

I'M FREE!!
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**YOUR
VET**



SPRING 2013



for happy, healthy pets

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OUR VETS:
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Dr Wendy Milledge
Dr Caroline Thursfield
Dr Jenny Tong
Dr Byron von Hoff

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.

Lauren, Bec, Katie, Ingrid, Gillian, Claire, Tammie, Manya and Leeanne make up our team of veterinary nurses. **Louise** and **Lisa** are our weekend cattery attendants.

Clea, our dog groomer, is also happy to help you with any grooming enquiries.

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.

BREAKTHROUGH IN CAT ALLERGIES BRINGS CURE EVEN CLOSER

A cure for allergic reactions in cats and other pets may only be a few years away, thanks to the discovery of the biological underpinnings that cause them.

Australia and New Zealand have the highest prevalence of asthma in the world, and as our countries become more industrialised, the percentage of population afflicted tends to grow higher. 15 to 30% of people with allergies in Australia have allergic reactions to cats and dogs. And people with pet allergies have supersensitive immune systems that react to harmless proteins in the pet's dander (dead skin that is shed), saliva or urine. These proteins are called allergens.

Cat dander is a particularly "sticky" molecule and can appear in many places, in shoes, clothes and walls and ceilings, but how cat dander causes such a severe allergic reaction in some people has long been a mystery. Thanks to new research, a treatment ridding people of their allergies may be on the way. British scientists have been identifying the different components that lead to allergic reactions in cats, and combined with a drug that's already in clinical trials for other illnesses, they are closer than ever to a treatment for cat allergies.

Researchers at the University of Cambridge found that when dander was released in the presence of the common environmental bacterial toxin Lipopolysaccharides (LPS), it triggered in humans an immune response in the protein receptor TLR4, and subsequently, an allergic reaction. Researchers found that LPS exacerbates the immune response's reaction to cat dander, and they have identified the part of the immune system that recognises it.

Understanding this triggering mechanism, there are now drugs that have been designed and are now in clinical trials, that could potentially then be used in a different way to treat cat allergy and prevent it. This new drug would be more effective for long-

term treatment by inhibiting the reaction of the TLR4 receptor and therefore blocking the allergic reaction. This may be available in pill or inhaler form.

This new information could pave the way for treatments for those with asthma, and other persistent disease triggered by cat allergen, even potentially help create a dog and dust mite cure.



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THE BONDS BETWEEN DOGS AND THEIR OWNERS

We as humans understand the importance of developing friends and relationships as part of our growth to adulthood. Well, the same goes for your pets; they need to develop relationships with their own kind. But for domestic animals the relationship can often go in the opposite direction.

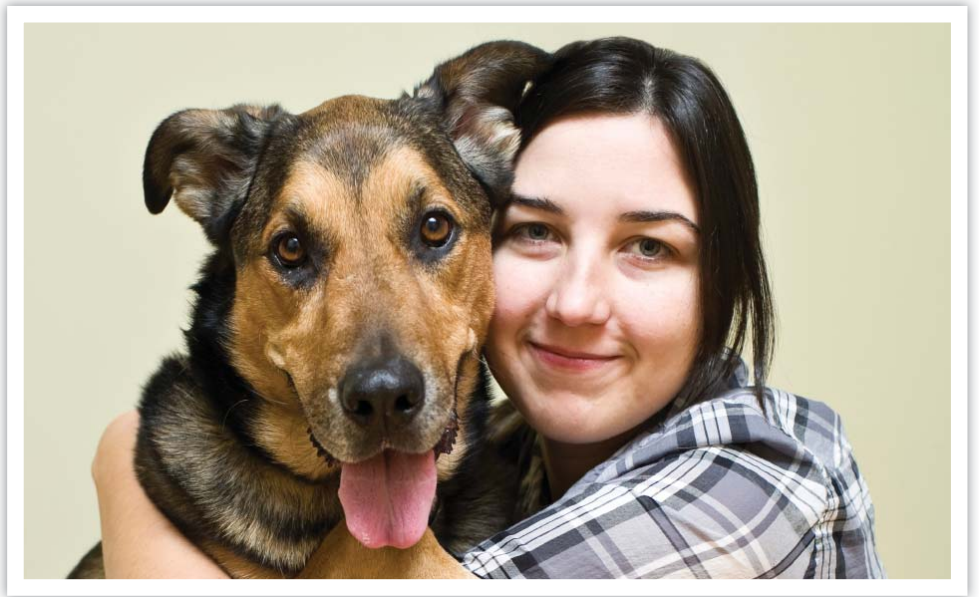
Researchers have found that there are often very strong bonds formed with owners and their pets, much like that of a parent and a child. This is known as the “secure base effect”; and normally found in infant children as they develop and understand the world around them. You see all the time how children gravitate back towards their caregiver, using them as a safety net for interacting with their environment.

A new study has found that dogs become attached in much the same way, and an experiment held in Vienna tested 20 dogs and their reactions during three different settings: having an absent owner, a silent owner with a blindfold on, and an encouraging owner. The dogs had a toy with a treat inside that they had to work out how to get, and researchers found that the owners presence definitely affected the dogs reactions. If the owner wasn't in the room, the dogs spent less time trying to retrieve the treat. They also tested for separation anxiety with two other tests, but found no effect on the dog's performance in those experiments. So the researchers concluded that the dogs weren't affected by the absence of the owner, just that if the owner

was present that the dog needed them as a secure base to interact with the toy.

Researchers then tested whether dogs would complete tasks when their owner was replaced by a stranger. The dogs showed no interest in the strangers, and also didn't show much interest in the toy or treat whether the stranger was there or not. This further supports the evidence that a secure base effect is specific to the owner and comparable with that found in infant-caregiver relationships.

The truth is that people of all kinds have great relationships with their dogs and vice versa, for example Police Officers and their dogs, or drug dogs and their owners. Pet ownership has also been found to have positive benefits on people's health, as pets can provide nonhuman form of social support, and they increase your physical activity, lower systemic blood pressure, diminish stress and the list goes on. The bottom line is love your pets and they will love you back!



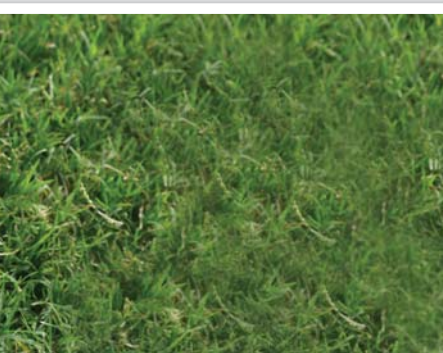
LAWN CHEMICALS MAY BE HURTING YOUR DOG'S HEALTH

Now that it's starting to get a bit warmer, you and your dog can finally venture out into the front or back yard. As you venture out you find that the lawns need some work, so you spray them with chemicals to keep the weeds from growing. But does this affect your dog, and could it be causing your dog health problems?

Researchers in the US have been analysing the effects of lawn chemicals on the health of dogs and their findings may make you think twice about using herbicides. Even the grassy areas you take your dog to visit could be dangerous. The research team applied common herbicides to grassy areas in various conditions including green, dry brown, wet, and recently mowed grass. The chemicals remained detectable for up to 48

hours after application and even longer in some cases. According the Environmental Protection Agency, exposure to some herbicides can lead to blood, liver, and kidney toxicity. And extreme exposure has also been known to affect neurological development in humans and animals.

A solution for protecting your pets from herbicides and other lawn chemicals is to keep an eye on them, and close off those areas of your lawn that have been treated. But you also have to be careful while out walking as your pet may come across an area that has been sprayed. If your animal experiences any type of symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhoea, or seizures, please contact your Veterinarian immediately.



FUN FURRY FACTS FOR POCKET PETS

DID YOU KNOW?

- Guinea pigs have only three toes on their hind feet and four toes on the front feet.
- A female guinea pig can come back on heat and be fertile within 2 hours of giving birth – hence it is best to separate the male and female prior to the birth!
- Guinea pigs (like humans) must eat food that contains Vitamin C – other animals are able to synthesise their own vitamin C. Without enough vitamin C in their diet, guinea pigs will develop scurvy.
- Guinea pigs and rabbits produce two types of faeces – one firm pellet that you clean out of their cage and another softer stool that is eaten directly from the anus. Ingestion of this softer stool or caecotroph is thought to aid in the absorption of certain essential dietary amino acids and vitamins.
- A guinea pig pregnancy lasts around 63 days and results in 1 to 5 babies.
- A mouse pregnancy lasts 21 days and can result in anything from 3 to 18 babies.
- Rats and mice with pink eyes have very poor vision compared to their darker eyed mates.

TICKS, ARE THEY SEASONAL? AND WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS?

As spring is upon us, your dog will be more likely to come into contact with ticks. So doing a thorough check is very important, as there is actually quite limited information on tick distribution, and seasonality. But what we do know is that this condition of tick paralysis, *Ixodes holocyclus* and *Ixodes cornuatus* can be a potentially fatal for Australian dogs. So now is the best time to perform these checks.

A study was conducted on the 3479 cases of canine and feline tick paralysis in Australia, using a real-time disease surveillance program. The risk factors of mortality have been identified and this study has generated a map of distribution. Utilising space-time permutation scans, gave a cluster analysis statistic to work with.

The study found that tick paralysis was distinctly seasonal, with most of the cases reported during spring. The majority of cases were located on the East Coast, New South Wales and Queensland, with one cluster in particular identified on the south coast of New South Wales. The breeds found to be at a significant higher risk of death were puppies less than 6 months old, or of a toy breed. For cat owners, no significant risk factors were found. But, dogs receiving chemoprophylactic treatment for tick infestation did experience tick paralysis during the products period of effectiveness.

With the risk factors for mortality identified, Veterinarians can determine a prognosis in cases of canine tick paralysis and

potentially improve the treatment of cases. However, the prevention of tick paralysis via chemoprophylaxis is not 100% guaranteed across the whole population of dogs. Daily tick searches for pets are highly recommended in these risk areas such as New South Wales and Queensland, and especially during the Spring / Summer periods.



TIME TO TALK BIRDS AND THE BEES

Isn't it nice waking up in the morning to hear the beautiful songs of the birds? Well spring time means for the birds, literally that it's time for: the birds and the bees.

Birdsongs are mostly male birds calling out about how great they are. And their songs have different meanings, to the females it's saying, 'check out how fit I am', and to the other male birds it's, 'yeah that's right, this is my territory and you don't want to mess with this!'

George Armistead, a world renowned bird expert says that there are many myths about birds and the most common question is: 'Do

birds mate for life?' His answer was sadly no, but Armistead has said that most birds are monogamous. And that there are different types of monogamy, serial monogamists – they pair up for breeding season, but might take a different partner next season. Then there are the socially monogamous - they mate and nest together but it's an open relationship. And some other birds don't even bother to maintain a surface relationship. Take for example, the female Prairie Chicken, they gather and line up in a process called "Lekking." The show starts at the crack of dawn, with the males performing a song and dance judged by the females. Each female

picks a male, mates and moves on. The females don't come to these sites for a long-term relationship, and these sites go back decades even centuries, so the females know exactly where to go.

When it comes to actually doing the deed, the Dunnock or hedge sparrow, only lasts a second, but they copulate a hundred times a day. And Hummingbirds, with a short lifespan, have been timed copulating in the wild for 56 minutes. That's a fairly large proportion their lifespan! But no matter how they go about it, the goal is to find a mate; so next time you hear a beautiful birdsong you'll know it for the birds, and the bees.

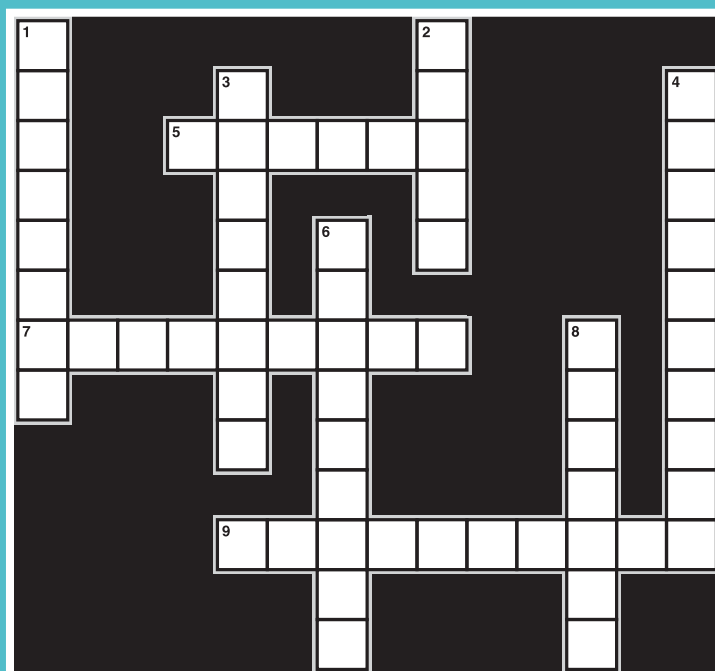
Clever CROSSWORD

ACROSS

5. What is dead skin that is shed called?
7. What are protiens that cause allergies called?
9. Most birds have what sort of relationship?

DOWN

1. Pets can provide what form of social support?
2. How many toes do Guinea pigs have on their hind feet?
3. What can your dog pass on if you kiss your dog on the mouth?
4. What should you think twice about using on your lawn?
6. A Guinea pigs what lasts around 63 days?
8. What is another name for the hedge sparrow?



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

WHETHER A CHIHUAHUA OR A MASTIFF, FOR DOGS, A DOG IS A DOG.

Man's best friend, the dog, comes in all shapes and colours. Dogs vary in size from less than 1kg to over 100kg. They can have long, short, pointy or flat snouts, erect or floppy ears, short or long hair, curly or not, and the great colour variation defies any simple description. Nevertheless, scientists in France have recently demonstrated that dogs recognise other dogs as being of their own species, and this, using only pictures of heads (Autier-Dérian et al. 2013, published in *Animal Cognition*).

The researchers trained nine pet dogs to choose a picture of a dog when paired with a picture of a non-dog species. Each time the dog selected the dog picture, it was rewarded with a treat. Each pet went through

a series of 10 tasks, of increasing difficulty. By the end of the experiment, every dog was able to recognise any dog picture (whether it be a labrador, a bull-terrier or a poodle) and distinguish it from pictures of any other species (cows, cats, horses, reptiles, humans, etc.).

These results show that domestic dogs can recognise individuals from their own species despite the huge morphological variations that humans have created. This cognitive process means that dogs know whom to play with — and mate with.

Reference article: Autier-Dérian, D., Deputte, B.L., Chalvet-Monfray, K., Coulon, M. & Mounier, L. 2013. Visual discrimination of species in dogs (Canis familiaris). Animal Cognition, 16, 637-651.



CAT DENTAL CARE

We all know how hard it is to get your pet to anything at all, let alone brush its teeth for good health. But did you know that up to 80 percent of dogs and 70 percent of cats will experience the beginning stages of periodontal disease by the age of three? That means it's time to break out the toothbrushes!

CAT TEETH CLEANING

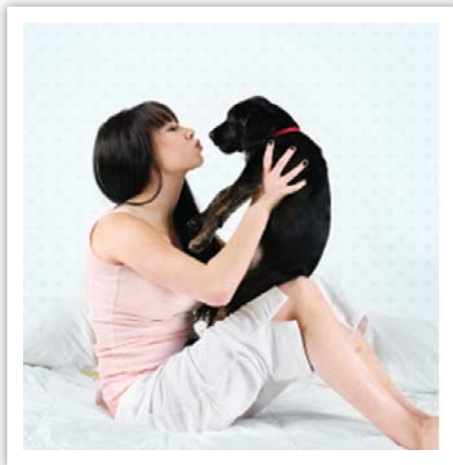
Don't just jump straight into it at home; you may want to get your cats teeth done by your veterinarian so it's already professionally done. Your Vet will flush your cat's teeth with a solution to kill all the bacteria, then use special ultrasonic scalers that clean above and below the gum line.

You can then clean your cats teeth yourself at home, and should examine them on a regular basis keeping them nice and healthy. Stay on the look-out for plaque and tartar; if you're not sure what to look for, ask your veterinarian. They'll inform you on reddening of the gums, bad breath and yellow-brown crust (tartar).

There are different types of cat toothpaste available — they have similar flavours to your catfood, and some encourage them to bite down which makes the paste more effective. Cats should see their veterinarian twice a year, as they can identify problems and help ensure your at-home cleanings are doing the trick.



THE DANGERS OF KISSING DOGS ON THE MOUTH



Owners who kiss their dogs on the mouth may be putting themselves at risk of transmission of gum disease.

It may be cute and irresistible, but kissing your dog can actually pass on bacteria and lead to periodontitis if left untreated. Only 5 percent of dogs will suffer from cavities during their lifetime, but periodontitis is very common in canines and can cause teeth to become loose and even fall out.

Researchers tracked a microbe that is common in canines and not in humans finding that 16 percent of pet owners had the microbe, mostly those with close contact with their pets. But did you know that germs can also be received from human to pet? 10 human strains of periodontitis-related bacteria have been found in dogs mouths, so pet owners need to practice good habits like brushing their animals teeth.

People with compromised immune systems and the elderly should be especially careful.

PRACTICE UPDATE



Nurse Lauren has recently returned from a relaxing week in Torquay visiting family, plenty of good food and relaxation was in order!

Nurse Katie is our roller derby queen, her other passion!

She has recently returned from competing in a Victoria vs Tasmania tournament in Launceston. This was Katie's first trip to Tasmania, so she also took the opportunity to explore some of its beautiful sights.



Dog grooming is in full swing again, Clea having returned after a relaxing vacation. Your pooch may be in need of a makeover now

that Spring is in the air. Grooming is available 5 days a week, Monday to Friday. As the warm months approach our grooming salon is extremely busy and bookings need to be made well in advance to ensure a place for your canine friend.



Your feline family is also well catered for in our cattery when you decide to take a holiday break. Out cat boarding facility is an

intimate purpose-built indoor area, also with a fully enclosed outdoor playground for your cat to laze about. Some of you may be planning a holiday over the busy upcoming holiday season, bookings over these busy periods need to be made well in advance to secure a place. Details of our cattery can be found on our clinic website on www.northroadvet.com.au. You can always feel in touch with your feline friend whilst you are away by logging on to our website and checking out our photo snapshots page, this is updated weekly for you to view recent pictures of our boarders. Of course our nursing staff are also happy to send you email updates too.

Down: 1. Nonhuman; 2. Three; 3. Bacteria; 4. Herbicides; 5. Pregnancy; 6. Dunnock.

Across: 5. Dander; 7. Allergens; 9. Monogamous.

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD