

I'M FREE!!
PLEASE TAKE ME

**YOUR
VET**



SUMMER 2014



for happy, healthy pets
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OUR VETS:
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Dr Caroline Thursfield
Dr Jenny Tong
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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, Ingrid, Carli, Claire, Nat, Lynn, Tammie, 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.

DOGS AND GRASS SEED INFECTIONS

With spring and summer comes a greater risk of grass seed infections for your dog. The grass seeds are commonly found lodged in your dogs' paws, ears or eyes. It's important that the problem is detected early to make treatment easier and minimise suffering for your dog.

Grass seeds have a sharp point that can easily penetrate skin. The fibres along the edge of the seed that fan out make them similar to a fish hook once they are embedded. They often get caught in the dog's coat after they've been in long grass and then they work their way into the skin. They will cause infection which presents as swelling and, if left untreated, can cause a nasty abscess.

It's important to look out for swelling or a weeping wound around your dog's toes and feet and keep an eye out for excessive licking or chewing. Other indications that a seed is stuck in their ears are excessive head shaking or ear scratching as well as being

sensitive to touch. If the seed is stuck in the eye you will likely see squinting, rubbing and a swollen eye (this may or may not be weepy).

If you think that your dog might have a seed stuck in its skin you should not delay in getting them to the vet. If the infection is found early (and your dog is a trusting patient) the seed can often be removed with a relatively non-invasive treatment by your vet. Otherwise, if the seed gets too deep in the skin, minor surgery, antibiotics and anti-inflammatory medication may be needed.

During these months when the grass seeds are more prevalent there are precautions you can take to prevent an infection. Keep grass and weeds around your property under control and avoid long grass when you take your dog out for a walk. If you have a long haired dog keep them well groomed and, with all dogs, make sure you regularly check their coat and pay particular attention to the problem areas which are eyes, feet / paws and ears.



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HAVE FUN IN THE SUN, BUT BEWARE OF HEATSTROKE

Everyone should know the golden rule of not leaving pets unattended in cars in warm weather. Nevertheless every summer many dogs and children die from heatstroke. Dogs-in-cars is not the only way for your pet to suffer from this potentially fatal problem.

What is heatstroke, and how can we prevent it from happening?

Unlike humans, dogs don't cool off by sweating through their skin. The only way they can lower their body temperature is to pant, and to sweat a little through their paws. To pant effectively they rely on the air around them being cooler than their own temperature; this will allow the heat in their moist breath to dissipate and be removed into the environment. They also rely on the environment being a little dry. High humidity makes it harder for them to cool off.

Dogs suffer heatstroke when their internal body temperature gets much too high (an example is when severe seizures occur or the pet over-exercises); when the external temperature is too high and the dog cannot seek shade (dogs-in-cars); and when there is no access to water and shade on a very hot day.

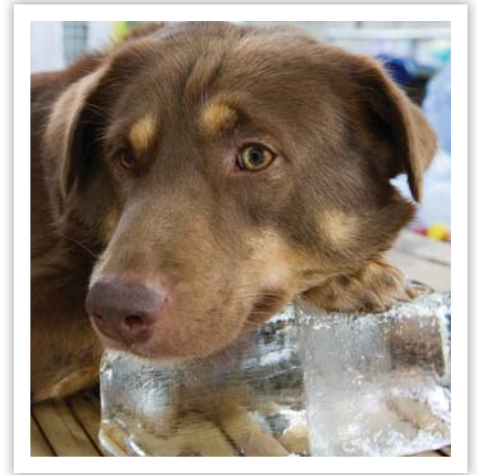
'Pocket' pets like guinea pigs are extremely sensitive to heat, and can die from just lying in their cages on a warmer-than-usual day, if the sun's movement means their cage is no longer in the shade. Cats are far too sensible to let themselves get hot via over-exercising, but are just as susceptible as dogs if confined to a hot situation with no escape.

Heatstroke can occur when you least expect it. There are hidden traps. For example, 'over-exercise' can occur without an owner realising that it's too warm. A dog running alongside a bicycle is likely to be doing somewhere between 15kph-20kph. The effect of wind on skin will keep the owner cool, but won't work for the dog. So the owner may think it's cooler than it really is. Dogs run for enjoyment and to keep up. They can develop a raised core temperature within minutes, but may not start flagging until it's dangerously elevated and their lives are already in danger.

Another example is the frantic, ball-chasing dog, who will NOT give up chasing until the owner stops playing. The owner, believing he/she is helping their dog with some healthy exercise, keeps throwing the ball. Many dogs have suffered heatstroke for this reason, sometimes fatally.

To help prevent heatstroke don't leave your dog in the car, except on the very coolest of days; avoid heavy exercise except in the cool of the morning and late evening and ensure that they can access shade and water at ALL times in the garden.

If you have a guinea, providing them with a frozen water bottle to lie against on days warmer than high 20's can make a big difference to their core body temperature. If you have a cat, keeping it well supplied with chilled gin-and-tonic should do the trick!



CLEVER COLOUR CODED BUDGIE BEAKS

When it comes to deciding who is dad and who is mum, budgies are nosy little birds. The two sexes are colour coded by their beaks.

Budgies have a strip of tissue over their beak called the cere. In juvenile budgies this area is a tan colour but, as they get older, the male's cere becomes a brilliant blue, whilst the female's cere remains a tan to pink colour. Things can sometimes get confusing, however, as male budgies can develop testicular (sex gland) tumours that produce hormones, and these hormones can change the colour of the cere from blue back to brown!



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

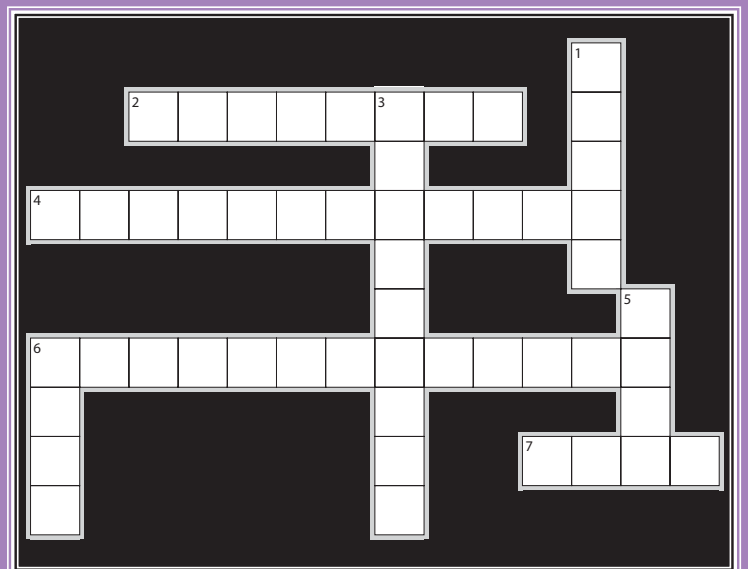
Clever CROSSWORD

Down:

1. Spring and summer bring a greater risk of which seed infection for dogs?
3. Prevent other cats from _____ in your home, before they start.
5. Budgies have a strip of tissues on their beak called a what?
6. Tropical fish come in two varieties: fresh water and what water?

Across:

2. Dogs can't cool off by _____ through their skin.
4. When going on holiday, make sure your pets _____ are current.
6. One of the most popular dog breeds in Australia is the _____ Bull Terrier.
7. Grass seeds are commonly found lodged in your dogs' paws, ears and where?



POPULAR DOG BREEDS

There are many reasons why we love our dogs. They can be a valuable addition to the family or great company for those on their own. In Australia it seems that the most popular breeds of dog are intelligent, strong and active – perhaps this is because we have quite active lifestyles so dogs with these qualities suit us well.

Four of the most popular breeds in Australia are:

1. The Staffordshire Bull Terrier

Staffys are strong and muscular dogs for their size. They play, work and love at full pace and are intelligent, persistent and active. They are extremely courageous, obedient and affectionate. To say that they are “people friendly” is an understatement, which also means that they are not overly wary of people outside their group. They need a stern and solid human pack leader and should be socialised well with other dogs from an early age.

Health: Staffordshire Bull Terriers can be prone to cataracts and hip dysplasia.



History: They originate from Staffordshire, England, in the nineteenth century and come from a cross between Bulldogs and various local terriers that were similar to the Manchester Terrier.

2. Labrador Retrievers

Labrador Retrievers come in two types, English or American. The English Labs are heavier, thicker and blockier while the American Labs are tall and lanky. Whichever the origin, all Labrador Retrievers make great family dogs as they are loyal, affectionate, intelligent, patient and very eager to please. Their desire to please makes them easy to train and excellent service dogs.

Health: Labrador Retrievers are prone to hip and elbow dysplasia as well as eye disorders.

History: The Lab originated in Newfoundland, where it accompanied fishermen in their work and caught fish that came loose from the lines. It was also trained to jump into the cold waters to help pull in the nets. Specimens were brought to England in the 1800s by English ships coming from Labrador.

3. German Shepherds

A German Shepherd is another dog that is extremely well suited to service. They are faithful, brave, keen, alert, obedient, intelligent and eager to please. These qualities also make them great in families. They are generally a one person or one family dog and can often be wary of strangers due to their protective nature and loyalty to their group. Good socialising early on with other people and dogs will decrease their possessive nature. German Shepherds need plenty of mental and physical stimulation and are not suited to being left alone in a yard all day.

Health: German Shepherds can be prone to hip and elbow dysplasia, blood disorders and digestive problems.

History: In Karlsruhe, Germany, Captain Max von Stephanitz and other breeders worked to produce a dog that was

responsive, obedient and good-looking using longhaired, shorthaired and wire-haired local herding and farm dogs from Wurtemberg, Thuringia and Bavaria. The dogs were presented at Hanover in 1882, and the shorthaired variety was first presented in Berlin in 1889.

4. Cavalier King Charles Spaniels

Cavalier King Charles Spaniels are loving, keen and happy dogs. They seem to be wagging their tail most of the time. They are outgoing, sporty and brave. They are intelligent and respond well to a gentle approach to training. They have a good reputation as well behaved dogs and love human companionship. They also get on well and can be trusted with other animals. They are suited to being a constant companion, as they do not like being left alone, but be wary of letting them develop small dog syndrome by treating them too much like a baby.

Health: Cavalier King Charles Spaniels are prone to syringomyelia, hereditary eye diseases such as cherry eye, dislocating kneecaps (patella), back troubles, ear infections, and early onset of deafness or hearing trouble.

History: Cavalier King Charles Spaniels are named after King Charles II and are descended from the King Charles Spaniel. In the late 1600s the King Charles Spaniels were interbred with Pugs, which resulted in a smaller dog with flatter noses, upturned faces, rounded heads and protruding eyes which we now know as the King Charles Spaniel (English Toy Spaniel).

Other dogs on the favourites list are the Golden Retriever, which comes in at number five, six is the Border Collie, seven is the American Staffordshire Terrier, eight is the Poodle, nine is the Pug and ten is the Rottweiler.



THINK OF YOUR PET WHEN MAKING HOLIDAY PLANS

The best way to enjoy your holiday is to follow the Boy Scout motto – “Be prepared”. If you can sail out the door knowing that your pet is safe and secure, with contingency plans in place, then a state of blissful relaxation is more likely.

If leaving your pet in a boarding establishment visit the premises and make sure you feel comfortable with the set up. Book early – Most good boarding establishments are filled to capacity over Summer.

Carers should be made familiar with your pet’s routine. For example if you have a ‘paws-on-the-floor’ policy in your house make sure this is upheld whilst you are away. Habits such as sleeping on the furniture or in your bed can be very difficult to break.

Where possible get the boarding

establishment or carer to feed your pet its usual diet. Sudden changes in diet frequently cause gastric upsets.

Provide the boarding establishment or carer with your holiday itinerary, your contact details, your vet’s details and also your expectations should an unexpected emergency occur. For example if your pet is bitten by a snake or is involved in a road traffic accident is there a financial cap on treatment costs? Or would you prefer a ‘spare-no-expense’, ‘refer-if-necessary’, approach?

Ensure your pet’s vaccinations are current.

If your pet is on medication, make sure there are sufficient supplies for the duration of the holiday.

Then relax!



TROPICAL FISH

Have you ever thought of setting up a tropical fish tank? They can be extremely impressive with breath-taking and interesting varieties of fish, corals and plants. However, you need to keep in mind that a tropical fish tank requires much more care and attention than keeping regular goldfish, so it pays to do your research first.

THE FISH

Tropical fish come in two varieties: fresh water and salt water (otherwise known as marine). Fresh water fish are generally easier to keep than the salt water variety however having a salt water environment allows you to display reef environments like live corals and anemones.

popular fresh water species include tetras, catfish, hatchet fish, pencil fish, angel fish and headstanders. Australian natives such as platies, goramis, barbs, and some varieties of catfish can be easy to care for because they are more tolerant of changing water conditions and temperatures (within reason).

Species to avoid when starting up include the Discus fishes, scaleless species such as clown loaches, ghost knife fish and elephant fish and also aggressive predatory fish.

When selecting your fish make sure they are in good health. Make sure they are alert

and not sluggish and that they are an even shape. Look out for heavy breathing and one gill being closed – this could mean that the fish is diseased. If you are able to see the fish feeding, make sure that they are quick and demanding with their food, this is a sign of good health.

THE TANK

It's not a good idea to start with a small tank. In a smaller tank there is less water, which will pollute faster and needs more regular attention. The essentials to start your tank are the tank, lights, two-stage filters, hydrometer, test kits, substrate, live rock, food and chillers.

The best temperature range for tropical fish is generally 28°C to 30°C. If you have corals and anemones, look into the best temperatures for keeping the specific types you have. Corals and anemones can actually be more sensitive to temperature than the fish.

There is definitely a lot to think about when setting up a tropical fish tank, but if you have the commitment the display can be a pleasing addition to your home. Remember when you are starting out not to be afraid of asking lots of questions of your tropical fish supplier, they are there to help you with advice on keeping your fish and tank environment thriving.



PRACTICE UPDATE

We farewell nurse Natalie this issue. She has been part of our senior nursing team in 2014, but is a country girl at heart and has decided to make a move back to country Victoria taking up a position in a mixed animal practice in Warrnambool. We will miss her infectious laugh and smile, but wish her well in her new position.

We welcome Lynn to the our nursing team. Lynn is an experienced vet nurse and is originally from New Zealand but now calls Melbourne home. We now have two Kiwis at North Road!

Dr Caroline has recently returned from an incredible month in Africa. Her time in South Africa involved participation in a wildlife immobilisation course for vets, as well as attending the World Small Animal Conference in Cape Town. Caroline was involved in the monitoring of immobilised wildlife as well as veterinary treatments of Cape Buffalo, Black Rhinos and antelope. The work with the rhinos was aimed to help combat poaching, by microchipping and collecting DNA samples for identification of this endangered species. Caroline also had holiday time with husband Dave driving around Namibia. They spent several days in Etosha National Park with much wildlife viewing.

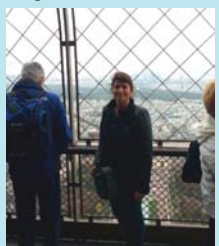


Caroline and David in Namibia



Lion viewing in the National Park

Nurse Ingrid has also recently returned from a wonderful European vacation. This was Ingrid's first visit to Europe, visiting London, Paris and Belgium. She loved exploring medieval towns, wineries as well as many museums of course. Her highlights were visiting the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Cathedral in Tours, France, the World War 1 battlefield tour in Ypres, Belgium and enjoying some bike riding along the beautiful canals of Bruges.



Ingrid viewing Paris from the Eiffel Tower

INTRUDER ALERT

Many cat owners find that they have problems with other people's cats. It's estimated that in a third of the households where the cat has access to come and go as they please, there is a problem with an intruder cat using the same access. This can lead to unfortunate trips to the vet for treatment to cat wounds and abscesses caused by fighting.

Cats are curious by nature and some extroverts simply enjoy visiting neighbours. A lucky few are welcomed and cause no problem. Others cause a nuisance by, stealing food, spray marking and fighting.

Why do other cats come into my home?

- 25% are looking for food
- 21% want attention
- 21% are seeking shelter
- 18% are intent on fighting

How do I prevent intruder cats coming in?

- Do not interact with other cats that come into your garden or property, even if they are friendly. This will just encourage them to explore more and has the potential to cause problems for your cat/s.
- Move food away from the cat flap so

cats are not tempted by the sight of a food bowl.

- Be wary of allowing your cat access to your home via an open window as other cats will follow suit.
- Upgrade your cat flap to one that opens by a sensor that will be picked up from your cat's collar or microchip.

It's very important to try to prevent intruding behaviour from cats in your area before it starts. Cats are very persistent and can be hard to discourage once they have started invading.



Down: 1. Grass; 3. Intruding; 5. Cere; 6. Salt
Across: 2. Sweating; 4. Vaccinations; 6. Staffordshire; 7. Eyes.

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD