loving and make great pets. Hairy Nosed Wombats often bite as adults and tend to dig up the carpets and put holes in the walls. Obviously it is not recommend keeping any of the venomous snakes as pets.

INFORMATION

Laws regulating the keeping of native animals as pets vary from state to state. For more information, contact the authority in your state, the local Parks and Wildlife service. **It is very important to find out if you need a licence to own a native animal before getting one.**

WHO'S A 'FATTY BIRD' THEN?

The obesity epidemic has spread to our feathered friends. The sedentary lifestyle of many caged parrots, combined with easy access to a bottomless food bowl, creates a recipe for a fat bird. Obese birds can get fatty growths called lipomas. These are round, soft masses that can occur anywhere around the body but are most often found over the breast bone area. These growths are not malignant or cancerous, but can become quite large and cause a mechanical hindrance.

Birds with lipomas need to be placed on a strict diet. Reduction in body fat will usually result in a reduction in lipoma size. Diets should involve limited amounts of seed, lots of vegetables and definitely no bread, biscuits or chocolate. Your vet will be able to help you tailor a diet for your bird. Lipomas which do not reduce in size with dietary control may require surgical removal.

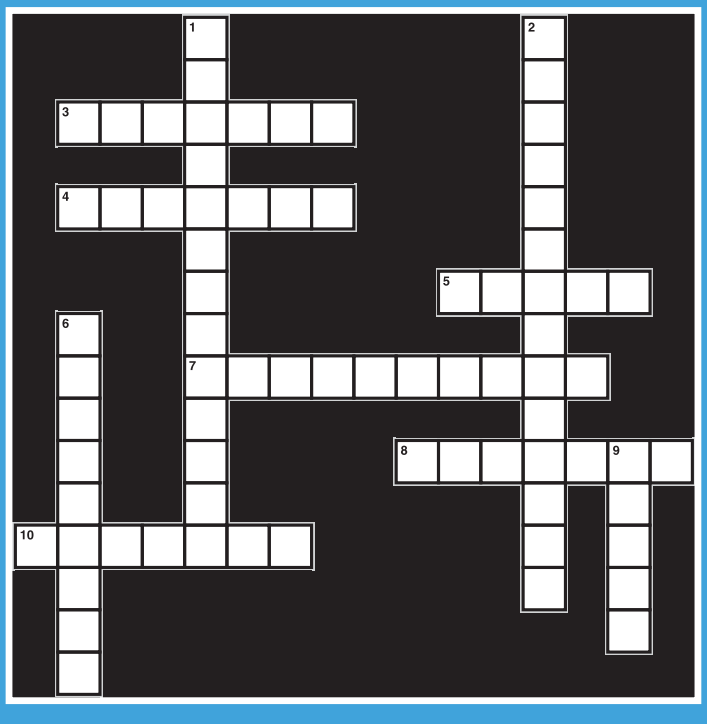
Clever CROSSWORD

ACROSS

3. Which breed of cats can become sexually mature as young as four months of age?
4. What epidemic has spread to our feathered friends?
5. What is the name for a female cat?
7. What sort of medication can treat a yeast infection in the paw?
8. Fatty growths are called _____.
10. What should you find out if you need before considering a native animal as a pet?

DOWN

1. What are some native animals not suitable for?
2. nasodigital _____ is an ailment affecting either the nose or foot pads of older dogs.
6. An auto-immune disease of the skin.
9. What can be regarded as the canine equivalent of hay fever in humans?



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

PLAY TIME PHOTO COMPETITION:

Congratulations to 'Grungle' and his owner Camille Dack from Queensland. Grungle's vet is Dr David at Northern Beaches Veterinary Hospital.

Camile will receive a Silver Pet Prints pendant and chain which is personalised with your pets paw print. Check out the winning picture (right) of Grungle.

We had a hard time choosing a winner. There were so many wonderful pictures sent in. Thank you to everyone who took part and sent us pictures of your wonderful pets at play time.

SILVER PET PRINTS

www.silverpetprints.com

SPRING HAS SPRUNG AND THE QUEEN IS CALLING

Queen is the rather regal name given to a female cat.

Depending on the breed, she will reach puberty at around nine months of age. Siamese queens can become sexually mature as young as four months of age whilst breeds such as the British Blue can be very slow off the mark and not reach sexual maturity until they are well over a year old.

Queens are seasonal breeders and the hormones usually start to flow in springtime. They require at least 12 hours of daylight in order to trigger this reproductive cycle. This can be falsely achieved by non-natural light and explains why queens kept indoors may cycle all year round.

Queens who are in a period of sexual receptivity are said to be 'in season' or 'calling'. Calling aptly describes their behaviour during this time, and involves loud, long vocalisations. The yowling is accompanied by rolling on the ground, rubbing around owners' legs and assuming a 'dragster' position with forequarters crouched down and hind quarters raised in the air. Many vets have had an emergency call from a distraught owner concerned that their cat is writhing in agony and many a vet has had the pleasure of being able to reassure an owner that their cat is in a hormonal haze and certainly not in pain!

Unless mated, the queen will continue to call every three weeks, although there is considerable variation between breeds. Professional breeders aside, the best way to ensure that you and your queen both have a peaceful springtime is to have her de-sexed.

QUIZ ANSWERS

CROSSWORD

Across: 3. Siamese; **4.** Obesity; **5.** Queen; **7.** Antifungal; **8.** Lipomas; **10.** Licence.

Down: 1. Domestication; **2.** Hyperkeratosis; **6.** Pemphigus; **9.** Atopy.

WHO AM I?

1. Budgerigar; **2.** Rough Collie; **3.** Manx mouse; **4.** Shar-Pei; **5.** Persian; **6.** Schnauzer; **7.** Turkish Van; **8.** Dachshund; **9.** Abyssinian; **10.** Clydesdale.

PRACTICE UPDATE

COMPLETE HEALTH

City Beach Veterinarians is committed to making it easy for you to look after all of your pet's needs.

Our Complete Health packages provide all of your pet's routine preventive health care. You do not need to remember when your pet is due for any products as we mail them to you monthly!

Each Complete Health package includes

- Monthly Flea Control
- Heartworm Prevention
- Intestinal worming medication
- Annual vaccinations

By taking out a Complete Health package you will save 5% off the price you would normal pay for the products and services listed above.

There are extra rewards for being a Complete Health member. These include

- $20 discount off every primary consultation
- Unlimited free nail clipping
- Pet food discount vouchers
- Microchipping discount (transferable)
- For dogs there are 4 free hydrobaths which include blow drying.

Complete Health means peace of mind.

PUPPY PRESCHOOL

Just like humans it is best to start training young! We run regular puppy classes that are great fun and informative. Your pup will learn to socialise with other pups, enjoy visiting us and you will start to learn the basics of training.

This is a great start to your pup's life and helps cement a long lasting relationship between you and your pet. Ask one of our nurses for more information.

VET PROFILES:

Dr Neville Robertson

Neville graduated from Sydney University in 1985. He moved to WA a year later to take up a position as an Intern in Veterinary Anaesthesia at Murdoch University. Nev has completed a Masters Degree in Veterinary Science at Murdoch University.

Dr Alan Wade

Alan graduated from Murdoch University in 1988. Alan worked extensively in the United Kingdom before returning to Australia 9 years ago. He has worked in many large practices and gained significant experience dealing with complicated cases over the years.