

**I'M FREE!!**  
PLEASE TAKE ME



**WINTER 2014**



**for happy, healthy pets**  
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**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, Natalie, Ingrid, Claire, Tammie, Nat, Manya and Leeanne** make up our team of veterinary nurses. **Louise and Adele** are our weekend cattery attendant, **Sarah** is a part-time cattery attendant on weekdays.

**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.

## PROTECTING YOUR DOG AGAINST KENNEL COUGH

Kennel cough is an umbrella term used to describe a hacking cough in dogs caused by various viruses and bacteria. The two main causes are infection with parainfluenza virus and the bacteria Bordetella Bronchiseptica. The latter is a similar bacterium to the one that causes whooping cough in humans. These bacteria and viruses cause an inflammation of the major airways resulting in a hacking, paroxysmal cough. The cough can end in gagging and retching of mucus which may give owners the impression that their dog has something stuck in its throat. Coughing is often worse at night and is exacerbated by exercise and pressure on the throat region – such as pulling on a lead.

Kennel cough is highly contagious. Infected dogs can even transmit the disease prior to showing any symptoms. The treatment for kennel cough will vary from case to case depending on the age of the dog and the

severity of symptoms. Puppies and elderly dogs (who may have preexisting airway disease) tend to be the most severely affected. Treatment may include antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs and cough suppressants. In addition to medication prescribed by your vet, owners should rest their dog and isolate it from other dogs. Taking the dog into a nice steamy bathroom or humidifying the environment may also help.

As with any disease, prevention is better than cure. A vaccine that protects against the two major causes of kennel cough is available. Because many other bacteria and viruses can cause the problem it is still possible for a vaccinated dog to contract kennel cough. However vaccinated dogs tend to have a less severe form of the disease and recover more quickly than unvaccinated dogs. Speak to your vet about what is an appropriate vaccination for your dog.



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# KEEPING YOUR PETS HAPPY OVER WINTER

Even pets can get the winter blues, so it can help to give them some extra attention and cuddles over the cooler months when everyone's moods can drop just a little. Here are some other vital tips for keeping your pets happy and cosy over winter.

**KEEP ACTIVE:** We all know how easy it is to go into hibernation mode over winter and avoid exercise, but it is good for you and your dog to keep up with the walks and exercise. It is worth braving the weather and putting on a few extra layers to get outdoors. Keeping your pet moving helps with joint health and mobility and prevent arthritic animals from seizing up as much.

**BEDDING:** Some extra blankets and/or padding on your pet's bed will make a great difference. Also make sure that their bed is away from draughty, cold and damp areas. Raised beds are great for avoiding draughts and cold coming from hard floors. For outdoor animals, make sure their shelter is well insulated and protected from the elements.

**GROOMING AND RUGGING:** Don't assume that your pet doesn't need a trim up over winter if they have regular grooming. Coats being left to grow too long in an attempt to keep your cat or dog warm can lead to skin

irritations and matting. It is a good idea to perhaps keep their cut a little longer than in other seasons and you can add extra warmth with a rug or coat for your pet.

**CAREFUL OF THOSE HOT SPOTS:** In the search for the ultimate warm spot your pet might get themselves into danger. Be aware that your cat (or your neighbours) might be hiding under your car or in your engine to keep warm. They might get too close to an open fire, so it is always good to have the guard up so that sparks don't land on their coat. Finally make sure that you keep an eye on animals around heaters that can be knocked over.

**WATER:** It is just as important in winter for your pet to have access to plenty of water. If you live in a very cold area and their water supply is outside, make sure it doesn't get iced over. Indoor heating can cause some dehydration, so make sure they have access to water even when you are all bundled up in one area keeping warm.

**FLEAS:** Fleas are not just a summer problem. Heated homes can set off a fleas cycle as well as the warmer weather, so make sure you keep your pets treated all throughout the year.



# RODENTS MAY BE THE PERFECT PET

For many people rats will always be vermin. Small dirty animals with scaly tails whose only redeeming feature is to provide exercise for scared beholders as they leap on and off chairs shrieking RAT!

It's time this stereotype was corrected and we realise that these animals are one of the most appropriate pets for young children. Pet rats are a different species to the wild plague-bearing type. Many fancy varieties are available, the most common being the Hooded rat and the Self-coloured rat. Domestic rats are bred to be docile and sociable and can be kept in groups. Males and females can be kept together, but bear in mind that they reach sexual maturity by 6-8 weeks.

Rats are nocturnal. But unlike many small rodents they are not cranky if interrupted from their slumbers for a play. They enjoy being handled, seldom bite and, once used to owners, will not run away. Cages must be well ventilated and cleaned every other day otherwise odours can be a problem. For this reason bird cages or wire barred rodent cages are preferential to aquariums.

Obesity can shorten a rat's life span and can be prevented by feeding your rat small amounts of fresh food plus a pelleted rodent ration. Pellets prevent selective feeding, which occurs with seed mixes where rats will preferentially choose the high fat, low calcium sunflower seeds.

Mammary tumours are common in rats occurring anywhere from under the chin to the base of the tail. The good news is that 80% of these tumours are benign. Rats live for 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 years.

In summary rats are the perfect children's pet – cheap, sociable, safe, interesting yet short lived enough to ensure that you will not be left "holding the baby" once the kids have left home!

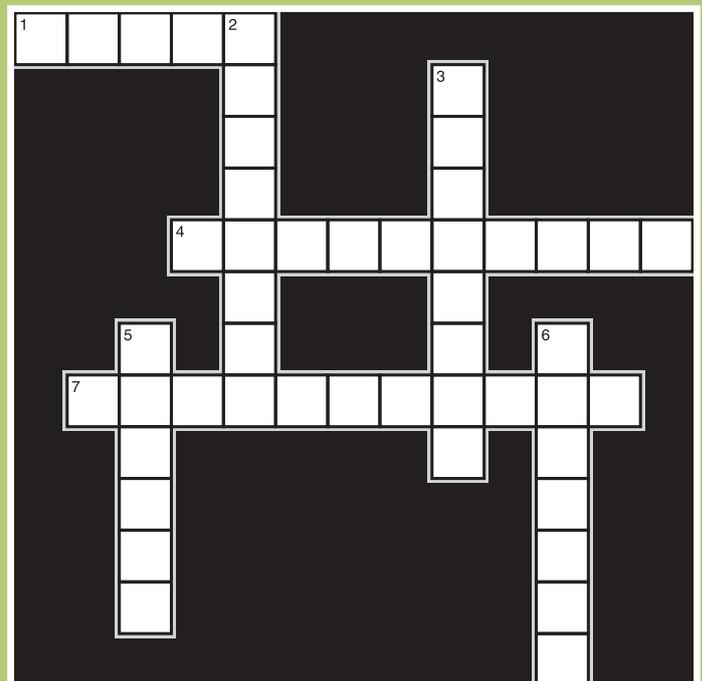
## Clever CROSSWORD

### ACROSS

1. What should you treat your house for all year round?
4. What is better than cure?
7. Indoor heating can cause \_\_\_\_\_.

### DOWN

2. Cage tents give extra warmth and the feeling of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Put some extra \_\_\_\_\_ on your pet's bed over winter.
5. What do many people think of rats as?
6. What do toys help to alleviate?



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

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## REDIRECTED CAT AGGRESSION

Have you ever had your cat show aggressive behaviour and wondered "where did that come from!?" What may seem like a random attack from your cat can come from many different triggers and it's not necessarily a malicious act aimed at yourself, a family member or one of your other pets.

Many animals, even humans can react in this way. It is the act of lashing out at something near when the aggressor is not accessible. You may have experienced it yourself, perhaps throwing something or kicking a wall in anger.

One minute your cat might be sitting there peacefully and the next they can be arch backed, bushy tailed, hissing and striking out at whoever is closest to them. This is called redirected aggression and is different to petting aggression and play aggression. It occurs when a cat is upset, fearful or territorial towards an animal, person or perceived threat and they strike out at those around them.

Redirected aggression can be triggered in your cat for many reasons. They may see a strange cat outside the

window and feel that the cat is intruding on its territory. They might also smell another cat on one of your visitors, yourself or a new object that has come into the house. They could even see a potential prey animal that they cannot get to.

It can be difficult to deal with redirected aggression, as it can be hard to pinpoint the trigger that is causing it. The outburst can seem to come from nowhere. It is even more difficult when the aggression is towards another cat in the household.



If your aggressive cat is attacking another cat in your home the best thing to do is separate them for a while. While separated, you should leave something with each cat that smells of the other; maybe a blanket or toy, to remind them that the smell is familiar and that they know that cat. Once they have been separated for a while, slowly reintroduce them as you would introduce two cats that have never met. This may take some perseverance and it could take a while for them to get used to each other again.

If the aggression is not towards another cat in the household, then you need to be vigilant in figuring out what the trigger is for your cat and taking steps to reduce the stress for your cat. If it is another cat or animal outside, you can close the curtains or blinds or try using deterrents for the intruding animal such as a motion activated sprinkler. If it is a smell that they don't like on an object, you can remove the object or clean it so that it is no longer perceived as a threat.

If you continue to have problems with your cat displaying this type of behaviour you can have a talk to your vet about other possible stressors that your cat could be reacting to and ways to minimise the stress.

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## CHOOSING A FAMILY DOG

A dog can be a great addition to a family for you and your children, but there are many things to take into consideration when choosing a dog. You want the experience to enrich your household and be as stress free as possible.

It is very important to choose a breed of dog that is going to be appropriate for yours and your family's lifestyle. Choosing a dog without these considerations can make for a stressful situation. Every breed of dog was bred for a job or purpose, so it is wise to do your research on the dogs original purpose and try and fit those traits to your lifestyle as best as you can. For example, if you live in a built up area you don't want a breed of dog that is prone to barking a lot.

Take into consideration how much time you will have to devote to the dog each day. An hour a day is a good amount of time to

spend walking, playing or interacting with your dog especially if they are going to be allowed inside and around the family often. If your dog is going to be strictly an outside dog, it is important that you can spend more than an hour a day with them, as they are social animals and will need your company to reassure them and keep the bond strong.

Size is a big issue. Cute little puppies can grow into enormous dogs so quickly. Take into consideration whether a big dog will work in your family – is the yard big enough and is the dog liable to bowl over your children or visiting children when they are excited. Some big dogs do grow up to be very placid in nature and you may feel that a breeds other traits outweigh the possible inconvenience of a large size. Many families will find that choosing a dog that is likely to be a small to medium size works well in their home.

Is anyone in your house allergic to dogs? If so, there are many breeds that have a wool type coat that does not shed and is unlikely to cause allergies. If you do want a dog with this type of coat, keep in mind that they require regular clipping and grooming.

As far as the debate over pure bred or mixed breed, there are arguments for both. With a pure bred dog it is much easier to determine their traits and know how large they will grow, but they can also be prone often to breed specific health issues (which are also not usually covered by pet insurance). A mixed breed dog may be a little bit of a mystery, but if you are getting one from your local shelter, they usually have a good indication of what mix may be in the dog and the size that it could grow. Many mixed breeds outlive their purebred counterparts.



## PLAY TIME PHOTO COMPETITION: BE IN TO WIN A PURE SILVER PENDANT AND CHAIN FROM SILVER PET PRINTS VALUED AT \$215

Send us a photo of your pet enjoying their play time and you could be a winner.

Simply email us a picture of your pet enjoying their play time to:  
[cliniccompetition@gmail.com](mailto:cliniccompetition@gmail.com)

Don't forget to tell us your pets name, your name, address, phone number and the clinic you attend. Please make the subject heading 'Winter Pet Competition'.

The winner will have their photo displayed in the next issue of Your Vet and receive a Silver Pet Prints pendant and chain which is personalised with your pets paw print.

*Entries must be received by 31/08/2014.*

**THAT'S IT! GOOD LUCK!**



[www.silverpetprints.com](http://www.silverpetprints.com)

## KEEPING YOUR BIRD WARM IN WINTER

Birds can be ill equipped to keep warm over the winter months, so it is important to take extra care with their environment over this time. Here are some things that will help keep your bird comfortable and warm.

**CAGE COVERS:** Most bird cages will have a cover to give the bird privacy and cover them up at night. Over winter, make sure that this cover is well insulated or a good thickness to keep the draft out. Perhaps swap to a thicker blanket or look at getting a new winter-crafted cover.

**HEAT LAMPS:** Heat lamps are a good way to effectively and safely give your bird some extra warmth.

**HEATED PERCHES:** Birds can lose a lot of heat through their feet, so a heated perch is an excellent way to warm them up from the feet up.

**CAGE TENTS:** These are probably more suited to smaller birds. Cage tents are a small enclosure that fits in your cage, they are soft and warm and the bird can pop inside them for a bit of extra warmth and even the feeling of security.



**TOYS:** As with any animal, and indeed ourselves, movement will keep your bird warm and help alleviate boredom. Making sure your bird has some good toys will help to promote this movement.

## WINTER REMINDER! GET YOUR PET CHECKED FOR ARTHRITIS

The cold weather of winter seems to play havoc with arthritic patients. If you have noticed that your pet is stiff on rising, has a limp or is reluctant to jump into the car (or onto the kitchen bench in the case of cats) then it may be time to have a '10,000 mile' service and check out their joints. Arthritis is not just a disease of the elderly – some sources state that one in five dogs over one year of age is affected.

Arthritis needs to be attacked from many different angles. Weight loss, exercise modification and diet all need to be addressed. Your vet can also advise you on appropriate medications for your pet, from disease modifying drugs (drugs which slow down the progression of arthritis and keep the joints happy longer) to anti-inflammatory drugs and pain relief.

## PRACTICE UPDATE

We farewell nurse Bec this issue. Bec has been part of the team for nearly five years, initially starting in a junior nursing position. We will miss Bec, but she has decided to take some time out from nursing to be a full-time mum to baby Harper; we wish her well and hope she will rejoin the team at North Road again one day.

Dr Caroline and husband Dave have recently returned from a 3 week holiday break, enjoying time in New Zealand and French Polynesia. They spent time travelling around the Coromandel peninsula in the north island of New Zealand, and in French Polynesia visiting the beautiful islands of Moorea, Huahine and Bora Bora. Plenty of r & r was in order, enjoying the warm weather, plentiful seafood and scuba diving amongst sharks and eagle rays!



*Dr Caroline and Dave on Bora Bora*

Senior nurse Lydia, has recently returned from a well-earned break, visiting her family in New Zealand. Her parents live in the countryside south of Auckland; she enjoyed beautiful weather and scenery, plenty of country air and her mother's home cooking! A wonderful time was spent, attending a wedding, her nephew's 3rd birthday and her niece's 1st birthday. Lydia loved being reunited with her cat Trooper Davis Jones catching up on plenty of smooches, and equally, on returning back to Melbourne plenty of kisses and cuddles were in order from her Boston terrier, Pepper.



*Nurse Lydia home in New Zealand with her niece*

### 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.



*Pups in play at puppy preschool*

Down: 2. Security; 3. Blankets; 5. Vermmin; 6. Boredom.

Across: 1. Fleas; 4. Prevention; 7. Dehydration.

## ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD