

# 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 BVBiomed (Wagga)

Special interests: Small and large animal medicine and surgery.

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

Special interests: Cattle and small animal medicine and surgery.

**Dr Lyndon Cleary** BVSc BAnVetBioSC (Hons) (Syd)

Special interests: Small and large animal medicine and surgery.

**Dr Beth Miller** BVSc

Special interests: Small animal surgery and medicine.

## OUR SUPPORT STAFF

**Barb, Catherine, Alice, Claire, Steph, Candice, Kayleigh, Hayley, Adelle, Josie and Jemma**

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, Fuzzyard 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



AUTUMN 2019

## Preparing for your vet visit

Vets have seen it all. Dogs knocking over display stands, cats meowing and hissing, and genuinely terrified animals who aren't sure where they are or why they're there. A vet visit can be daunting for any owner and pet, but it can also be positive too.

To make sure your trip to the vet goes as smoothly as possible, you need to make sure you lay the groundwork. All your pet knows is that whenever you bring out a particular item, such as a cat cage, it can only mean one thing: a stranger is going to poke and prod them. Once they know that, they may begin to display behaviour that makes your trip to the vet less than ideal.

Some owners, knowing how hard it's going to be, even delay their vet visits until they can't wait any longer.

It's crucial to remember that vets understand and know that not all animals are going to enjoy a trip to the clinic. That's why they recommend the following.

### KEEP CALM

It can be stressful and maybe a struggle for any pet owner to handle the emotions and reactions of an anxious or aggressive pet. It's important to stay calm – both for yourself and your pet. Remember, your pet is not the first or last to be anxious in a vet clinic.

All veterinary staff are trained on how to handle nervous pets, and have systems and procedures in place to do their job with minimal impact on the animal.

### BE AWARE OF SIGNS

It's important to be aware of aggression, anxiety, and nerves that your pets are showing so you can act accordingly. Some dogs will lick their lips, groom themselves aggressively and even begin yawning. Such behaviour can indicate fear or anxiety. When you spot these signs, try to sit in an area of the clinic which is quiet and relaxing.

### LAY GROUNDWORK

Try to change any disagreeable association your pet may have with a vet or a particular item. For example, some cats see a cat cage and run away. Why not turn that cat cage into a bed that's open all day, every day? It's now somewhere safe, as opposed to something that only comes out during a vet visit.

### COMMUNICATE

Communication with your vet, the vet receptionist, and when you make your appointment is essential. Let the vet team know that your dog, cat, or other animal is uncomfortable. Your vet can then take extra precautions or offer additional support. What's more, if your pet has a favourite vet, someone they tend to feel safe with, then book an appointment with that particular vet.

Whether your pet needs veterinary treatment, vaccinations, or a check-up, it's important not to delay it because you're worried about their reaction. Instead, talk to your vet and find out what they can offer in the way of support and advice. A positive experience at the vet is entirely possible for both you and your pets.

Take me home to complete our PUZZLE – check inside!

## Does your pet have the **green-eyed monster**?

Animal researchers are not yet sure whether animals can show the human version of jealousy. Some see it as a competitive trait, while others believe it's a display of social hierarchy against another pet in your household.

Even if research hasn't shown that pets get jealous, there are many jealous-like behaviours of which you need to be aware. Many of these behaviours are unhealthy and can be dangerous for both you and your pets. Here are a few of the many signs to look out for, and what you can do about them.

### **PUSHY BEHAVIOUR**

Pushy behaviour can rear its ugly head at any time, but it's usually when you show one pet more attention than another. One pet may move in front of the other to take over the attention.

### **TRICKS**

Is your dog carrying out a trick you have taught them while you're patting another animal? Some dogs begin to beg, play dead, or do other tricks to get your attention.

### **PEEING ON THE FLOOR**

As you know, your dog can't communicate with words. Therefore, they can use out-of-character and drastic actions to get your attention. These may include peeing on the floor in front of you, so you stop giving another pet attention.



## **To snuggle** or not to snuggle?



### **Does your dog snuggle up with you in bed at night? It might be time to reconsider your bedtime habits.**

There can often be nothing more heart-warming than having your pampered pooch curl up with you in your bed as you drift off to sleep. They're warm, you're warm, and everyone is comfortable. However, that's all before you wake up during the night, claw your blankets back from the dog, then wake up again to move them to their own bed. While there's no denying that pets can bring you comfort and security in the bedroom, they can also bring you a restless night's sleep.

During 2015 studies at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, New Hampshire, researchers found two surprising results. Firstly, those with a dog that slept in the same bedroom had excellent sleep quality. While they were in the same bedroom, they had their own bed or area in which to rest. However, the second part of the study showed that those who let their dog sleep with them in bed under their covers had a poorer quality of sleep.

However, researchers also found that even though people were more likely to

wake up tired than those who had their dog sleep elsewhere, they enjoyed the sense of security.

Aside from a lack of sleep, there are many other reasons why you should direct your furry friend to their own bed instead. If you have an inside dog and they get fleas, there's every reason to believe you're going to find them in your home. Then, when you invite them onto the bed, you are also extending an open invitation to their fleas. The last thing you want is to wake up covered in bites then spend days trying to rid your home and bed of the problem.

Every time your dog goes outside to take care of business and play, they will most likely be bringing faecal particles inside with them as well. As faeces contain bacteria, your dog is traipsing it through your home then directly onto your bed sheets.

Sometimes, nothing brings a smile to your face quicker than hopping into bed with your furry friend. However, if you want to get a decent night's sleep, it's a good idea to invest in a quality bed for them and enjoy your own bed for yourself.

### **WHAT CAN I DO TO STOP THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER?**

The first step is to see your vet to rule out any health problems – especially if your pet is doing anything out of character. You can then keep a diary of when the jealous-like behaviour occurs, to work out whether it's one thing you are doing or a series. Try to feed your pets separately, show equal attention when they are together, and make sure all your pets get the same number of toys, beds, and treats.

If you are busy and don't have time to show all of them attention, ignore

them all equally. You don't want to appear to be showing more love for one over another, especially if one pet has been displaying jealous-like behaviours. Finally, give each pet somewhere they feel safe, such as a crate or another bed in a quiet part of your home.

Pets may not display jealousy as humans do, but they can feel like they need to fight for your love. Consult your vet clinic for advice or try out the tips above to nip those unwanted behaviours in the bud.

# A new feathered friend

If you'd prefer a pet that didn't slobber, shed, or eat you out of house and home, then a bird could be the animal for you.

While Australia is very much a country of dog and cat lovers, there is still room for bird lovers who prefer feathered pets to furry ones. Birds have a lot of love to give, while also being more affordable to own, in many cases, than a cat or dog.

Here's what you can expect as a bird owner.

## DIET

A bird's diet can depend on the breed, with some having stringent requirements such as fruit nectar. What you will find, however, is that providing the correct diet is crucial. Seed should only be a "sometimes" food due to its fat and lack of nutritional content. Instead, opt for fresh vegetables and pellets that are recommended for your specific bird.

## EXERCISE

Birds need to spend a lot of time out of their cage for the good of their health. Set time aside for free-flying, but bird-proof your home in advance. Close blinds to stop them hitting windows, and remove obstacles and potential dangers. You may also find that regularly changing the toys in their cage can be beneficial to relieve boredom, as well as offering toys they can destroy such as paper towel rolls.

## HOUSING

The larger the cage, the better it is for your bird. After all, they need all the room they can get to move around. Stainless steel or powder coated enclosures are better to avoid metal poisoning from zinc powder, or you can clean the cage with vinegar before housing your bird in it. There are minimum size requirements for enclosures, so check what your state requirements are before going ahead and purchasing one.

## HANDLING

If you have brought home a baby bird, the sooner you can begin handling them, the more relaxed they will become with you. Start by talking gently through their cage without looking at them. Then, place your hands inside the cage so they can see them. You can encourage them to take a closer look by placing seed in your hand for them to nibble at. Socialisation is a slow process, so have plenty of patience.

Bird ownership can be as rewarding as owning a dog or cat, however, they do require a significant amount of time and care. If you are contemplating bird ownership, ask your local veterinarian for advice.



## WORD SEARCH

- AGGRESSION
- ASSOCIATION
- ASTHMA
- ATTENTION
- BIRD
- BOARDING
- BRONCHITIS
- CAGE
- CAT
- CHOCOLATE
- COMPETITIVE
- EASTER
- FREE FLYING
- HIERARCHY
- HOLIDAY
- INTERNET
- JEALOUS
- LISTING
- MICROCHIP
- MILDEW
- ONLINE
- PERMIT
- PUSHY
- SEED
- SITTER
- SOCIALISATION
- TERRIFIED
- VET
- VINEGAR
- WHEEZING

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# Your pet's Easter holiday

With Easter just around the corner it makes sense to begin planning for your pet's holiday as well as your own.

If you plan on booking your cats, dogs, and other animals into boarding facilities or with house sitters, then there are a few things you need to remember. Even if you're caught up in your own holiday preparations, it's crucial to set time aside to also make arrangements for your pets, rather than as an afterthought.

## IN A BOARDING FACILITY

If you plan on booking your furry friends into a boarding facility, then find out all there is to know about those in your area. Make sure your pet is up to date with their vaccinations and other treatments, and check whether you need to bring your own food and bedding, or if it's supplied.

What's more, make sure they can cater to any specific needs, such as dietary or medication requirements. It may also help to provide the manager with your vet's number in case something happens while you're away.

## AT HOME

If you make arrangements for a pet sitter, you may find your regular home environment can help keep stress levels down for both you and your pet.



However, you still need to instruct your pet sitter in how to care for your pets the same as you would. Make sure they know about changing any litter trays, times and frequencies of dog walks, and set a feeding schedule for quantity, brand, and times. The more you can stick to your pet's routine, the better it is for them.

Are you planning a holiday this Easter? Make sure you have all your ducks in a row. Prepare your pets for the occasion, make sure their vaccinations and treatments are all up to date, and make sure all that Easter chocolate is hidden well away!

# Buying pets online

Every year, tens of thousands of pets are advertised for sale online in Australia. The problem is, not every buyer knows when a listing is legitimate and safe. Here's what you need to know before buying pets online.

If you find yourself browsing the internet for a new furry friend to add to your family, you may believe all listings are as they appear, but, unfortunately sometimes they're not. There are not only a significant number of scams online – coercing you into paying a deposit for a dog or cat that doesn't exist, but thousands of pets listed with no medical histories, or have health and behavioural problems.



While many people don't aim to deceive when selling or rehoming an animal online, there are some that do. It's your responsibility to look out for warning signs and shop for pets responsibly. Don't fall for the cute and cuddly listing photo instead, look beyond it.

Always choose reputable websites and establishments such as the RSPCA, shelters, and pounds, and ask for as much information about the seller and pet as you can. Make sure the pet is weaned, microchipped, has a full vaccination and medical history, and parents you can view if you are buying a young animal. If you are buying from a breeder, you should also be able to access a permit or licence and sight recent pictures of the animals.

Any websites you purchase from should be well monitored, legal, and follow all animal welfare requirements. If you are unsure about a site or breeder, contact your local vet for advice.

Before you look online for a new furry friend, why not take a trip to your local shelter? There are thousands of animals across Australia in need of a new, loving home. Talk to your local vet or shelter to find out more.

**Disclaimer:** All text and images published in this newsletter are for general information and educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for professional advice. Always consult a suitably qualified professional regarding any concerns you may have in relation to pet health and/or treatment options.

## COSTS OF VETERINARY CARE

The average cost of a pet dog is \$25,000 over its lifespan. Dogs often live from 9-18 years depending on the breed and size of the dog. This is the average cost of a healthy dog including; food, bedding, toys, routine examinations and preventative health treatments (fleas, ticks, heartworm, intestinal worming). However, these costs can increase dramatically when accidents and illness occur. Accidents such as hit by cars and snake bites can also amount to thousands of dollars.

The costs of veterinary services are often misunderstood as most human healthcare is subsidised by Medicare and other programs. The cost of vet care also varies from clinic to clinic, and because the industry is not subsidised by the government the entire cost of the operation, treatment, or procedure will land solely on the pet owner. Many people are unaware that the cost of desexing and microchipping is already discounted by the vet clinic. This has been done for many decades in an attempt to stop the over breeding of animals and the surrounding of animals to shelters and pounds.

The RSPCA recommend budgeting a minimum of \$910 per year, this is a useful figure to work on if you are thinking of purchasing a new puppy. Investing in quality health care such as good quality nutrition, exercise, flea and tick prevention can prevent the development of expensive veterinary bills.

Payments for veterinary services are strictly due at the time of the veterinary appointment. Ways to have funds for unexpected veterinary bills;

- Have an account with some savings set aside e.g. pay \$20 per week when or before you get your puppy and accumulate over the dog's lifetime and have available for your vet bills.
- Have pet insurance, there are different levels of cover available and this can offer peace of mind that you can afford an unexpected out of pocket expense.
- New options such as Vet pay or Open pay allow you to take out a loan with an alternative company which will pay your vet bill to the veterinarian and you will then pay them by organising a payment plan. If you require a payment plan please ask our nurses at reception when booking your appointment.

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