

# 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 Sarah Sutherland** *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.

**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, Kayleigh, Hayley, Adelle, Josie, Jemma & Judi.**

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 a range of pet accessories including Fuzzyard dog beds, toys 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



WINTER 2019

## Your pet's pearly whites

**Dental disease is common in four out of five cats and dogs over three years of age. When was the last time you made an appointment to check on your pet's oral health?**

While you're busy taking care of your dog or cat's immediate needs – such as feeding, grooming, vaccinating and making sure they're well looked after, you may not think about their other less obvious health needs. Teeth are not something you see every day, and it's easy to forget they need care. As a result, periodontal disease is an all-too-frequent diagnosis by Australian vets – and one that's entirely preventable.

Periodontal disease is a bacterial infection that can lead to the need for tooth extraction, as well as infection of the liver, kidneys, and heart. Pets with periodontal disease may still continue to eat as usual, and not show signs of pain until it becomes entirely unbearable. At that point, a significant amount of damage may have already been done.

Common signs of periodontal disease include tartar buildup, bad breath, bleeding gums that may also be swollen and red, broken teeth, and pus. Your pet may also leave hard food, not being able to eat it due to pain.

If you notice any of these signs, it's crucial to see a vet sooner rather than later. They will assess the disease on the level of severity before choosing a treatment method to suit. Some periodontal disease may be reversible, but the higher the severity rating, the more likely it is they will have to extract teeth and take further action.

Often, your vet will recommend general anaesthesia to take a closer look, clean teeth, remove plaque build-up, take x-rays, and remove infected or damaged teeth. If you're not sure how this process works, make sure you ask your vet as many questions as possible so you can feel comfortable.

The entire procedure for taking care of your pet's pearly whites can seem quite daunting, but it's important to understand that many dental-related conditions are preventable. When you bring home a young dog or cat, you can begin a brushing regime from day one. Vet clinics stock a range of toothbrushes and pastes for animal use. Alternatively, there are specialised dental treats and raw bones on the market to help with the cleaning process. Check with your vet to find out the pros and cons of each method, and which will be suitable for your pet.

Alongside preventative measures at home, you can also keep on top of your pet's health by booking them in for routine annual check-ups. During these check-ups, your vet looks out for any dental health issues as well as any other problems that may have cropped up in the prior 12-month period. Remember, your pet can't tell you what hurts and where, so these appointments are essential.

Are you worried about your pet's oral health, or do you have another health concern? Stay on top of your pet's health by making an appointment with your local vet.

Take me home to complete our **PUZZLE** – check inside!

# The dos and don'ts of donkeys

**Donkeys are full of character and make kind and gentle pets for children and adults. They might look like horses, but their needs are very different. If you're considering becoming a donkey owner, read on.**

There are several different donkey breeds in Australia – all with different needs and backgrounds. Fortunately, Australia is home to the Donkey All Breeds Society of Australia Inc., a source of information and support on all things donkey-related. If you find yourself in need of a helping hand with breeding, care, or performance, you are not short of expert help and advice.

One of the first things you will learn about donkeys is that they have particular dietary requirements, and require constant care to ensure their digestive system remains healthy. They are known as 'trickle feeders' as they eat little and often. You should always feed your donkey according to their temperament, weight, and age, and avoid any feed that's dusty, mouldy, or high in sugar, protein, and carbohydrates. If you need to change their diet, do it gradually over two weeks to avoid digestive upset.

Donkeys require a high-fibre diet, and oat or barley straw with minimal grass access. When this is scarce you can also include meadow or seed hay, but beware of highly poisonous ragwort.



They also need fresh drinking water, and an equine salt lick.

A common problem arising from a poor diet is laminitis, which is a tissue inflammation that causes hoof pain and lameness.

Donkeys get laminitis from consuming too much grass or cereal-based feeds. Unless your vet recommends cereal-based concentrates, stick with a standard straw diet. If you believe your donkey has laminitis, consult your vet for urgent care.

Like horses, a donkey's hoof care is vitally important. Donkeys can suffer problems such as hoof cracks, and seedy toe, which is caused by an incorrectly trimmed and shaped hoof. Talk to your vet about ongoing hoof care, to ensure they avoid these problems.

You will need to keep monitoring your donkey's body health. A helpful body condition score chart can be downloaded from Donkey All Breeds Society, which outlines the overall condition, including optimum weight, muscle development, and fat coverage.

Finally, donkeys need shelter, exercise and companionship. They can live for 30 to 40 years, so the society advises you learn as much as you can to help decide if you can take care of their needs. If you have any questions or concerns, consult a veterinary professional.

## ACROSS

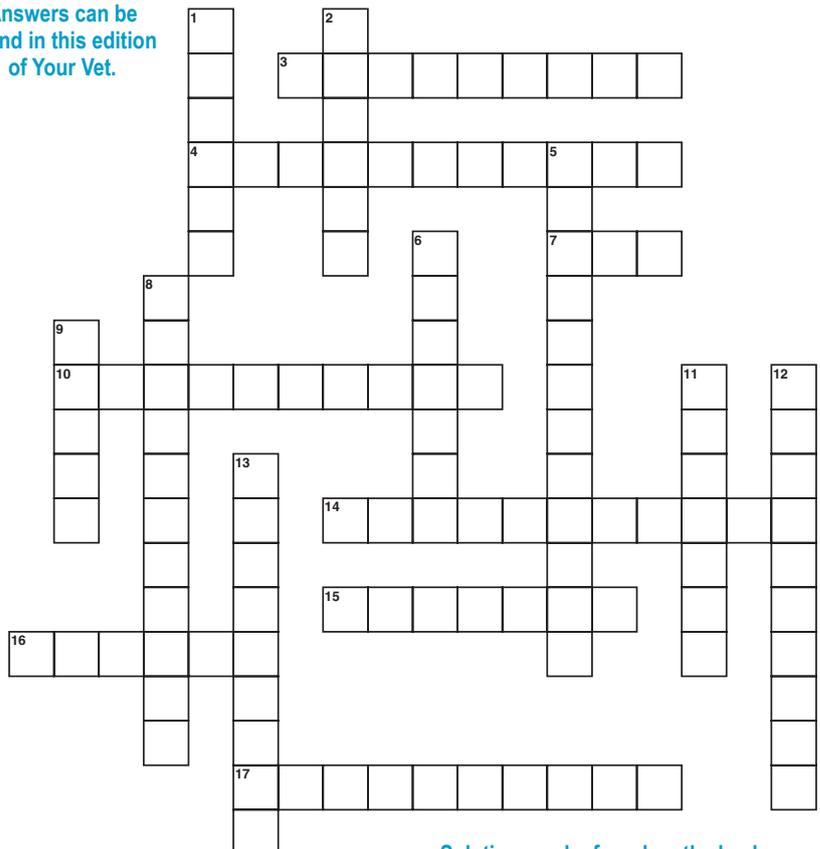
3. Tissue inflammation of the hoof
4. Scared, overwhelmed. nervous
7. A small bag or pouch, especially one that contains a fluid
10. Inflammation of the skin
14. Nature or character
15. Strong, sharp or bitter
16. A hard deposit that forms on teeth at the gum line and contributes to dental decay
17. Covering or surrounding something to prevent or reduce the loss of heat

## DOWN

1. Routine or system
2. The liquid produced in the mouth by the salivary glands
5. A male hormone
6. Best or ideal
8. Relating to, or affecting the tissues that surround the tooth
9. A smell or aroma
11. Sensitivity to a normally harmless substance that creates a strong reaction
12. Having excessive gas in the digestive system
13. A medical condition affecting joints, causing pain, swelling, and stiffness

## C L E V E R C R O S S W O R D

Answers can be found in this edition of Your Vet.



Solution can be found on the back page.

## Fearful of men? Here's why

**Does your dog cower, run away, or show their dislike of men whenever one enters the room? Find out why and how you can fix the problem.**

Your dog could have the sweetest nature and the calmest of dispositions, but as soon as a male enters the room, they can become scared, nervous, or even aggressive. While many people assume the dog has had a bad experience with a male, that's rarely the case. Instead, it can be one of several reasons.

A lack of socialisation with males from a young age is one of the more common reasons. During the age of three weeks through to three months, a puppy should be exposed to all types of people. In many cases, they are not. The arrival of a new gender with a different manner, walk, and voice can be an overwhelming experience for a dog that is more familiar with feminine qualities.

Facial hair is potentially another reason, according to a 1970 study by Guthrie. Beards are thought to be signs of testosterone, aggressiveness,

and status. A dog may feel threatened and intimidated by men with facial hair.

A male voice can also cause fear, as some pooches may hear the low boom and believe it's a growl or bark. A man's scent or size may also contribute. Of course, not every dog will fear men for these reasons, but when you begin trying to solve the problem, these are worth considering.

You will find it's a slow process to solve the problem of male-oriented fear, as you cannot force your dog to stop being scared of men. Start by letting the male be in the same room as your dog, but not the same space. Have the man ignore your dog, so your pooch does not feel threatened. If your dog moves closer to the male in the room, have him throw a treat toward the dog as a reward. Doing so can slowly help to build trust.



Treats, praise, and patience are going to be your three primary training tools.

Use praise and treats for any non-aggressive and positive behaviour, and patience for not forcing the dog to interact with the male and vice versa.

Over time, and with guidance and advice from a trained professional, you may be able to help your dog to overcome their fear of men. If you have any queries or concerns, consult your local vet.

## Helping your elderly pets through winter

**As you load on the layers to make it through another winter, are you sparing a thought for your ageing pets? Help them battle the cold too.**

Even though winter in Australia can be relatively mild, it's still important to take care of your ageing pets as they may feel the cold more than most. If you haven't already taken steps to make them more comfortable with the sudden temperature drop, then now's an excellent time to start.

Begin by letting your dog wear a coat when you take them for a walk. Your pooch may

have fur, but they are getting older and sometimes need a little extra. For elderly cats, make sure they have access to plenty of warm sleeping spots inside and outside your home. However, to be on the safe side, put fireguards up against heaters and fireplaces to stop them getting too close!

When it comes to sleeping arrangements, consider your pet's need for comfort as well as warmth. Give them more blankets, (which should be washed regularly), and consider investing in heated memory foam pads that help ease stiff, older joints. Elevated beds may stop any draughts from

causing discomfort too. If your dog sleeps outside, as many do, make sure their kennel has plenty of insulation, with warm, dry blankets, and is out of harsh weather conditions. The more shelter you can give them, the better it is for their comfort and health.

Arthritis is a common problem older pets face, and it can take its toll in colder weather. Consider making an appointment with a vet to talk about your options regarding care. They may recommend a supplement such as Omega 3 fatty acid, a course of injections for improving severe arthritis cases, or medication for inflammation.

Finally, colder weather can keep you and your pets indoors a lot more, so make an effort to provide stimulation for your pets to avoid boredom. There are many puzzles, games, and activities available to keep your furry friends active, but out of trouble while they spend more time inside.

Most importantly, however, be considerate of your ageing pet's needs. As soon as you begin to feel cold, consider that your pet might be too. If you are concerned about your pet's health, especially with the onset of winter, then consult your vet for advice.



# Communicating with man's best friend

**Researchers used to think that animals' facial expressions were unintentional and not used as a way of communication. But that might no longer be the case. Could dog owners be missing important signs?**

Many people look at their pampered pooches and think about how much easier life would be if they could tell you what they were thinking. While dogs can't speak our language, studies show they are communicating with you on a different level – with their eyes.

Research published in the Australian Veterinary Journal showed that dogs respond better to non-verbal communication when they can see your eyes. Also, when you close your eyes or look away, they are more likely to do things they know they shouldn't, such as stealing food.

While it would be easy to assume that dogs are using facial expressions at random, numerous studies show otherwise. In one study the behaviour of 24 dogs was analysed when they were offered human attention and food. If the dogs reacted to both in the same way,

then it meant that their expressions were not being modified for humans. However, the results showed that dogs responded with more expressions - and on a larger scale, to human attention with or without food, than to food alone.

Dogs can also use their eyes to their advantage, raising their inner brows to make their eyes look bigger, similar to an expression children make. Humans find this action adorable, making them respond in a very affectionate and protective way. This expression is so effective, many dogs using it in shelters find new homes far quicker than dogs that don't.

It's fair to say that most dog owners believe they communicate with their pets on some level. Put your dog to the test. Check out their facial expressions when looking at food, then when they see you. Notice any difference?



## WHAT IS CUSHING'S DISEASE?

Cushing's disease is when the adrenal glands in your dog produce too much cortisol and is also known as hyperadrenocorticism. It is the most common endocrine disease in dogs.

It is most commonly caused by a (benign) non-cancerous tumour of the pituitary gland which is located in the brain or a tumour of the adrenal gland which is located near the kidney. Cushing's can be artificially caused by long term dosing of steroids which are often used for other conditions such as skin irritation or immune mediated conditions.

The disease is most commonly seen when dogs reach middle to old age (7-12 years). Breeds commonly affected are small breed dogs such as the miniature poodle and Maltese terriers.

## WHAT ARE SIGNS OF CUSHING'S?

- 'Ageing' rapidly.
- Lethargy.
- Drinking and urinating a lot.
- Having a ravenous appetite.
- A changed body shape/ obesity/pot belly/fat pad development.
- Panting excessively without heat or exercise.
- Worsening skin or joint disease.
- Problems with nerves in the legs.
- Neurological signs (due to a pituitary tumour which is getting larger).
- Changes in hair coat and skin
  - Thinning hair coat
  - Colour change
  - Failure of hair to regrow
  - Hair looking 'singled' or 'burnt'.

If your dog has some of these symptoms it is quite possible that your dog could have Cushing's disease and further testing should be undertaken. Testing often starts with blood and urine testing. Once a diagnosis is reached there are treatment options available. Please book an appointment with your veterinarian to discuss. Following treatment often you will notice how much the disease has been affecting your pet's health and well-being.

## Why does my dog smell?

**If you find yourself crinkling your nose up as soon as your furry friend walks into the room, it might be time to get to the source of the odour.**

While it's true in some cases that a smelly dog has just been rolling in something unfavourable, it's not always the cause of the problem. Instead, it could be any of the following:

### 1. Tooth and gum disease

If your dog has periodontal disease or oral health issues, then they tend to produce more saliva than usual. This saliva can create a nasty odour. See your vet immediately, as you must take tooth and gum disease seriously.

### 2. Skin conditions

If you have a dog with skin folds, then you must clean them often with a specialised cleanser or gentle wipes. Often, they can be prone to dermatitis, resulting in stinky skin.

### 3. Ear infections

If your dog is allergy-prone or has long ears, they may get ear infections. Typically, these

come with a pungent odour which can be similar to yeast. See your vet to check for allergies or other conditions.

### 4. Anal sac issues

Dogs have two anal sacs near their anus which give off an oily or smelly secretion. If these become infected or impacted, it can make your dog uncomfortable and messy. You may find the oily substance oozes out onto their fur which can be challenging to clean. See your vet for help and advice.

### 5. Gas

If your dog eats something they shouldn't, or has a sensitive stomach, you may find they smell because of flatulence! Avoid table scraps and titbits, instead, offer vet-approved food.

Your dog can smell for many reasons, which is why it's so important to keep on top of their health. Remember to book them in for annual check-ups and take note if they are particularly whiffy!

**CROSSWORD SOLUTION**  
DOWN  
1. REGIME 2. SALIVA 5. TESTOSTERONE 6. OPTIMUM 8. PERIODONTAL  
9. ODOUR 11. ALLERGY 12. FLATULENCE 13. ARTHRITIS  
ACROSS  
3. LAMINITIS 4. INTIMIDATED 7. SAC 10. DERMATITIS  
14. TEMPERAMENT 15. PUNGENT 16. TARTAR 17. INSULATION

**Disclaimer:** The information provided in this newsletter is for educational purposes only, and is not intended as a substitute for sound health care advice. We are not liable for any adverse effects or consequences resulting from the use of any information, suggestions, or procedures presented. Always consult a qualified professional in all matters pertaining to your pet health.

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