

I'M FREE!!  
PLEASE TAKE ME



YOUR  
VET 

AUTUMN 2015

  
**North  
Road**  
Veterinary  
Centre 

for happy, healthy pets

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find us on  facebook

#### OUR VETS:

**Dr Andrew Milledge**

**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.

**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.

## PICA- WHEN PETS INGEST THE NON DIGESTIBLE!!

Pregnant ladies are not the only ones to occasionally experience cravings to eat non-food materials. This unusual activity, called pica, also occurs in our domestic cats and dogs.

Affected animals can eat an amazing array of materials from rocks and kitty litter to their owner's underwear. Cats with pica are particularly attracted to fabric and plastic bags. Oriental breeds such as Siamese and Burmese seem predisposed to this condition and often have a fetish for sucking and chewing on wool. Ingestion of these unusual objects can have disastrous consequences including gut obstruction.

Most cases of pica are the result of a behavioural problem. If the animal has been weaned too early or been hand-reared, the sucking on fabric may be an exaggerated nursing behaviour. A stressful event can precede a bout of pica and many animals with obsessive-compulsive disorder will have pica as part of their symptoms. For some affected animals, there may just be pleasure obtained from the texture and feel of these objects when they are ingested. Medical conditions such as anaemia, inflammatory bowel disease and low iron levels can also predispose an animal to pica.

The treatment for pica can be difficult and needs to be addressed from various directions. The animal should have a thorough vet check to rule out any underlying

medical conditions. If these are clear, the behavioural component of the problem needs to be addressed. Enrich the environment using toys, increased exercise and interactive playtime. Cats benefit from visual enrichment using windows, fish tanks and bird feeders (placed outside the window!) Thin rawhide chews and food-dispensing toys that drop small biscuits when rolled around can help direct eating away from inappropriate items. There are special diffusers available that release pheromones (secreted hormones that affect the brain) into the air to help reduce stress. Finally, mood-modifying medications may be needed to suppress the obsessive nature of this strange activity.



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# IF ONLY THEY COULD SPEAK!

Our beloved furry friends are well known for bringing us joy and making us smile. Even though they cannot speak, we are still able to connect and communicate love and affection with them. But what happens when they're not feeling at their best and they need to let you know?

As a pet owner it is vital to recognise when your fur-baby is not 100% so that you can manage them and any additional treatment they may require. The ability to recognise when your pet is not well comes through knowing your pet well. Being aware if something is not quite right is extremely important as it will affect how soon your pet receives the care they need. It all comes down to knowing what is normal and what is not. With regular monitoring of your pet's day-to-day life you will be able to pick up any concerns early and therefore be able to deal with them sooner, rather than later. The following list will help you know what to look out for:

- GENERAL WELLBEING** – Is your pet moving normally? If not, are they in pain? Do they have an obvious injury? It is important to assess this quickly and to seek further advice if concerned. Are they eating/drinking the normal amount? A change in the consumption of food or water can be a concern. Obviously minor variations are to be expected, particularly with changes in temperature. However all unexplained changes should be investigated, especially if your pet has stopped eating completely or you suspect they are dehydrated.
- TOILETING HABITS** – While sometimes difficult, it is important to note any changes in the quantity or consistency of your pet's faeces. Digestive upsets are common in most pets but diarrhoea can be a serious problem and something that should be evaluated. Remember any dietary changes need to be introduced gradually and a moderate change in the consistency of your pet's faeces is not uncommon when changes to a feeding regime are being introduced, but major changes can be a cause for concern.
- GENERAL Demeanour** – Does your pet seem happy and looking forward to food with a sense of excitement? A pet that shows little or no interest in its meal should be watched carefully. Be aware if you have more than one pet that group feeding environments can create their own issues! Ensure that the feeding routine is as consistent as possible, even if that means separating your pets to make sure that each gets its fair share

feeding routines in which some animals may miss out altogether, and others get twice their ration, are unhealthy and increase the risks of dietary-related problems.

A change in any of these areas can be triggered by something as simple as a variation in temperature, but it could also be the first early signs of something amiss. Do your best to get to the bottom of it by checking your pet thoroughly and monitoring them closely.

If things don't return to normal then don't hesitate to see your vet for a check-up.

Finding problems early can not only reduce treatment costs, but also save lives.



## Clever CROSSWORD

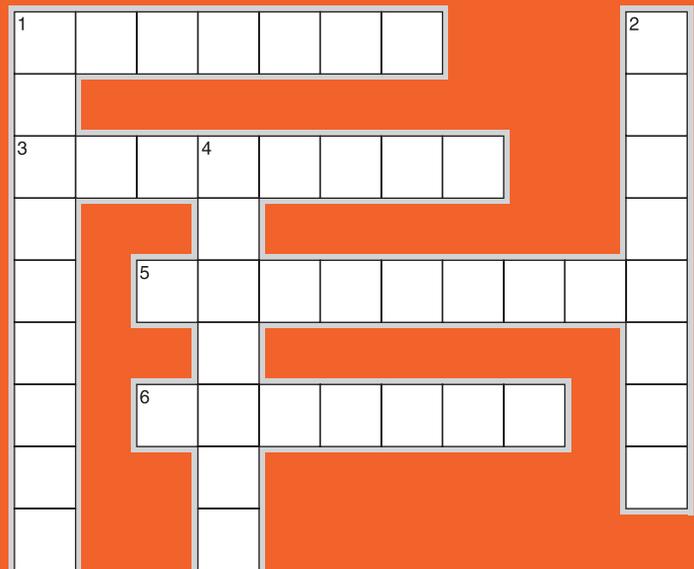
### Down:

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a good idea should your pet have tendencies to wander.
2. Cats' claws often carry \_\_\_\_\_ underneath them.
4. Insufficient exercise can cause your pet to suffer from \_\_\_\_\_

### Across:

1. Another name for cats ?
3. What are frogs and tadpoles sensitive to ?
5. Changes in temperature can cause your pet to \_\_\_\_\_
6. Most Australian States require a \_\_\_\_\_ to keep Frogs in captivity.

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



## CAT SCRATCHES AND YOUR SKIN

Our beloved moggies are generally wonderful to cuddle and play with, but every now and then someone ends up drawing blood...and it's usually them! Cats have sharp claws, and occasionally they scratch their human family – usually unintentionally. Cat scratches can burn, itch and be downright painful. If you or someone in the family has been scratched, here are some tips for dealing with it:

### WASH THE AREA WITH SOAP AND WATER.

Cats' claws often have material or bacteria on or under them. When they puncture your skin, that dirt is right there and can enter the wound. Use mild hand soap and warm water to wash the cat scratch and the area around it. Flush the area thoroughly with warm water to rinse any material away.

### PROTECT THE AREAS OF THE WOUND THAT WERE DEEP ENOUGH TO BLEED.

Depending on the size of the scratch, this could be a band-aid or a piece of gauze; as long as the covering allows the injury to breathe. It is important not to smother the wound with anti-bacterial cream but these can be used sparingly or try lavender oil as a natural anti-bacterial which can often help reduce any itching.

### WATCH THE WOUND FOR SIGNS OF INFECTION.

These include swelling, redness, tenderness and oozing. If these signs appear, see your doctor.

### WATCH FOR SIGNS OF CAT SCRATCH DISEASE - ESPECIALLY IN CHILDREN OR THOSE WITH LOWERED IMMUNITY.

Cat scratch disease, a bacterial infection that causes swelling of the lymph nodes, is usually due to a scratch or bite of a cat. *Bartonella henselae*, the bacterium that causes this disease, is found in all parts of the world. Fleas spread the bacteria between cats, although there's no evidence that fleas can transmit the disease to humans. The bacteria live in infected cats' saliva but don't make the animals sick. In humans, a blister or bump develops several days after the scratch or bite which is usually painless and may be mistaken for a bug bite. Within a couple of weeks, one or more lymph nodes close to the area will swell and become tender. In most kids, swollen lymph nodes are the main symptom of the disease and the illness is mild. If people have other general symptoms, they might include a mild fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, headache, rash, sore throat, and an overall ill feeling. Cat scratch disease usually resolves without any lasting illness.

### CONSIDER A VISIT TO YOUR DOCTOR FOR AN EVALUATION AND MORE THOROUGH CLEANING.

If the wound is very deep and has a skin flap or ragged edges, it is more likely to get infected and leave a scar. Also consider having it checked out if the wound is on your face.

Most people realise that receiving the occasional scratch is part of owning a cat. Playtime is an enjoyable activity for both you and your cat...it's just unfortunate that sometimes it's your flesh that comes off second best! To avoid this don't forget to utilise cat toys, ribbons, balls and blankets to help create some distance between their super-sharp claws and your delicate skin.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR EXERCISE

Just like humans, regular exercise is a must for the well-being of most pets. If you accept the responsibility of keeping a pet you must ensure that regular exercise is available to them.

If an animal does not have the space and opportunity to exercise it may lead to behavioural issues as well as poor health. Reptiles are one of the few exceptions as they prefer confined spaces and do not take the opportunity to exercise if allowed to do so.

Concerning situations for pets are cats living in small flats, dogs whose owners are never home, guinea pigs kept in a hutch with no

access to a run, caged hamsters/rats/mice without an exercise wheel and birds with no flight space in their cage.

Exercise is important as it allows our pets to express their normal instinctive behavioural traits and encourages the development of a daily toilet routine.

The most common adverse effect of insufficient exercise is obesity and all pets can develop this.

Numerous dogs, cats, guinea pigs, hamsters, rats, ponies and birds are overweight simply because their owners do not moderate their food intake or because they have enforced a sedentary lifestyle through a lack of regular physical activity. Make sure you keep your pet happy and healthy by ensuring they have the ability to run, jump, play or fly every day!



# DID SOMEONE SAY "RIBBIT"?

Before you consider purchasing a frog you need to be familiar with the law in your state or territory.

Frogs and tadpoles are protected in most Australian states and territories and a license is required to keep them in captivity. It is illegal to take a frog from the wild in Australia – if you wish to keep frogs you must purchase them from a licensed frog breeder or society.

While frogs are low maintenance pets, you must ensure that their cages are clean, they are fed regularly and that the water is free from toxins in order for your pet to live a long life. All water in their enclosure must be free from chlorine as they are very sensitive to its toxicity. You can buy products to de-chlorinate the water, or simply use bottled water.

Frogs are one of the most unique pets you could have. Having one as a pet is more of a hobby as these are not companion animals. It can be dangerous to both of you to handle them too often. Any chemicals or residue on human hands can be passed onto them and



even kill them so smokers should never touch frogs. Hands should be washed thoroughly before handling your frog to avoid irritation to their skin and again afterwards to protect you. Excessive handling can also cause distress to the frog so it is best to keep it at a minimum.

The preferred diet for frogs is live insects such as moths, flies, wax worms and crickets. Most of these can be purchased or you can collect them yourself but you must ensure their food is free of pesticides and chemicals. Frogs also need calcium and vitamin D powder regularly due to being indoors and you can get this in most pet shops.

Frogs make great pets but before you purchase, talk to your veterinary practitioner or a person experienced in the care of frogs for advice so you are fully prepared for your new friend when you bring them home.

# THE LOSS OF A FURRY FAMILY MEMBER

Animals provide us with companionship, acceptance, emotional support, and unconditional love.

If you've shared your heart and home with an animal, you will no doubt feel a great sense of loss and sorrow when you lose them.

No matter how many years you had together, or how expected their death, the grief can be overwhelming.

Unfortunately there's no avoiding it: if you loved the pet, you're going to be sad and the grief may last longer than you expect.



Don't allow people to tell you how to feel or what to do; only you know what is right for you.

Acknowledge your grief and give yourself permission to express it and don't hesitate to reach out to others who will lend you a shoulder to cry on. You may find it helpful to write about your feelings, either in a journal or a poem. You may also want to ask your veterinarian or local animal shelter about available pet-loss hotlines if you would like to talk to someone about your grief. Use the Internet and search for pet-loss support groups and coping information. When you are ready, prepare an appropriate memorial for your pet. This is a very personal choice and whatever you choose needs to be right for you.

The relationship between humans and their pets is often described by psychologists as a simple one. It is free of the issues that people experience in dealing with each other and full of unconditional love. This is often what makes the grieving process more intense when a pet dies. A pet is a constant companion, and facing its loss can be devastating. It is due to the incredible amount of love that the loss is so painful....but it's that love and joy that they bring that makes it all worth it.

# PRACTICE UPDATE

Drs Andrew and Wendy have recently returned from a wonderful holiday with their daughters Emily and Alice, on Kao Yao Noi island, a beautiful and untouched island in southern Thailand near Phang Nga Bay. Plenty of family r & r in the Thailand sun was enjoyed, along with some amazing Thai cuisine and fresh seafood; they enjoyed bike riding around the island and even tried their hand at sight-seeing with motor scooters, a new experience for Andrew and Wendy!



# PUPPY PRESCHOOL

At the North Road Veterinary Centre, we think early socialisation and training is vital for all puppies between two and four months of age to help them develop into well-behaved and sociable dogs. It is much easier to train your puppy from the start rather than having to correct inappropriate behaviour later on. Our puppy preschool classes are conducted on Sundays at the clinic by a qualified and experienced dog trainer and instructor. The program runs each month as a 3 week course, check our website [www.northroadvet.com.au](http://www.northroadvet.com.au) for full details.



# EASTER WARNING

With Easter comes all those chocolate treats!!! Our pets love them too, but remember chocolate is toxic to our four-legged friends. Small amounts can be poisonous causing serious illness, and in severe cases can even be fatal. So don't be tempted, keep all those chocolate treats out of reach from your pet!!



North Road Veterinary Centre can be found on Facebook, follow our page to keep up to date with the daily happenings of the clinic! [www.facebook.com/northroadveterinarycentre](http://www.facebook.com/northroadveterinarycentre)

Across: 1. Moggies; 3. Chlorine; 5. Dehydrate; 6. License.

Down: 1. Microchip; 4. Obesity; 2. Bacteria.

# ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD