

# SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS VETERINARY CENTRE

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Find us on 

## 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 Sarah Sutherland** *BVSc BVBIol (Wagga)*

Special interests: Small and large animal medicine and surgery.

**Dr Trent McCarthy** *BVSc BVBIol (Wagga)*

Special interests: Small and large animal medicine and surgery.

**Dr Stephen Laing** *BVSc BVBIol (Wagga)*

Special interests: Cattle and small animal medicine and surgery.

## OUR SUPPORT STAFF

**Barb, Catherine, Alice, Claire, Zoe, Steph, Candice, Kayleigh, Hayley & Denise**

Our staff 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, Fuzzydog dog beds and shampoos and Rogz collars and leads.

## CLINIC HOURS

The clinic can be contacted:

**Weekdays:** between 8:30am & 6:00pm

**Saturdays:** between 8:30am & 12:00noon

**Sundays:** now open 10:00 – 11:00am

**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



SPRING 2018

## Caution with common dog treat

It's a well-known fact that both Australia and New Zealand are countries of dog lovers, but could choosing to give your dog treats prove fatal?

There's no harm in treating your dog to something different from their standard diet every now and again. After all, who doesn't like to watch their dog's eyes light up as you give them something tasty they can gnaw on for hours? However, a popular treat may just be the leading cause of a paralysing condition known to be fatal.

Chicken necks, which were long-considered a healthy and entertaining treat option for small dogs, have been linked to a higher risk of developing Acute Polyradiculoneuritis (APN), a condition that causes paralysis. Earlier this year, in a study led by the University of Melbourne, it was found that the risk of developing this condition was 70 times higher if dogs were fed raw chicken than if they weren't.

The investigation, which was published in the Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine, discussed the link between campylobacter and the instance of APN. In many cases where APN was the diagnosis, the dog had eaten raw chicken or chicken necks which can often contain campylobacter.

While most dogs can recover from APN, it's a long, slow and often-distressing process. The condition takes hold by weakening the dog's hind legs, before spreading to the head, face, front legs, and neck. If the paralysis spreads to the chest area, there's a higher risk of the dog not recovering at all. If the dog

does improve, the process can take up to six months, if not longer.

The paralysing feature of APN stems from the dog's immune system attacking its own nerve roots. It can gradually get worse over a period of days as the immune system continues to become unregulated. This condition is very similar to that of Guillain-Barre Syndrome – the human version of APN. GBS causes muscle weakness and sufferers can also require ventilation if chest paralysis occurs.

While raw meat diets are a growing trend amongst dog owners, vets are beginning to recommend science and vet-approved diets until further studies can be carried out on the connection APN has to chicken and campylobacter.

If you continue to feed your dog raw chicken, being aware of the symptoms of APN is crucial. Be on the lookout for weakness in the legs, a weaker than usual bark, an inability to stand, and difficulty breathing. If you notice any of these signs, visit your vet immediately.

Your vet will carry out a physical and neurologic exam, complete a blood count and urine test, and will even request a biochemical profile and electrodiagnostic test. Lastly, your vet may also carry out a cerebrospinal fluid tap to gain a correct diagnosis. If your dog has acute polyradiculoneuritis, they may require ongoing physical therapy and a respirator if the condition is severe enough.

If you have any questions about feeding raw chicken to your dogs, speak to one of our staff for advice.

Take me home to complete our PUZZLE – check inside!

# WORD SEARCH

- ADOPT
- AFFECTIONATE
- ALLERGY
- CAMPYLOBACTER
- CEREBROSPINAL
- CHICKEN
- DANDER
- FOSTER
- GRAIN
- GRASS
- HOOF
- HORSE
- INTELLIGENT
- IRRITATION
- ITCHING
- LOVE
- PARALYSIS
- PARASITE
- POLLEN
- QUIET
- RAT
- RAW
- RODENT
- SALIVA
- SHEDDING
- SPHYNX
- TEMPORARY
- VACCINATION
- VOLUNTEER
- WEEPY



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## Yea or neigh?

**Even if you have enough land for a horse to graze, how ready are you really for horse ownership?**

Many children, and even adults, dream of owning a horse. After all, they look like so much fun in the movies. However, while horse ownership can be rewarding, it can also be a lot of hard work. Are you up for the challenge?

Firstly, it's important to be aware of a horse's nutritional requirements. There's a common misconception that putting a horse in a paddock ticks all the boxes for both food and shelter, but the reality is entirely different. A horse requires at least one percent of its body weight in food per day, and it's not going to get all of the nutrients it requires from grass alone. Hay and grain are also needed, and grain may also need to be fed out at least twice per day. Owning a horse is a full-time job in itself, so you need to be ready for 365 days per year of ongoing care.

Equally as important is its veterinary care and hoof maintenance. Every six to eight weeks, horses need to have their hoofs trimmed or shod. This process is best to be carried out by a hoof care specialist known as a farrier. Farriers are involved in all components of hoof care, including trimming, shoe installation, and

hoof balancing. What's more, a trip to the vet at least once a year is crucial for vaccinations, as well as regular dental care. Parasites can also pose a problem, so treatment for intestinal worms is an ongoing expense as well.

If you've decided that you have plenty of land and time for a horse, it's time to think about their shelter and exercise requirements. Horses require a robust, three-sided shelter, at a minimum, that can provide protection from all elements – be it driving wind and rain, or shade from the intense sun. They also need regular riding as well as exercise, and a safe enclosure in which to stroll that has adequate fencing. Fencing should keep the horse in without causing injury should it try to escape.

Care for horses can run into the thousands of dollars every year, and the attention they require can often be more than the average person can provide. If you're interested in becoming a horse owner, but you're not sure whether you're ready or not, talk

to your local equine vet. They will be more than happy to talk you through a horse's everyday needs.



## The appeal of rodents

There's no denying that cats and dogs are the most popular household pets, but what about the understated rat or mouse? Here's why introducing a pet rodent into your home could be the right move to make.

### Clean and tidy

Contrary to what you've probably been led to believe, mice and rats are exceptionally clean animals. While you do need to clean out their cage on a regular basis, they are known to prefer a tidy setting and do all they can to keep it that way. You can train them to use a litter box or a specific corner of their cage, and they are also finicky groomers as well.

### Intelligent

Just like a dog, you can train a rat to carry out particular tasks. Such is their intelligence that rats have long been used in psychological testing. You can teach them to solve puzzles, perform tricks, learn obstacle courses and even run in mazes. Therefore, rats can provide no end of entertainment.

### Affectionate

While it might be hard to believe, rats and mice – but rats in particular – are very loving creatures. They may not play the most heart-warming roles in horror movies, but they are genuinely affectionate animals. They are quite happy to nestle into the crook of your arm while you watch TV, or cuddle into the sleeves of your jersey. In essence, they can play the role of a cat very well.

### Quiet

Dogs bark, cats meow, but rats and mice make very little sound at all. If your neighbours are close by, owning a quiet pet can preserve your neighbourly relationships. Rats and mice scuffle around their cage and make the occasional squeaking sound, but that's typically the extent of their din. If you'd prefer a silent pet as



opposed to one that keeps you awake with barking, then it might be time to consider adopting a mouse or rat.

## Is my dog allergic to grass?

Seeing your dog frolic through long grass with a frisbee in its mouth is a pleasing sight to see. It's happy, its tail is wagging, and it's getting plenty of fresh air and exercise. However, for some dogs, this small amount of freedom outside can be all it takes to flare up a grass allergy – regardless of how fun the activity was initially.

Who would have thought that a domestic pet could fall victim to a condition that, according to the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy, affects only 18 percent of people in Australia and New Zealand, rather than animals?

However, it's true. Dogs can be allergic to grass, and it's more common than you might think. In a study completed at the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna, more than 80 percent of 262 trialled dogs tested positive for grass, weed, and tree pollen allergies.

As proven in the study, many dogs suffer from allergies to grass and its pollens, but what are the symptoms, and how can you treat them?

If your dog appears to be itching more than normal, is scratching its skin to the point of causing injury, is suffering from fur loss and is gnawing at its fur, skin, or paws, it may be suffering from a grass allergy. A dog with grass allergies may also sneeze a lot, or have red, irritated, or weepy eyes. If

you suspect your dog may have an allergy, make an appointment for your dog at a veterinary clinic. Your veterinarian might test to identify specific allergens, before offering treatment options and advice.

There are also many things you can be doing at home to help your dog be as comfortable, and as symptom-free, as possible. Firstly, it might be a good idea to keep the area in which your dog plays free of tall grasses, and mowed on a regular basis. Any grass that features heads may irritate their skin.

It may also be helpful to keep your eye on mobile weather apps. These apps can offer helpful, up-to-the-minute pollen level indicators to give you a good idea of when to limit outdoor play time. If your dog does play outside in grass a lot, wiping down their legs and feet with warm water after playtime might also help to remove any pollen that has come into contact with your dog's skin or fur.

If symptoms and irritation still occur, and your dog is uncomfortable, be sure to call upon your local veterinary professional for help. They might be able to recommend anti-itch shampoos and sprays to relieve discomfort, and may even prescribe allergy shots in severe cases.

Your furry friends love to play, but don't be afraid to think outside the box when it

comes to exercising them without grass irritants. Consider taking your dog for a walk on a leash, rather than in a dog park, and remember to keep grass areas mowed short at all times.



## The gift of fostering

Animals often need temporary homes to recover from illness or injury before they can be adopted and foster care programmes help to give these animals a new start to a better life.

Volunteer 'foster parents' provide temporary homes for animals who are not yet ready to go to a permanent home and help them recover from surgery, give them medicine for an illness or work with them to improve their behaviour.

For many foster parents, the single biggest concern is falling in love, especially if you already have pets at home. Why not just keep the foster animal yourself? While admirable, it's not always the best thing.

If you adopt a pet that you're fostering, you might have reached your limit of household pets and not be able to accept any others. This means one less foster home for the shelter to rely on.

So, when the day comes that you must bring your first foster pet back to the shelter, be prepared for some tears. But, while it can be very difficult to let go once you have become emotionally attached to an animal, remember, they are now much more likely to find a loving, permanent home because of your help.



## DOES YOUR PET FEAR THE VET CLINIC?

58% of cat owners and 38% of dog owners report their pets hate going to the vet! We would like to change this. We want your pets to love us not hate us!

Fear of the vet not only causes a health and welfare issues to the pet but it can impact on blood results, physical and psychological parameters. It can also be a safety issue for veterinarians, veterinary staff and the owner.

Some tips to help decrease stress for your cats when visiting the vet clinic;

- **Cover the carrier** – this can be done with a towel at home. If you don't have one please ask at reception as we have towels provided behind the counter. Feliway® spray is also provided to spray to the towel prior. Feliway® is a pheromone which helps to create a calm and safe feeling.
- **Elevate the carrier** – you are also welcome to sit the carrier on the front desk, table or chairs. An elevated position reduces anxiety particularly for cats. Feliway® diffusers are placed in the consult room, cat boarding and cat hospital facilities.
- **Desensitisation** – getting your cat/kitten used to the cat carrier in your home is ideal. If you store the carrier away and only bring it out for trips to the vet clinic the cat will associate the cat carrier with a scary experience e.g. vet visit
- **Medication** – finally if none of the above are working we can provide you with medication to administer prior to the visit. Most medications are required to be administered 30-60 mins prior to the anxiety causing stimulus e.g. car trip, vet visit.

Some tips to help decrease stress for your canine vet visit;

- **Bring a companion** – If your dog is reassured by his companion dog, you can bring them for moral support.
- **Side access door** – we have a side access door if your dog is not comfortable being in the waiting room with other dogs. Please inform the reception when you make the appointment and when you arrive at the clinic.
- **Treats/toys** – if your dog has a favourite treat or toy, bring them along. Fasting before arrival at the vet clinic not only decreases the risk of car sickness but increases the motivation for treats offered when arriving at the clinic.
- **Adaptil®** – the canine pheromone spray can be sprayed onto a bandana and placed around your dog's neck. Diffusers are placed in the consult room, canine boarding and hospital facilities.
- **Zylkene®** – is a nutritional supplement available over the counter which can reduce anxiety.
- **Practice visits** – we are happy to accommodate people who would like to visit the vet clinic to help desensitise their pets. Your pet can sit in the waiting room eating treats, get on the scales and enter the consult room without any procedures occurring. This helps provide a positive experience for your pet at our clinic.
- **Medication** – we can provide medication to reduce anxiety before the vet visit. We can also reschedule visits if your pets are becoming too anxious or we can perform the procedure under sedation if required e.g. nail clips

We are going to start some classes which will provide pet owners with some information on how to help their pets prepare for vet visits. These classes will also introduce procedures that your pet may undergo while at the vets such as examination of ears, feet, mouth, blood collection and giving medications. The idea is to desensitize your pet to these routine procedures so they don't become anxious during visits. Individual classes can also be organised if required.

## Hope for allergy sufferers

If you suffer from allergies, then you may find choosing a house pet challenging. Lucky for you, you don't have to give up pet ownership altogether.

While reptile and bird ownership are valid options for those suffering from allergies, choosing a cat or dog is not entirely out of the question. You just have to be smarter with your choices.

Contrary to popular belief, most allergic reactions to cats and dogs don't come

from fur shedding, but rather the dander – tiny skin cells. As cats and dogs groom themselves with their mouths, these skin cells are often coated in saliva, contributing to an allergic reaction.

Rather than putting up with sneezing, watery eyes and spending hundreds of dollars on allergy medication, you can instead opt for a dog or cat that produces less dander than that of a standard moggy or Labrador.

If you're a cat lover, then opting for a Cornish or Devon Rex, or even a Sphynx cat, could be a beneficial move. Cornish and Devon Rex cats have very soft and delicate coats, and as a result, they don't shed as much dander. Sphynx cats, on the other hand, are hairless so produce the least dander of all. They also have a sweet temperament and crave attention.

If you're more of a dog fan, it might be time to consider adopting a Poodle or Bichon Frisé. Both breeds have curly hair-like coats which reduce the instance of dander, skin issues, and shedding. They are also well-tempered which allows them to fit into your home life with relative ease.

However, aside from hypoallergenic pets, you can also prevent or reduce the severity of allergic reactions by keeping pets out of bedrooms and spaces you regularly frequent, washing their bedding often, and washing your hands after petting them.



The Sphynx cat is hairless.

To contact your vet, keep me in a handy place at home.