

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS VETERINARY CENTRE


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Find us on 

OUR VETS

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 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, Steph, Hayley, Josie, Jemma, Judi, Ellyse & Sarah

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 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



SUMMER 2019/20

Fun and games for your pets

The festive season is when you get to spend more time at home with your family, but how do you keep the furry family members entertained?

When you're running around trying to keep everyone occupied and entertained during the school holidays, it can be easy to forget your pets. They also need stimulation and attention to keep them out of trouble.

A bored dog is one that barks, chews, digs, and creates chaos. A few simple, fun holiday games can make a world of difference to your dog's day, while keeping any destructive behaviour in check.

Obstacle course

Get the kids involved in the creation of an obstacle course. Use large boxes for dogs to crawl through, a chair to jump on, and barriers for them to climb over. With encouragement and treats, your pooch will use all their energy to master the course.

Hide and seek

Think your dog is not smart enough for hide and seek? Give it a try! Place their favourite treats and toys around the house and help

them discover them. Make some easy to find, but include a few challenges as well.

New tricks

The often quoted proverb, 'you can't teach an old dog new tricks,' isn't really true. Older dogs can learn new tricks, but it may take them a little longer than puppies. Consider teaching them some firm favourites such as shake, roll over, and fetch.

Food puzzles

If you want your dog to play quietly by themselves, then invest in food puzzles that match their intelligence level. Many different options at local pet stores can keep your dog entertained for hours.

In amongst all the festive excitement, it's important to involve your pets as much as possible. Treat them to some fun holiday games that will stimulate them both mentally and physically.

Microchips and missing pets

Microchipping is mandatory in some Australian states, but some pet owners may be unclear, or unsure about the process.

Giving your pet a microchip arms them with a permanent form of electronic identification that they can't lose. Your pets may have a collar with their name and your phone number on it, but what happens if they lose it when they wander away from home? There should be a backup plan.

A microchip is a very small implant about the same size as a grain of rice. Your vet will insert it just under the skin at the back of your pet's neck so it's not visible. It holds a unique number that matches up to a database containing the details of the pet and the owner. Should your pet go missing or become lost; animal shelters, vets, or councils can scan the chip and identify you as the owner.

Many people think this identification method is just for dogs and cats; but other

animals, from horses to rabbits and birds, can all be microchipped.

A microchip can be a saving grace for worried pet owners, but if it's not up to date it can take a long time to reunite pets with their owners. If you move, change phone numbers, or transfer ownership, don't forget to update your information on the database.

Each state in Australia has different mandates for microchipping; make sure you're aware of the regulations in your area, as penalties could be incurred if you fail to comply. If you're not sure if your pets were microchipped before you adopted them, check with your local vet.

An identification tag on a collar is a helpful way to track down a missing pet's owner, but microchipping is more reliable and permanent. If you're yet to microchip your pets, now's the time to make an appointment with your vet.

Take me home to complete our PUZZLE – check inside!

What about a goldfish?

If you're not quite ready for pets of the furry variety, then a goldfish might be an excellent start to animal ownership. But would you be prepared for fish?

You might think owning goldfish is as easy as filling a bowl with water and feeding them from time to time. But if you want your fish to reach their full lifespan and be healthy, you need to ensure they thrive in their new environment. Here's how.

Buy healthy fish

Sometimes, new goldfish die because they are already sick. Select goldfish with vibrant colours, erect fins, and no lumps and bumps. Signs of sick fish may include sinking to the bottom or rising to the surface, clamped fins, or trails of excrement.

Choose the right tank

Bigger is better, and your tank should have a volume of no less than 50 litres. Its length should be at least four times your adult fish body length, the width at twice its length, and the height at three times its length.

Filter and aerate

Fish eat a lot, so it's only natural that they expel a lot too. Ensure you have an adequate filtration and aeration system. Add plants to help absorb waste and provide a natural environment for your fish. Ask what your local pet store recommends.

Maintenance

Goldfish might not need obedience training or grooming, but their tanks require maintenance. You should change approximately 10 percent of the tank water weekly, and clean gravel to remove waste. If you replace it with tap water, use a water conditioner to neutralise the chemicals. Wipe down algae from the glass with an aquarium sponge, and regularly test the water for nitrate levels and ammonia.

Owning goldfish may be less labour-intensive than a cat or dog, but that doesn't mean they don't require any care. Before you buy your new finned friends, talk to aquarium experts to find out what you need to keep them happy and healthy.



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

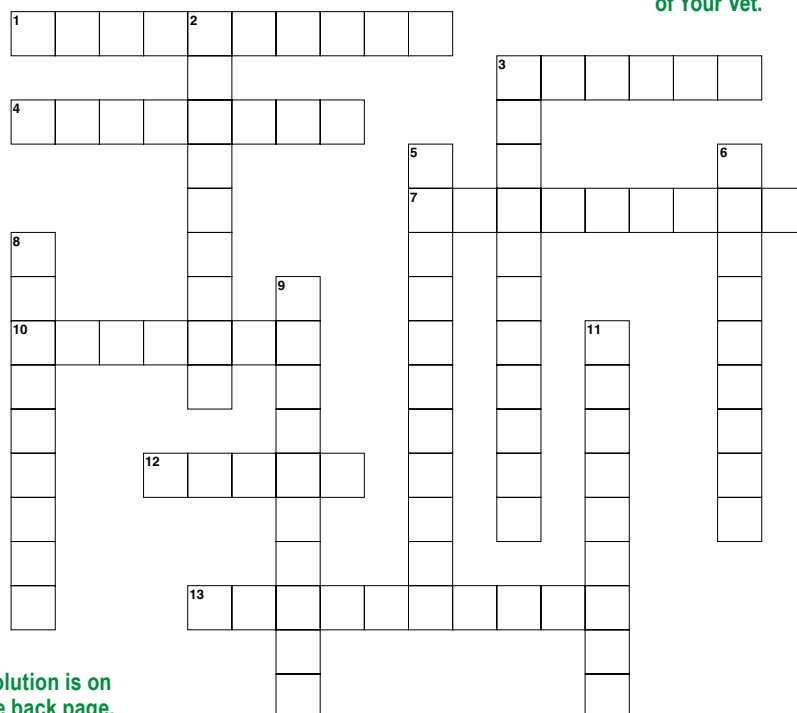
ACROSS

1. Dried out or lacking water
3. Capacity, total amount
4. Natural lifetime
7. Active or occurring at night
10. A place where cats are bred or boarded
12. An organism that lives in the water such as seaweed
13. A bacterium that commonly infects dogs, also known as kennel cough.

DOWN

2. A contagious and serious disease caused by a virus
3. Immunisation
5. Surroundings or location
6. Compulsory or required
8. A small electronic device that stores data
9. A disease carried by a fox or bat
11. Refuge or shelter.

Answers to clues can be found in this edition of Your Vet.



Solution is on the back page.



Safe festivities for your furry friends

December marks the beginning of festivities, with family events and warm sunny days. It's also the time of year when vets see a lot of pets with health problems caused from the celebrations.

The festive season is a time for decorations, family photos, delicious dinners, and parties. Everyone is happy, relaxed, and pleased to be off work until the New Year begins. While Christmas is a fun time of year, it also presents many new hazards for your pets. Read on to discover how to keep your pets happy and healthy these summer holidays.

Family Photos

There's nothing more adorable than a family photo with everyone in matching outfits – including the cat and dog. However, not every pet will appreciate their new attire. Some animals may fret or become stressed, and warm weather can also make them overheat if left in a costume for extended periods.

If you notice any signs of distress as you're putting on your pet's costume, or while they're wearing it, take the outfit off immediately. Your pet will look equally as adorable in the photo with their natural coat.

Christmas gifts

Everyone deserves a present on Christmas Day, and your pets are no exception. A new toy or treat will allow them to enjoy the festive occasion equally as much as you. But before you load their stocking full of goodies, make sure they're pet-friendly.

Treats and pet food should abide by the Australian Standard: Manufacturing and Marketing of Pet food. You can also find many safe and natural recipes online for you to make the treats yourself.

If your pet is toy mad, then introduce them to new toys under supervision. To be on the safe side, choose toys from your local vet clinic.

Decorations

Many people love getting into the true festive spirit with tinsel, baubles, and other Christmas decorations. A curious kitten, puppy, or even a bird, will find these attractive items irresistible to play with! Vets see many pets over the Christmas period that have swallowed tinsel and other Christmas decorations, so make sure these are out of reach of curious critters.

Leftovers

When those puppy eyes stare up at you from under the dinner table, it can be tempting to give them a titbit or two. It's hard to say no, but it's in your pet's best interests to do so. Many Christmas goodies can pose a health risk to your pets, such as raisins, chocolate, garlic, fatty meat, and bones. If you want to treat your pet, give them skinless, boneless white meat with a plain potato and a touch of pure cranberry sauce. They will love the change from standard pet biscuits!

If you pay attention to your pets' behaviour, and be careful with decorations and food, the festive season can be a fun time of year for all, including your pets.



Helping in a heatwave

In summer, Australia's frequent droughts and high temperatures can wreak havoc on wildlife. What can you do to help?

If you're feeling the heat on a hot summer's day, then wild animals will be as well. For some animals it can be challenging to cool down, as finding sources of drinking water or shady spots can be difficult.

If you share your area with wild animals, then you can do your part by filling shallow dishes with fresh, clean drinking water. Put the water in shady areas where there are bushes and shrubs, so that the animals can feel safe from predators. Do not provide them with food unless advised by a vet or registered wildlife carer.

Sometimes, your kind gesture can come a little too late, and wild animals can become heat-stressed. You may notice changes in their behaviour, such as nocturnal possums being awake during the day, or birds standing on the ground rather than in the trees. They may also be unbalanced and appear confused.

If you can safely help a heat-stressed or dehydrated animal, then get a cardboard box and a towel. Wrap the animal loosely in the towel and put it in the box with a drink of water. Try to avoid handling the animals too much as this can stress them further. Spray them with a cool water mist, and then leave them in a quiet, dark place while you contact your local vet or wildlife sanctuary to receive instructions.

If you come across a heat-stressed flying fox or bat, leave it where it is and call your local vet or sanctuary for advice. Flying foxes and bats can carry lyssavirus; a disease that can cause severe illness and even death in humans.

Finally, take note of the location where you found the animal. In the event of it recovering, you may be able to help see it returned to its natural environment.



Going away these summer holidays?

Many pet owners love taking their pets with them everywhere they go, but that's not always possible. How do you choose the perfect boarding facility for them when you're on holiday?

If your family is going away for the holiday season, now's the time to start looking for boarding facilities for your pets. The festive season is when kennels and catteries are at capacity – so the sooner you can book your pets in, the sooner you can plan your trip away.

Most towns and cities across Australia boast an abundance of kennels and catteries, so you do have options. But how do you know which one is going to be right for your pets? The first thing you need to do before you go away is to visit the facilities to find out what they are like, who works there, and what services they provide.

Ideally your cats and dogs should have vaccinations or boosters at least two to four weeks before their stay.

Ask if they provide high-quality food, or whether you have to supply your own. Check out the exercise areas, where the dogs and cats sleep, and if they will get ample play time to stop boredom. It's also helpful to ask if you can bring your pet's own bedding and toys. Ideally, the boarding facility should enquire what breed your pet is, and whether they have any special routines or requirements.

Cleanliness, hygiene, and health are paramount as well. Does the facility have

processes in place to handle an unwell animal or emergency? Is a vet close at hand? When you made the booking, did the staff member ask about vaccinations?

Dogs should have, at minimum, the C5 vaccination. This vaccination provides immunity for Bordetella (leads to canine cough), hepatitis, parvovirus, parainfluenza, and distemper.

Cats should have, at minimum, the F3 vaccination, which immunises against cat flu and feline enteritis. Talk to the cattery staff about whether your cat also needs vaccinations for Chlamydia and feline Leukaemia.

Ideally, your cats and dogs should have vaccinations or boosters at least two to four weeks before their stay. Additionally, worm and flea treatments should be up to date.

Finally, consider your pets' temperament. Are they likely to fret while you're away? Do they get anxious? If you're worried about how your pet will behave in your absence, consider a couple of short visits or night stays before their extended stay. They can then get used to the staff and facilities.

If you don't think a boarding environment will be suitable for your pet, consider a pet sitter. Pet sitters stay in your home so your pets can feel safe and secure in the comfort of their own surroundings.

There's no better time than now to book your pet in for a check-up at your local vet clinic before the holiday season kicks off. Ask your vet which vaccinations your pet may need, and whether there is anything you need to address before they go into a boarding facility.

SNAKE BITE IN DOGS AND CATS

There are around 100 Australian snake species that are considered venomous.

Producing highly toxic venom consumes a considerable amount of the snake's energy.

Often, snakes will not inject any venom at all when they bite. This explains why pets and humans can be unaffected by some snake bites. The first bite is often a warning or dry bite.

However if your pet is bitten signs of envenomation can occur within minutes.

- More than 6000 pets are bitten by snakes each year. 52% of these cases are cats and 44% are dogs.
- Only 3000 people are treated for suspected or confirmed snake bites each year, so your dog or cat is more likely to get bitten than you.
- The majority (76%) of snake bites Australia wide are from Brown snakes, 18% from Tiger snakes, and 6% from Black snakes.
- In Victoria, most snake bites occur in summer, whereas in Queensland and New South Wales snake bites are more common in October and November respectively.

Clinical signs associated with snake bite include:

- Excessive salivation
- Dilated (enlarged) pupils
- Vomiting
- Hind limb weakness progressing to paralysis
- Depression

In the Southern Highlands snakes commonly encountered include Tiger snakes, Red-bellied Black snakes, Eastern Brown snakes and Copperhead snakes.

In our experience, Copperheads are the most common snake encountered by pets and also owners in the Southern Highlands. Whilst the Copperhead is highly venomous, it is not as aggressive as a Tiger Snake or the Eastern Brown Snake and its venom is less potent.

Copperheads actually prefer a cool climate and can be active even on very cold days. On hot days, they actually do most of their hunting at night.

In our clinic, we use a combined Tiger-Brown snake antivenom to treat snake bites.

Tiger snake antivenom is effective against Tiger, Red-Bellied Black, and Copperhead snake bites. The Brown snake antivenom obviously treats Eastern Brown Snake bites.

This combination effectively covers most bases (with the exception of a death adder bite) as it is very difficult to determine the species involved in most cases. The bite site can only be located in around 30% of cases, as there is usually only minimal swelling at the bite site.

Studies have shown that cats have a higher resistance to tiger and brown snake venom than larger animals such as dogs and horses. This explains the higher survival rates in cats compared to dogs but cats are certainly not immune to snake bite and if enough venom is injected this resistance is soon overwhelmed.

Treatment for dogs and cats involves administration of antivenom along with intravenous fluids.

Snake venom can also cause red blood cell and muscle damage as well as prolonged clotting times so blood tests may also be required to check for these problems.

Previous studies have found that 91% of cats and 75% of dogs survived with antivenom whereas only 66% of cats and 31% of dogs survived without antivenom. Therefore, prompt treatment by your veterinarian can dramatically increase survival chances.

ACROSS 1. DEHYDRATED 3. VOLUME 4. LIFESPAN 7. NOCTURNAL
DOWN 2. DISTEMPER 3. VACCINATION 5. ENVIRONMENT 6. MANDATORY
8. MICROCHIP 9. LYSSAVIRUS 11. SANCTUARY

CROSSWORD
SOLUTION

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 pet health.

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