

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



**YOUR  
VET**



**AUTUMN 2015**

## SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS VETERINARY CENTRE

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MOSS VALE, NSW 2577**

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### VISIT OUR WEBSITE

**W:** www.southernhighlandsvets.com.au  
www.facebook.com/SouthernHighlandsVets

find us on **facebook**

### OUR VETS:

**Dr Bill Beresford** BVSc (Qld)  
Special interests: Large animal practice especially cattle

**Dr Charlie Carter** BVSc (Hons) (Syd)  
Special interests: Cattle and small animal surgery

**Dr Alex Johnston** BVSc (Syd)  
Special interests: Small animal medicine especially feline medicine

**Dr Chris Watson** BVSc (Univ. Pretoria)  
Special interests: soft tissue and orthopedic surgery

**Dr Emma Mainprize** BSc BVMS (Hons) (WA)  
Special interests: Cattle, small animal surgery and equine dentistry

### OUR SUPPORT STAFF:

**Barb, Catherine, Alice, Tarmeeke, Kelly, Megan & Mevagh**

Are eager to help you with your appointments, food supplies and any other questions you may have about the care and welfare of your pet.

Our clinic has a full range of Royal Canin pet foods. We also stock Weatherbeeta dog rugs, Molly Mut Bed, Fuzzyard dog beds and shampoos and Rogz Collars and leads.

### CLINIC HOURS:

The clinic can be contacted between 8.30am and 6.00pm weekdays, and between 8.30am and 12.00noon on Saturdays.

Sundays – now open between 10-11am

**Consultations are by appointment**

### AFTER HOURS:

After hours emergencies - at night, on weekends and Public Holidays - will be attended by the rostered Vet from this practice. Call our number and this will be diverted through to the duty vet on call. If we are attending another call we may not answer but please leave a message and we will ring you back as soon as possible.

## ARE MICROCHIPS NECESSARY AND SAFE?

These are the two major questions commonly asked about microchips. As with any medical procedure, you have to weigh the risks versus the benefits, and it's often a very individual decision.

If you know that your pet is safe and secure inside your home, is always kept on a leash outside and is correctly trained to come when called then it's possible you do not actually need a microchip. However, microchipping for both cats and dogs is currently mandatory in ACT, NSW, QLD, VIC and WA, as well as in TAS for dogs only.

If your pet has a high chance of becoming lost through running off and not coming when called, a microchip may be a good idea. Thousands of pets are lost every year and sadly many are never reunited with their owners. While having a microchip can increase the chance of finding your lost pet, it all depends on whether it can actually be scanned. There have previously been problems with microchips and scanners that weren't compatible and it can also sometimes be difficult to locate the chip as they can migrate from the original anatomical site. If your pet does have a microchip then you must make sure that the chip is registered and includes your current contact details, otherwise it is of no use if your pet is found and scanned.



The major safety concern with microchips is that any time you implant a foreign body into your pet, whether a microchip or a metal plate for a broken bone, there's the potential for your pet's body to reject the substance. This reaction can range from a mild to severe inflammatory response at the site of the injection and research on this is still ongoing.

([http://kb.rspca.org.au/Is-microchipping-mandatory-for-cats-and-dogs\\_287.html](http://kb.rspca.org.au/Is-microchipping-mandatory-for-cats-and-dogs_287.html)). If you would like more information about microchipping, check with RSPCA Australia or your local veterinarian.

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# 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.

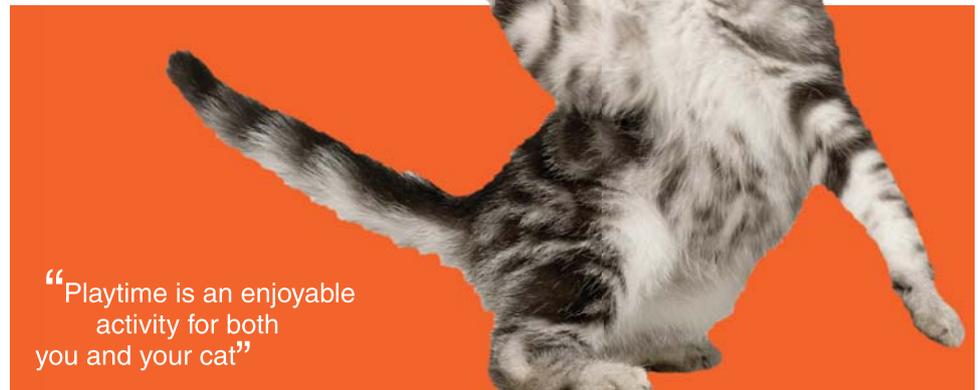
## WATCH FOR SIGNS OF CAT SCRATCH DISEASE - ESPECIALLY IN CHILDREN OR THOSE WITH LOWERED IMMUNITY.

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 used 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.

## PRACTICE UPDATE

We have had a very busy start to the new year! We have farewelled two of our team members Erin and Aimee. Erin is currently travelling in Europe while Aimee has left us to take up a position on a cattle Station in the Northern Territory. The girls will be missed greatly by our team and clients alike. To fill the big shoes that Erin and Aimee have left, we would like to welcome Tarmeeeka and Kelly to our friendly team. Tarmeeeka finished her Veterinary nursing course in 2012 and has been working in another local vet since finishing. She enjoys snow skiing, water skiing and horse riding. Kelly is currently completing her veterinary nursing course and has recently been working at the RSCPA in Yagoona. She also enjoys horse riding, as well as motor bike riding and animal photography.

### NEW ONE MONTH TICK PREVENTATIVE NOW AVAILABLE!

We are excited to let you know that we are now stocking the newest Paralysis Tick and Flea prevention on the market- Nexgard. This new preventative is a ONCE a MONTH chewable beef flavoured tablet. Being a tablet means that your dog can be bathed and swim while staying protected from the potentially deadly paralysis tick (note we do still recommend regular tick searches when in high risk areas). Nexgard is available in 1, 3 and 6 packs and is safe for use in puppies from 8 weeks of age. For more information have a talk to any of our friendly staff.

### OBESITY

Obesity is the most common form of malnutrition seen in pets. According to the Australian Veterinary Association around 44% of dogs and 40% of cats are either overweight or obese.

But there is more to obesity than appearance; the condition causes numerous health problems for pets, decreasing both their lifespan and quality of life.

Excess weight places extra stress on the joints leading to arthritis, spinal problems and other joint diseases. Simple movements become difficult and even painful. Overweight and obese pets are often reluctant to move, leading to decreased activity and increased weight gain.

Respiratory difficulties have been noted as a frequent problem in overweight dogs and obese dogs. Excess fat in the neck and abdomen compress the windpipe and lungs, making it more difficult for the animal to breathe. This complication may be partly responsible for exercise intolerance in obese pets. Even if the dog wanted to play, after a few minutes it is exhausted and unable to continue. Many people mistake this behaviour for laziness.

Obese dogs are also predisposed to suffering from congestive heart failure. Extra fat places excess stress on the heart as it struggles to pump blood around the body.

Other diseases caused by or aggravated by obesity include diabetes and cancer, but ultimately, regardless of the disease involved, obesity will decrease your pets lifespan.

## 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.



Down: 1. Microchip; 2. Bacteria.  
Across: 1. Moggies; 3. Chlorine; 5. Dehydrate; 6. License.

## ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD