

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 BV Biol (Wagga)

Special interests: Small and large animal medicine and surgery.

Dr Stephen Laing BVSc BV Biol (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, 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



SPRING 2019

Fit for a fish

You might think a goldfish's diet is all flakes and no fun, but you can spice up your fish food in more ways than you think.

Goldfish are a favourite household pet in Australia, requiring minimal care when you compare them to a domestic dog or cat. However, many people are getting it wrong when it comes to feeding time; a scattering of flakes once a day isn't the best feeding approach.

It's important to give your goldfish a varied diet to ensure they always receive the right nutrients to be healthy. To keep things interesting for them, include all three food types: dry food, live or freeze-dried food, and a selection of vegetables.

Feed your fish specialised flakes and granules as the basis of their diet; then mix it up a bit with shrimp, vegetable mixes from your local pet store, and daphnia (aquatic crustaceans). Duckweed, algae, lettuce, and cooked or softened peas are also a nutritious and welcome addition.

Goldfish can suffer from digestive problems, so ensure you soak freeze-dried food first, keep vegetables natural and soft by boiling, and thaw frozen goldfish food.

Over feeding is a common problem, if you think you might be feeding them too much, there are ways to tell. Look out for excess waste, uneaten food, dirty water, and fish that don't look healthy.

Feeding a small amount two to three times a day is better than one large serving. Feed your fish only as much as they can eat in two minutes or less, or about the size of their eye.

When temperatures fall below eight degrees, limit feeding. They are less able to digest food when the water is colder.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding fish care and feeding, talk to your local aquarium specialist or vet.

Spot the difference – domestic, stray or feral?

If you saw a cat walking down your street, or in your garden, would you be able to identify it as a domestic, stray, or feral cat?

Many people can often recognise a domestic cat by its collar, friendly personality, or its well-fed body. However, when it comes to a stray or a feral, the differences can be harder to spot. Here's how you can tell which is which.

Stray

A stray cat is one that has become lost, abandoned, or separated from its family. In essence, it once had an owner, and regular meals, but now lives amongst a cat population. It relies on rubbish bins and the generosity of strangers to survive, and will usually look a little thin and dirty.

Some stray cats can be anxious and stand-offish, but it's not uncommon for them to warm up quite quickly to people once they receive a regular source of food from them. If you come across a stray, try to catch it and

take it to your local animal shelter for care, treatment, and possible adoption.

Feral

A feral cat, by definition, is a cat that has avoided human contact and is not friendly. They are born to wild parents, and rely on their own hunting and scavenging skills to survive. They are tough, lightning quick, often disease-ridden, and can elude capture well.

According to the Australian Veterinary Society feral cats are responsible for the extinction of seven types of mainland mammals.

While owners can keep tabs on domestic cats, and limit their destruction on native wildlife and habitat, it's not as easy with stray and feral cats. If you find yourself in a position to help trap or catch these cats, then get in touch with your local animal shelter to see what help they require.

Take me home to complete our PUZZLE – check inside!

WORD SEARCH

- GOLDFISH
- AQUARIUM
- ALGAE
- DAPHNIA
- DUCKWEED
- FERAL
- DOMESTIC
- WILDLIFE
- SCAVENGE
- POULTRY
- EGGSHELL
- ROOSTERS
- EARTHWORMS
- CHICKENS
- MOULDY
- SUPPLEMENTS
- TOXIC
- PHILODENDRON
- POISONING
- HOUSEPLANTS
- ALLERGENS
- POLLEN
- ASTHMA
- FELINE
- OBESE
- LETHARGY
- ABDOMEN
- OSTEOARTHRITIS
- DIABETES

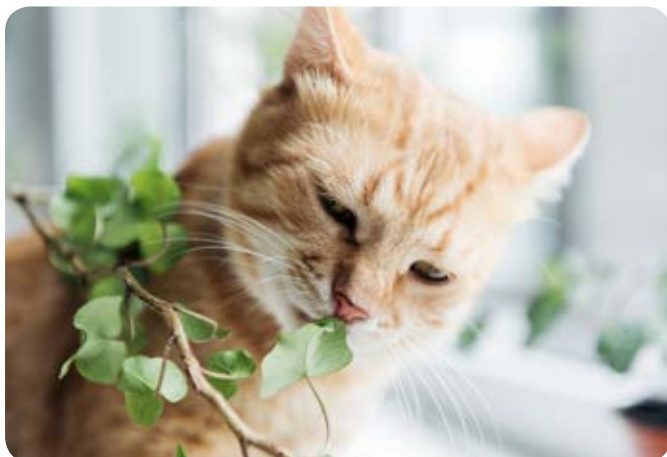
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Poisonous plants and your pets

Everyone knows that chocolate is toxic for dogs, but what about your household plants?

Most people clue themselves up on what they can and can't feed their pets. They know that raisins, chocolate, citrus, and avocado are best left for the human family members, and that treats are a "sometimes" food. What you may not have considered, however, is that your pets may think your plants are food too.

There are several hundred species of houseplants that contain toxins that can harm your pets. Symptoms and toxicity strength can differ from one plant and pet to the next, with effects ranging from mild illness through to fatality.



There are no really safe houseplants for your pets to be around, as most are capable of causing upset in one form or another. You might not be able to stop your pets from having a curious nibble, but you can remain informed to reduce the risk of poisoning. The key is to identify what the worst ones are, so you can remove them and create a safe environment for your pets.

One of the most dangerous plants for your pets to consume – but one of the most common – is the lily. Lilies of all varieties can be fatally toxic to cats, and harmful to dogs. They can cause stomach pain, depression, multiple organ failure, and death.

Plants such as sago palms, ivy, rubber trees, aloe vera, and philodendron are also common household plants – but are very toxic to cats and dogs. Symptoms can range from general loss of appetite and stomach upset, to tremors, drooling, swelling, skin irritation, organ failure or damage, and sometimes death.

The symptoms of toxicity can differ for each plant, which can make it tricky to know what your pet has eaten, and how severe their illness is. Often, the most classic or initial symptoms include vomiting, diarrhoea, and a lack of appetite. At this point, it's crucial to speak to a vet and arrange for immediate veterinary care.

To make your home as safe as possible, limit how many houseplants you have. Where you can, restrict your pets' access. If your cat or dog is showing any signs of poisoning, such as those mentioned above, seek veterinary care immediately.



Does your pooch have a potbelly?

As much as 41 percent of dogs in Australia are overweight or obese. Are you aware that your beloved pooches could be carrying a little more weight than they should be?

Recent research from the University of Liverpool has shown that overweight dogs can have a shorter lifespan by around two and a half years, compared to a dog of an ideal weight. The study looked at 12 breeds and 50,000 dogs from around the world.

While the study didn't consider the causes of an overweight dog, it's easy to deduce it could be for the same reasons that many humans are obese – too much food, and not enough exercise.

“Overweight dogs not only die earlier than dogs of ideal weights, but their quality of life can suffer too”

Some studies show that as many as half of pet owners will give their pets food if they beg, or look pleadingly at them. While morsels from the table are many pet owners' way of showing how much they love their pets, they could be killing them with kindness. Not only are some human foods not suitable for dogs, but they can be over and above their daily food intake needs.

Overweight dogs not only die earlier than dogs of ideal weights, but their quality of life can suffer too. They can be more at risk of osteoarthritis, cancer, heart disease and diabetes. Surgical risks and infection risks are all increased too. Many of these conditions could be preventable with ongoing weight management and regular exercise.

How to check your dog's weight

Many owners are not aware that their dog is overweight, so it's important to understand the signs.

You can refer to the body condition score chart from the World Small Animal Veterinary Association, or take a look for yourself.

Dogs should have a noticeable waist between where their rib cage ends and their hindquarters start. With light pressure, you should be able to feel the individual ribs and spine.

Dogs in the ideal weight range will also have their abdomen tucked up when you view them from the side.

How to practice weight management in dogs

If you know your dog is a little on the chubby side, it's time to get on top of the problem. The first step should be to talk to your vet. They can inform you of your dog's ideal body weight and what to feed them, or even prescribe a special diet.

You can also make sure they get enough exercise for their age and breed, and stop giving them table scraps.

It can be hard to resist those puppy eyes staring up at you from the dining table, but you must if you want to have your dog with you as long as possible. Place importance on feeding them a healthy and balanced diet, combined with exercise. Make an appointment with your vet to establish a feeding plan for your pet.

Asthma and your cat

Spring has finally arrived, which not only means more sunlight, but more allergens as well. However, you're not the only one that's suffering – your cat may be too.

When the warmer weather hits, there tends to be more allergens in the air, such as pollen from plants. However, dust, fumes, smoke, mould and mildew, deodorisers and chemicals can also cause an allergic reaction in your cat.

This is known as allergic bronchitis, and occurs when your cat's airways become inflamed due to an inhaled allergen that stimulates the immune system. Asthma is believed to develop as a result of this. The severity of the attack can depend on the type of allergen that sets it off, and whether your cat is obese, stressed, has parasites, or a pre-existing condition.

How common is feline asthma?

At least one percent of adult cats are believed to have feline asthma. It tends to be more common in females, and more prominent in Himalayan and Siamese breeds. Many cats develop asthma between two and eight years of age.

How to tell if your cat has asthma

Many general symptoms may be present in a cat with asthma. Your cat may have laboured breath, wheezing, coughing, or breathe with an open mouth. They may be hunched and squatting with their neck out as they struggle to breathe. Foamy mucus, blue lips and gums can be present, along with weakness and lethargy. If your cat shows any of these symptoms, take them to a veterinary clinic immediately.

How to treat feline asthma

If your vet has diagnosed feline asthma, you'll be pleased to know it's an entirely manageable condition. While there is no cure, there are many medications which can help to open up your cat's breathing passage, reduce inflammation, and alter their immune response to allergens that cause asthma attacks.

You can also help by reducing your cat's stress, keeping them active, not exposing them to smoke or dust, and not using perfumes, sprays, or aerosol cleaners around them. Routinely checking for parasites may be of benefit too.

If you think your cat may have feline asthma, or you would like to get your furry friend checked out for a clean bill of health, make an appointment with your vet today.



Chicken chow – what to feed your chickens

If you enjoy having poached eggs for breakfast every morning, then make sure you're laying the foundations for the best eggs possible. It starts with your chickens.

Chickens are lovely, social creatures that lay between 250 and 300 eggs yearly. However, your feathered friends need the best possible food if they are going to help you create an award-winning omelette.

The most important part of their diet is poultry pellets. Ensure you provide them with the best poultry mash or pellet variety available, as it will be their mainstay. Add corn and wheat to bulk up the main meal and provide texture and variety. Hens and roosters also require access to fresh, clean water at all times.

What you put on the family's dinner table may also prove beneficial for chickens. Hens and roosters eat almost anything you put in front of them, making them the most unfussy family members to have.

They'll eat a variety of fresh vegetables and fruit such as spinach, cabbage, vegetable peels and bananas. Grains, too, will be a favourite; treat them to bread, rice, rolled oats, cooked legumes and pasta.

Mouldy food can make your hens very ill, so make sure grains remain dry, and steer clear of anything that rots quickly, such as lawn clippings. Some foods are toxic to chickens; these include dried beans, rhubarb, onions, garlic, citrus fruit, chocolate, and avocado.

A supplement of dried ground eggshell will supply calcium to help grow strong eggshells. Keep plenty of eggshell grit scattered around their run area as well. The grit, along with plenty of earthworms and weeds to snack on, will make them the happiest chickens around.

However, when it comes to animal products, exercise caution. Many states ban swill feeding. Swill feeding is anything containing mammal or bird materials such as carcasses, eggs, meat, blood, and faeces.

You may feed them milk products, but nothing that doesn't abide by Australian standards for hygienic rendering of animal products.

Providing a balanced and varied diet will make your hens healthy and happy. If you're not sure what's right for them, consult a vet or livestock professional, and refer to the rules and regulations in your area for keeping chickens in the backyard.

HOW TO TREAT CUSHING'S DISEASE

Our last article discussed how we diagnose Cushing's disease and this article will discuss how we treat Cushing's disease.

The most commonly used medication to treat Cushing's disease in dogs is Trilostane.

Trilostane causes a decrease in the synthesis of cortisol by the adrenal gland. It is given once or twice daily and can be given as a tablet, capsule or liquid.

We do have to measure levels of the medication within your dog's system quite closely. If the levels are too low then your dog will still have symptoms of Cushing's disease. The more serious concern is if the dose is too high. Signs that the dose is too high include trembling, vomiting and inappetence. This can worsen to collapse and coma if left untreated. We usually give you a medication called Cortate to keep at home. If you think your dog has had an overdose, you can call us to seek further advice and give Cortate if instructed. Levels of the drug required also change over time therefore 3 monthly testing is recommended.

We measure these levels by performing as ACTH stimulation test;

- This will involve you bringing your dog in four to six hours after the morning dose of medication and leaving him/her for around one hour.
- On admission we will confirm some details with you such as:
 1. What dose of the medication is your pet getting?
 2. How often is your pet receiving the medication?
 3. Any side effects you may have noticed and how the dog is behaving.
 4. Have you noticed increased or decreased drinking, eating or panting?
 5. Has there been any change in energy levels or changes to the hair coat?
- We will perform a blood test when your dog arrives.
- We will give a dose of a medication (to "test" the adrenal glands) and take another blood sample one hour later.
- Your dog is then okay to return home as normal.
- The blood will be sent to an external laboratory where the level of cortisol is measured from each sample.
- An endocrinology specialist then comments on the results based on the dog's current dose and clinical history supplied by the vet. The vet will then contact the owner regarding the results.

Clinical improvement is usually seen within 2 weeks of starting treatment and adequate disease control is usually seen at 30 days. Improvements include more energy, reduced hunger and thirst, weight control, better coat, less anxiety, reduced urinary tract and skin infections and improved wound healing.

Did you know?

- Chickens aren't totally flightless – they can get airborne enough to make it over a fence or into a tree.
- Chickens can remember over 100 different faces of people or animals.
- Chickens are the closest living relative of the Tyrannosaurus Rex.
- When chickens feel stressed, they start to lose their feathers.
- A mother hen turns her eggs about 50 times per day.

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.

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