WINTER 2012

YourVet

CITY BEACH Veterinarians

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Our Vets

DR NEVILLE ROBERTSON
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DR ALAN WADE
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DR MEG GREEN
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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	7.30am to 7pm
Saturday	8.30am 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 Emergency (PVE) on 9204 0400. This is a dedicated local emergency centre and they are 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

Diabetes in Cats - The Silent Killer

Diabetes mellitus, or 'sugar diabetes', is a commonly diagnosed disease in cats. Male cats have twice the risk of females, and at greatest risk are obese, older male cats.

There are two types of diabetes: type 1 in which the pancreas does not produce enough insulin, or type 2 in which the pancreas produces insulin, but the cat's body does not use it properly. This is the most common type of feline diabetes. Both types result in the glucose level in the blood becoming too high, which could damage almost every organ in the body.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a complex metabolic disorder caused by a deficiency of insulin. (Insulin is a hormone than helps the cells of the body to absorb glucose.)

The cells of the body need glucose (from digested food) as their energy source. Without insulin, the cells cannot absorb glucose, and they effectively starve. Since the glucose in the bloodstream is not being taken into the cells, the concentration of glucose in the blood increases. This may lead to elevated blood sugar levels (hyperglycemia) and subsequent glucosuria (sugar in the urine).

In diabetic cats, excess glucose is excreted through the kidneys, producing frequent urination. The cat then drinks more to compensate for the fluid loss. Hence, one of the first symptoms of diabetes mellitus is increased thirst and increased urine production.

Increased thirst is usually combined with an increased appetite, yet despite eating more, the cat tends to lose weight. The body tries to feed its starving cells by breaking down stored fats which can lead to the production of ketones. Ketones are excreted in the urine and if present, can make an animal feel ill. Left untreated, diabetic animals will eventually become seriously ill with a condition known as ketoacidosis. This is a true medical emergency requiring aggressive management with intravenous fluids and intensive monitoring.

Symptoms of feline diabetes:

Diabetes is a life-threatening disease, so it's vital you know what to look for. Symptoms include:

- increased thirst and urination
- weight loss
- changes in appetite
- vomiting
- weakness in hind legs
- bad breath

As diabetes develops slowly over time, you may not notice all of these symptoms. That's why it is important to take your cat for regular health checks. Most diseases are controllable if caught in the early stages.

Treatment:

A diagnosis of diabetes mellitus can be confirmed with blood and urine tests. Early management can occasionally be achieved with oral medication but nearly all affected cats will go on to require injections of insulin. Diet can also influence blood glucose levels so your vet will recommend a diet suitable for your pet's needs.

Monitoring is a very important part of treating a diabetic cat. Blood and urine tests will need to be performed regularly in order to check that the cat is receiving the correct dose of insulin. If the response to insulin is not good, your vet will take steps to improve this and may adjust the type and dose of insulin.

In some cases, the disease has resolved itself in time, so it is important to regularly monitor your cat and work closely with your vet.

Although a permanent cure of this life-threatening disease has not yet been discovered, your cat can live a normal life with the help of medication and an adjustment to diet and lifestyle.

READERS! Enter our competition and **WIN!** Details on back page

- **Let's Nail It!**
- **Dealing with Osteoarthritis**
- **Guinea Pig Health Check**

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Let's Nail It!

Most dogs hate having their nails clipped. Many dogs resent their feet being handled to start with, and when you add the possibility that past nail clips may have drawn blood, then you have a recipe for a wriggling, unhappy, uncooperative dog and a sweating frustrated owner!

The anatomy of the canine toenail means that the likelihood of drawing blood is high, even when the clippers are in the hands of a professional.

To increase your chance of a stress and blood free effort, start with the basics. Long before its nails actually need trimming, get your dog used to having its feet handled in a relaxed manner. In a puppy, this can be achieved easily by using a nail file to shorten the nails gently, while watching television or sitting quietly. In older dogs, you could use food rewards as a positive motivator. If he wriggles as you play with his paws, ignore the behaviour, but when he sits still, reward him with a tiny treat. He will gradually put two and two together.

Next, make sure you have a strong, well-maintained, sharp pair of nail clippers specifically designed for dogs. Generally, you will find that the better the clipper, the higher the price, and you really do want a quality blade for a clean cut.

To enhance your understanding of nail trimming techniques, you need to know the anatomy of the toenail. Within the centre of each toenail is the blood and nerve supply for the nail called the "quick". In clear white toenails it is easy to see – just look for the pinkish area in the middle of the nail. You want to avoid cutting into the quick at all costs because it is rich with blood vessels and painful nerve endings.

Look at the toenail from the side. As it leaves the paw, the underside of the nail is flat. The length of nail that is flat varies from dog to dog. Follow the flat line visually. You may find that this line continues on straight, until it meets the curving "front" of the nail. If this is the case, no trimming is required. Alternatively, it may suddenly dip down in a curve, with a distinct "overhang". In this case (and bear in mind that different nails on the same dog may have different wear-patterns, making some flatter than others), make your cut along the same line as the flat part of the nail, and no higher. The sharp hook, or point, is the only part of the nail that you trim.

There are many reasons why it is important to trim your dog's nails regularly. Proper nail care will prevent potential health problems such as ingrown toenails and joint pain – not to mention the fact that it will also help to protect your furniture and belongings from unwanted scratches and damage.

Finally, if the thought of the whole process makes you hyperventilate and sweat, then the staff at our practice will be happy to help you with advice. Or you may wish to book your dog in with us for an assessment of nail length and a nail clip if needed.

Bumblefoot

Budgies, cockatiels and other captive birds can suffer from a form of pododermatitis (foot inflammation) called Bumblefoot. This infection results in swollen, painful feet, making it impossible for the bird to stand comfortably. The bird may become lame and, if left untreated, the infection may lead to septicaemia and even result in death.

Bumblefoot results from injury to the weight-bearing surface of the foot, causing bacteria to enter the foot. The first sign of disease is a loss of normal scale on the feet and the skin may be red and thin. As the disease progresses, ulcers may form on the pads of the feet. Once infection spreads to the bones and joints, the bird becomes severely lame, and surgery is required if there is to be any chance of recovery.

Early Bumblefoot infections can be successfully treated with antibiotics, and providing deep bedding to limit stress on the sore foot.

To decrease your pet bird's risk of contracting this disease, you need to provide your bird with proper husbandry: a balanced diet (with sufficient Vitamin A), good sanitation, and appropriate perches.

Birds kept in cages where the perches are all the same diameter are at increased risk of Bumblefoot because of constant pressure and wear on one particular area of their foot. Using perches with differing widths and textures will vary the point of contact with the foot and help prevent pressure areas. A tree branch (from a non-toxic species) is ideal for this purpose.

Dealing with Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a degenerative joint disease that can be quite painful, making movement difficult. Most of the joints in the body depend on a layer of cartilage acting as a cushion which also provides a smooth surface so the adjoining bones can move freely over each other. With arthritis, the cartilage deteriorates so that movement of bones becomes less smooth.

It is estimated that 20% of all dogs over the age of one year have some degree of osteoarthritis. This is usually a result of wear and tear on the joint cartilage but can be secondary to underlying problems such as hip dysplasia (a genetic disease where there is an abnormal shallowing of the hip socket) and luxating patellae (dislocating kneecaps). Both of these are common inherited conditions.

Signs that indicate your dog could have arthritis include:

- reluctance to play
- difficulty getting up, climbing stairs or jumping up or down
- limping or stiffness in the legs
- lameness
- repeatedly licking at a joint
- yelping in pain when touched

Osteoarthritis is a progressive condition that cannot be cured medically. There are however many things you can do to help control and slow its progress. These areas include weight control, exercise, medication, massage and environment.

Weight control

Obesity can contribute to arthritis, as the joint must carry a greater load than that for which it was designed. It is therefore imperative that you keep your dog's weight under control.

Although a pet of normal weight may have OA in one joint as a result of past trauma, the majority of pets have OA in multiple joints as a result of increased body fat. Pets are considered obese if they are 20-30% over their ideal weight.

Exercise

Exercise can strengthen the muscles and ligaments, thus reducing the risk of injury. Controlled exercise such as leash walking and swimming helps maintain muscle bulk without putting the joints under excessive strain.

Medication

See your vet for advice on appropriate medications such as anti-inflammatories and chondroprotective agents. These can be administered as pills, liquids or as an injection. Never administer human anti-inflammatories to animals- some of them have serious (or even fatal) side effects.

Massage

Massage can increase flexibility and circulation. Massaging around the affected joints helps, as does a range of passive movement exercises. These involve gently bending the joint to its point of maximum flexion and extension.

Environment

During winter, pets need extra care. Make sure they have a warm protected bed, away from winter chills and rain. The bed should be padded so as not to put excess strain on the joints.

To determine whether your dog has OA, it is best to make an appointment with your vet for a full physical examination and assessment. This is important to ensure a proper diagnosis of osteoarthritis is made, as other conditions can mimic this condition. Your vet will be able to discuss the various treatments available and the best treatment options for your dog.

Guinea Pig Health Check

Guinea pigs generally have few health problems. If they are well fed and properly cared for, they rarely get sick. Therefore, to ensure good health, you need to take care of your guinea pig's basic needs, such as a proper diet, a clean environment and regular exercise.

Get to know your guinea pig and observe it closely. A healthy guinea pig has clear, bright eyes, a shiny coat, and a lively and playful demeanour. A sick guinea pig will have a dull look in the eyes, and be listless and withdrawn. In addition to behavioural changes, you should also look out for the following signs of illness:

- difficulty in breathing
- loss of appetite
- drastic weight loss
- constipation or diarrhoea
- discharge from the eyes or nose

Regular grooming is an important part of observation, as it gives you an opportunity to take a close look at your pet. Grooming involves tasks such as brushing and nail trimming.

Examine your guinea pig's teeth regularly. Like all rodents, your guinea pig's teeth grow continuously. Provide something hard for your guinea pig to chew on, such as a block of untreated wood, to keep the teeth worn down. When a guinea pig's teeth are too long, it can no longer chew properly. As a result, it will lose weight and eventually starve to death. If you notice that your guinea pig's teeth are too long or misaligned, consult your vet. Treatment may involve regular trimming of the teeth or their removal.

Dog Breed Word Sleuth

E	W	P	H	S	E	G	W	F	X
A	H	D	C	C	I	A	E	B	M
I	I	A	H	H	E	P	I	O	A
O	P	L	I	I	L	U	M	X	L
Z	P	M	H	P	G	G	A	E	T
R	E	A	U	P	A	U	R	R	E
O	T	T	A	E	E	Z	A	V	S
B	K	I	H	R	B	B	N	W	E
P	G	A	U	K	F	U	E	A	D
B	P	N	A	E	T	O	R	B	P

CLUES

1. This breed is one of the smallest of the hunting hounds. It looks like a small English Foxhound and is sturdy with a short, hard coat. 2. This is one of the best known Russian dogs (also known as the Russian wolfhound) and belongs to the hound group. It has a tall body, with a long, silky coat. 3. This toy breed originated in Mexico and is the smallest breed of dog. 4. This breed originated from England, where it was bred to race. It is a medium-sized sight hound that looks similar to the greyhound. 5. This small dog is part of the toy group and has white, silky hair that requires a lot of grooming. 6. This toy breed originated in China over a thousand years ago. It looks like a miniature mastiff with a wrinkly, short-muzzled face and compact, square body with a short, soft coat. 7. An ancient breed and part of the utility group, this dog has a distinctive coat, with black or liver spots on a white background. 8. This breed is part of the gundog group and originated in Germany. Due to its coat colour, it gained the nickname "Grey Ghost". 9. This breed originated in Belgium, where they were a favourite choice to guard canal barges. Even today, they are often taken as companions on boats. It is small, black in colour, with a medium-length coat. 10. This breed originated in Germany and is part of the working dog group. It is a stocky, medium-sized dog with a compact and powerful body that makes for a popular guard dog.

Word Sleuth answers:
1. Beagle; 2. Borzoi; 3. Chihuahua; 4. Whippet; 5. Maltese; 6. Pug; 7. Dalmatian; 8. Weimaraner; 9. Schipperke; 10. Boxer.

Competition for our readers!

WIN a $50 shopping voucher

1) Just answer the following question: Which article did you like best in this issue of Your Vet? .....

2) Tick the box next to your preferred voucher: ☐ K Mart Australia Ltd ☐ Coles Myer Ltd ☐ Target Australia Ltd ☐ JB Hi Fi

3) What is your email address? * .....

* By providing us with your email address, you agree to receive future marketing material.

4) Post with your name and address on the back of the envelope to:
Your Vet Voucher Competition, Unit 5/1 Almondbury Road, Mt Lawley WA 6050

The winner of the competition in *Your Vet's Autumn* edition was **Ms K. Sheridan of NSW**.

THAT'S IT! GOOD LUCK!

Must be received by latest post marked 02/08/2012 to be in the running

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.