

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS VETERINARY CENTRE

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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 Chris Watson BVSc (Univ. Pretoria)

Special interests: soft tissue and orthopedic surgery.

Dr Alex Johnston BVSc (Syd)

Special interests: Small animal medicine especially feline medicine.

Dr Sarah Sutherland BVSc BVBiomed (Wagga)

Special interests: Small and large animal medicine and surgery.

Dr Trent McCarthy BVSc BVBiomed (Wagga)

Special interests: Small and large animal medicine and surgery.

OUR SUPPORT STAFF

Barb, Catherine, Alice, Claire, Zoe, Steph, Candice and Kayleigh

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 and Ivory Coat pet foods. We also stock locally made dog coats, Molly Mutt Beds, 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 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.

YOUR VET

FREE!!
TAKE ME HOME



WINTER 2017

Supporting your arthritic pet in winter

Older pets often suffer from arthritis, or degenerative joint disease.

Signs that your dog or cat is experiencing such pain include a limp when rising, reluctance to jump or climb stairs and difficulty using the litter box. Arthritis is often worse during winter, but there are things you can do to keep your pet comfortable when temperatures are low.

Weight management

Check to ensure you are feeding your pet the appropriate amount of food and treats for their life stage and activity level. Maintaining a healthy weight is one of the best ways to reduce the stress on sore joints. If your dog or cat is overweight, reduce portion sizes and replace calorie-laden treats with healthier options such as cooked vegetable. There are prescription diets available that have a specific balance of nutrients to support joints and help with weight loss.

Joint support

One way to ease your pet's pain is by supporting the production of synovial fluid which cushions and lubricates the joints. There are several brands of dietary supplement that include such ingredients as fish oil, green lipped mussel extract and glucosamine/chondroitin. These products are simply added to your pet's food every day.

Hydrotherapy and exercise

Many arthritic animals are reluctant to exercise, yet light movement can be beneficial for increasing circulation and improving muscle tone around arthritic joints. Hydrotherapy, which involves guided exercise on an underwater treadmill or in a warm pool, can relieve pain and pressure while increasing circulation, reducing

inflammation and improving muscle tone. Cats can be gently encouraged to be more active by moving their food bowls around the house so they have to walk a little further to eat.

Massage

Another way to increase circulation is through massage. Stroke the affected area while using your thumbs to gently massage tissues surrounding the affected joint. Never apply pressure directly to a bone, joint or other painful region. This not only feels good but will enhance the connection you have with your pet. We are happy to show you some techniques that can help.

Environment

Look at your pet's environment through their eyes. Which areas of your home could be improved in order to reduce their difficulties? For instance, place water dishes in each room so that they don't have far to travel to have a drink. Consider replacing stairs with a pet-friendly ramp, or removing the sides of your cat's litter box so they can step in easily.

Medication

Anti-inflammatory medications can make a big difference to your dog or cat's pain level. Never try to treat their pain at home with human drugs as these may cause serious side effects. Cats in particular are very sensitive to drugs. If you give your pet any natural remedies make sure to let us know so we can avoid any potential drug interactions.

Arthritis is a painful condition for dogs and cats and can adversely affect their quality of life. Together, we can work out a plan to keep your much-loved pet as comfortable as possible.

Take me away to complete our PUZZLE – check inside!



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 opportunity to run, jump, play or fly every day!

Ever considered an arachno-hobby?

Tarantulas are not for everyone, but these large, hairy spiders are gaining popularity as an interesting, low-maintenance pet. Tarantulas are unique and quiet pets that require minimal space, and keeping a tarantula can make a fascinating hobby.

There are close to 800 species of tarantula worldwide however while you are permitted to own a native Australian tarantula, it is illegal to have any overseas (exotic) species as a pet. Australian tarantulas are often referred to by their more commonly known names such as the whistling, barking and bird-eating spider, which reflect an individual and specific characteristic they display.

These mostly large and hairy spiders are surprisingly gentle, and are mostly harmless towards humans. Most will not bite unless provoked, but their bite feels more like a bee sting. Like all spiders, tarantulas are venomous and while their venom won't kill you it can cause an allergic or anaphylactic reaction, in the same way that some people react to bee stings. So while tarantula bites are unlikely to be fatal, you still want to avoid being bitten!

Tarantulas are not designed to be held as they can spook easily and squirm from your hand.



Falls are nearly always fatal for tarantulas as their abdomens rupture easily, so it's best to keep handling to a minimum.

Caring for a tarantula may be a long commitment. Female tarantulas often live for at least ten years while male spiders generally only live for a year and a half as adults. Also, before you decide to get a mate for your new spider friend, be aware that one pair of tarantulas can produce as many as 300 young at a time!

Visit www.arachnoboards.com for extensive reading from other arachnid hobbyists.

WORD SEARCH

Z I H Y F L P Q I I S Y V C Q U S E D E N T A L Y A
T E N I B X P E S R M R W T Z G V O J F R W V G N E
K Y C O G B W V B V F A S H I O N B E G A S S A M S
U M Y R V H O Q E P G T D F Y J S L A T Z J P L V I
X Q T L G A G H F F H N X D T K I D B C K H R E D C
C F I N O I T A C I D E M Y D P T X P A Y J S V B R
V C V K T R E X J Y T D L N L G I R G L C J I A C E
D U I Y S Y L S E Q X E A A O H R B A U M T Y M P X
F T T Q X X X S A A N S Y G J I H C I F R D E I W E
C T C A T Y D R O T H E R A P Y X T I A E C W M R C R
X O A T R N O P N G C C Y D Y I R A A P P L X F I M
C Z A P N O R V A H H L V T C V A T R V P J S Q A A
R M Z T Z I A C L W D W I W M C G J W O O E E D S R
E M H A E T L E E W P Z Y V C V X T J E C X T U K R
T Z D E C P B C R L W Y T I S E B O M H N E O I N T
L Y J L D R W P C F V S V A T P K D H K B M D I T E
E E J Y F O U E N V I R O N M E N T D W O C K R A E
H U X T B S C L I C K E R A I A L U T N A R A T M S
S D C S R E U C A D R F V S K T O T E O O N G A M E
V D N R I R K E Y R S D P O E W B V A E K S U U R M

ACTIVITY	CHASE	EXERCISE	MASSAGE	SEDENTARY
ANAPHYLACTIC	CLICKER	FASHION	MEDICATION	SHELTER
APPETITE	COAT	GAME	OBESITY	STYLE
ARTHRITIS	DECORATION	HAIRY	ORAL	TARANTULA
BACTERIA	DENTAL	HOBBY	PLAY	TREAT
CAGE	ENVIRONMENT	HYDROTHERAPY	RESORPTION	VENOMOUS

Tooth resorption in cats

While most veterinarians will acknowledge that brushing a cat's teeth can be difficult for owners, they will stress the importance of routine oral assessment of your cat's mouth.

These exams help find preventable problems as well as some more concerning issues which may often go unnoticed otherwise. One of these concerning issues is that of feline Tooth Resorption.

Feline Tooth Resorption is a common and painful condition found in domestic cats. The teeth become functionally destroyed as a result of tooth resorption. Tooth Resorption, or 'TR' is seen in a growing percentage of cats over the age of six years and studies have shown that well over 50% of adult cats develop tooth resorption. The same strange condition is also seen in dogs and in people, but it is not nearly as common.

In general, most cats will appear normal, but observant owners may note that their cat prefers to chew food on just one side, stops grooming, starts salivating excessively, tends to throw their dry food into the back of their mouth or develops a preference for soft foods. If left to develop, the process will lead to extreme pain due to the exposure of the root canal.

As TR progresses, some cats will develop bad-tempered or aggressive attitudes and lack a normal appetite. Eventually, your veterinarian may discover that the erosion has exposed the tooth to the bacteria of the mouth and this is when it becomes extremely painful. Dental x-rays are the only way to diagnose TR as they show changes in the density of the roots and crowns of the teeth. Although unpleasant, once your vet knows about the disease, several things can be done to keep your cat comfortable.

The exact cause of tooth resorption has not yet been clearly defined and unfortunately there is no effective treatment that can save the pet's teeth. A normal clean and polish will not work and any tooth that is showing any signs of resorption needs to be extracted. Just the removal of these painful teeth can often bring back your loving, friendly companion.



Early recognition through comprehensive oral exams with intra-oral probing and dental radiography is the best strategy to help these cats. Some cats will need full mouth extractions and all cats with a known history of TR should be x-rayed every 6–12 months. It is likely other teeth are affected and therefore vital that they continue to be monitored.

Many cat owners look at the activity and attitude of their pet and assume that they have a perfectly happy and healthy animal. As cats tend to be highly functional despite being in pain, owners are often unaware that their pets are experiencing such discomfort. But, regular visits to your veterinarian can help identify issues early so book a thorough oral examination for your feline friend today.



Choosing a winter coat for your dog

Like us, dogs often appreciate a cosy coat to protect them from low temperatures during the winter months.

Full coated dogs such as the handsome Alaskan Malamute may not need an extra layer but if your dog is short coated or hairless, or if they are very young or elderly then a coat to protect them from the elements is a good idea.

There are many styles and fabrics to choose from but before your dog becomes a follower of fashion, you need to be aware of safety and comfort factors.

Some coats are cosier than others and you'll need to choose one to suit your dog. An Australian cattle dog with a double coat will enjoy a lighter coat than a tiny Chinese crested dog with sparse fur.

No matter how stylish a coat, it must not restrict movement. Check that the coat isn't too tight; you should be able to fit two fingers between your dog and their coat. Make sure they can walk normally and lie down comfortably while it is on. If there is a hood, it shouldn't block their view of the world or fall over their face.



Choose a coat without embellishments that can be chewed off and swallowed. Ribbons, buttons, tags and loose threads can all cause gastrointestinal upset and vomiting – some may also be choking hazards. If you like stylish coats with trim, then makes sure all decorations are tightly sewn on and your dog can't reach them to nibble on.

When your dog is wearing the coat, look out for signs of irritation. Hairless areas such as under the legs or the belly can become irritated from a scratchy fabric or ill-fitting jacket.

Lastly, not all dogs feel comfortable in a coat. Watch their body language – panting, lip licking, a tucked tail or a stiff stance can all indicate that your pooch would prefer to be coat-free. For these dogs, you'll need to rely on warm bedding and shelter to keep them warm.

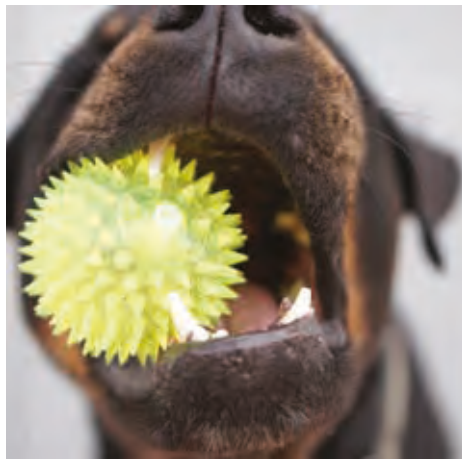
Indoor activities on winter days

In winter the weather is sometimes too cold or too rainy for outdoor activities.

Your dog, however, will still want to play and exercise so you'll need to think of some games you can both enjoy until it warms up again.

Indoor chase

Does your dog have a favourite toy or ball that they like to chase? This game can be especially fun indoors because they will have obstacles to navigate, such as chairs, couches, and tables. To increase the difficulty of this game, toss the toy into another room so your dog has to hunt around to find it. Just make sure to remove any breakable objects from their path.



Hide and go treat

For this fun game, ask your dog to sit and stay while you hide small treats in another room. Start with simple hiding places and help your dog to find the treats until he or she understands the point of this game. When they figure it out, you can then



choose more difficult hiding places such as beneath pillows or behind chair legs. There is a specific dog sport called "nose work" that involves this game and you can find advice and training guides online.

Tug

One of the most instinctive games for your dog to play is tug of war. You can use an existing rope toy made specifically for this purpose, or create a new one from old rags tied together. Tug can be a controversial game amongst dog owners but it's great for expending energy and teaching commands such as "take it," "leave it," and "drop it" – just make sure you're the one to initiate the game and stop it.

Interactive toys

Interactive toys force your dog to think and problem-solve in order to reveal a tasty prize. They range in difficulty level from simple to genius, and can keep even the most curious dog entertained for hours! They're particularly useful for dogs that are home alone; put their dry food in these toys and they'll be entertained for hours.

Trick training

Dogs are very smart. Teaching tricks will keep them mentally stimulated and you'll both enjoy the training sessions. A great way to teach them new behaviours is with clicker training. This is a similar technique to that used to teach dolphins and whales at marine parks. The benefit of this type of training is that it specifically rewards your dog for a specific behaviour so they're more likely to repeat it, and they learn quickly.

Don't let your dog get bored during the winter months. Use this time to discover new games and have fun together.

PRACTICE UPDATE

WHAT IS CANINE COGNITIVE DYSFUNCTION AKA 'DOGGIE DEMENTIA'

Canine Cognitive Dysfunction is a medical condition that affects geriatric dogs but it can also affect cats. It often manifests with behavioural symptoms such as: disorientation, wall staring, change in social and environmental interactions, change in sleep wake cycles (barking or pacing at night) and a loss of learned behaviours (where to toilet or sleep).

Cognitive dysfunction occurs due to shrinking of the hippocampus (part of the brain) and dilation of the ventricles. Anxiety often increases with age as there is often a decreased ability to cope with stress. This is often made worse by decreased hearing, vision and mobility.

Things to help dogs suffering from cognitive dysfunction include;

1. Modification of their environment with ramps, steps and nonslip flooring to compensate for sight, hearing and physical limitations
2. Ensuring a predictable routine can also reduce stress in older animals.
3. Exercise should continue if possible however, it should be shorter and more frequent.
4. Short training sessions can be incorporated to help brain function, short play sessions or excursions through the home.
5. Physical therapy can also be tried this may involve passage range of motion exercises, swimming or massage.

Nutritional supplements which can help are; anti-oxidants, essential fatty acids and some evidence suggests coconut oil can be of benefit. Your veterinarian may also be able to suggest a number of medications that can help with the cognitive dysfunction and address other concurrent medical conditions. Treatment is often more successful if it is started earlier. There is also research into using stem cells to reverse the condition but it is still in the trial stages.

