



# VET mates

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT YOUR PETS

MAY 2013



## Microchip failures

It has come to light that a number of pet microchips are failing, and are no longer being read or picked up by microchip scanners.

This is a nationwide problem and the microchip supply companies, along with veterinary clinics, are urging all people to have their pets' microchips checked to ensure they are still working.

### Totally Vets are replacing failed microchips at no charge\*

We are making a concerted effort to check all animals' microchips but please don't hesitate to ask us too! We can do this at the time of a consultation, or you can phone us and organise to pop down and see us for a free microchip check.

\*Proof of original microchip number required.

## The importance of grooming in winter

Raewyn Brew

It is just as important to groom your dog through the winter months as it is during summer, although there are different reasons for it.

If you don't look after your dog's coat during the colder months, it can become very matted and heavy. This can mean it takes a long time to dry out thoroughly, and with damp hair sitting against the skin, can cause your dog to stay cold for longer. Skin problems can also occur as the mats become so tight that when your dog moves, the mats pull or tug against the skin, making it very uncomfortable for your pet.

As long as your dog's coat hasn't already become too knotty, we can offer a slightly longer 'winter clip' which keeps your dog warmer, though they may need to come in and see us a little more often to keep the knots at bay.

Most of us have our pets living inside, where they keep nice and warm. In this situation, a shorter coat is just fine, but when the time comes to go outside, remember that Totally Vets sells a wonderful range of doggie jackets! If your dog is getting a little older, a jacket will also help to insulate those aching joints and keep them warm at night.

Due to the increasing demand for dog and cat grooming, 'Totally Groomed' has recently expanded its grooming suite - it's now double the size! Along with our experienced groomers Raewyn Brew and Diane White, we are delighted to have Nardiene Spicer join our grooming team - the grooming room is now doubly full and doubly happy!

**Simply give us a call on (06) 323 6161 to organise a pamper session for your furry friend - it's as easy as that.**





## PICK OF THE LITTER Totally Vets Combos...

### DEAL #1

Purchase ANY Masterpet Trouble & Trix cat litter and get a FREE pack of litter tray liners. For a cleaner, healthier litter tray - more hygienic, easy to use, easy to dispose of - five stars!

### DEAL #2

When you purchase ANY Eukanuba dog food, 3kg or larger, you can also get ANY 400gm pack of Yours Droolly dog treats for only \$10.00 instead of the usual \$17.30 - Duck Deluxe, Chicken Royale, Surf n' Turf, the choice is yours.

**Deals available now while stocks last, at the Feilding clinic.**

## PICK OF THE LITTER NEW - Superior Farms dog and cat treats

Superior Farms all natural dog and cat treats - from our farms to your pets. These treats are produced to the same high quality standards as the food you eat. Ingredients are sourced directly from NZFSA approved facilities and are packaged in New Zealand.

- Lamb or venison
- No artificial colours
- No artificial flavours
- 100% NZ natural
- Gluten free
- No preservatives

**Come in and check out the huge range today - available at the Feilding clinic now.**



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# Aging in our pets

Debbie Asplin

Changes are natural, and often expected, as our pets get older. However, not every pet experiences the same processes or the same severity of change - it often depends on their species, breed and any other medical conditions or previous injuries.

Arthritis can occur in older pets, especially if they sustain a joint injury earlier in life. This can cause slight stiffness or can sometimes be quite debilitating. Acupuncture can help, and there are prescription foods that can be of benefit. Even magnetic beds or collars can aid in the treatment of arthritis for animals! There are also many natural supplements that are recommended (glucosamine, chondroitin, green lipped mussel), as well as vet-only prescription

medications (anti-inflammatories and drugs for relief of chronic pain). Don't always assume that it is "just old age" slowing your pet down, it could be pain-related and something that could be easily managed. Come in and see us for an assessment if you are concerned.

Dental disease can be an issue in pets of all ages and it can lead to pain, infections, and even internal organ damage if not treated. Chews/treats, diets, oral solutions and home-based teeth cleaning can be an aid if the disease not too severe. Dental treatment under general anaesthetic may be required for more advanced cases of disease. Owners of older pets can be very worried about anaesthetics, but there are many things we can do to ensure a safer procedure.

It is common for our pets' hair to change colour - it may also become dull and coarse with age. This could indicate nutritional deficiencies or your pet could have an underlying medical condition, or less ability to absorb certain nutrients. Grooming could help remove old hair, as well as giving them some extra love and attention! Our aging friends can also develop some warts and lumps. However, any sudden loss of vision or redness/cloudiness in the eyes should be evaluated by a vet.

Loss of hearing and sight can sometimes be confused with bad behaviour. For example, your pet may not have heard or seen another person or animal approaching, then be startled and act aggressively. They may also fail to respond to commands, so your patience may at times be tested. Any sudden loss of vision or redness/cloudiness in the eyes however should be evaluated by a vet.

Weight change is often noted in the elderly. Metabolism and activity levels often decline, which decreases the need for calories, so if food portions are not monitored, pets may become overweight. This can lead to high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis and a shortened life span. On the other hand, weight loss can also be a problem and should be addressed in case of underlying diseases (including an overactive thyroid gland, cancer or kidney disease).

It is best for owners to monitor their pets closely and discuss any new symptoms with their vet. Addressing any problems earlier rather than later, the use of medications and supplements and making some changes to your pets' environment, can help contribute to a happier and healthier lifestyle for "our old mates".

## Staff news

Between the 6th and 9th of March, a team of four vets (**Christine, Sally, Suzanne and Kellie**) and three vet nurses (**Debbie, Helen and Beks**) ventured off to Auckland for the 38th annual congress of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA).

The speakers and specialists in their fields presented riveting lectures and we all came away excited, inspired and full of new, up-to-date information. As well as learning a lot, there was fun had by all at the many social functions - the 'Experience New Zealand' night was a particular highlight - ask Helen about the seafood next time you see her!

At the end of April, we were very sad to farewell **Kellie** as she and **Tracey** headed off on their big OE. Kellie has been a part of the Totally Vets companion animal team since 2010 - originally arriving as cover for Annabel's maternity leave, she never left (Australia's loss was our gain!). Kellie has gained herself a loyal following of clients, who we are sure will miss her as much as we will. We wish Kellie and Tracey safe travels and an amazing time - but not too amazing, just make sure you come back soon Dr Doyle!

**Helen Sheard** has come on board on a permanent, full-time basis as Kellie's replacement. Many of you will have already come across Helen who has been a familiar face around TVL for some time, on a part-time/locum basis. Helen rides a motorbike, has a soft spot for a huntaway, is our go-to-girl for all things dermatology - and we are very happy to have her here more often!

**Kayla** is also on a big adventure as we speak. When Beks, Sandy and Kayla attended the Association of Pet Dog Trainers NZ conference mid-last year, the opportunity arose to travel to the San Francisco SPCA to complete a volunteer dog training internship - and Kayla jumped at the chance! She is spending 8 weeks working full-time at the SPCA, focusing on dog training and behaviour, and then spending 10 days travelling to LA with her fiancé **Groves**. We (Beks and Sandy in particular!) are very excited to hear all about it when she returns.





## Teaching cats to love their carriers

Rebekah Willink

Did you know? Cats are becoming increasingly popular as pets, and in the UK, are now outnumbering dogs. This means that the number of cats visiting vet clinics is also increasing.

Visiting the vet clinic can be a very stressful experience for a cat, which in turn can be stressful for you as the owner - we all understand that no-one likes seeing their pet distressed. It is important to understand the natural behaviour of a cat, in order to understand exactly why coming to the vet clinic can be so scary - and it often all starts with the carrier!

Cats are very territorial creatures and very rarely ever leave their home. When they do, it usually means they are going to one of two places - the vet clinic or the cattery.

So this means, any time a cat is put into its carry cage, it assumes it's going somewhere 'bad', and travelling becomes stressful. Dogs however, leave home quite often - for walks, visits to the park or visits to friends' houses - so travelling is not often perceived as a "bad experience". To a cat, the carry cage therefore becomes a fear-inducing stimulus, putting the cat on edge in preparation for whatever is about to happen.

At Totally Vets, we commonly hear "I had real trouble getting my cat into her carry cage, but now she doesn't want to come out - I don't understand it!", or other words to that effect. So we encourage you to practice habituating your cat or kitten to the carrier, as a step in making vet clinic visits and travel a little less scary. You should also practice taking your kitty for short rides in the car, which are not associated with a negative experience.

So how do you train your cat to love its carrier?

The concept of crate training is far from a new idea - it is said that free-roaming dogs seek shelter in small enclosed spaces and feral cats hide in small dark spaces to avoid being caught. In fact, if you've ever visited a person with cats, you'll know that when unfamiliar people enter their home, many cats immediately run for cover in 'hidey-hole' safe places. Based on this, you can see how easily it should be to teach pet dogs and cats to perceive a travel carrier or crate as a cosy cave, or home away from home (and one that can be taken with them wherever they go!).

Training pets to see their carrier or crate as their personal bedroom is simple, even for the feistiest of felines, and with some consistency and patience, doesn't usually take very long. It's all about teaching them that great things

happen when they're in their crate - and the easiest 'great thing' to use is food. Following the simple steps below can train your housecat to think that their carrier is a heavenly haven!

- If your cat really dislikes being in its carrier, start by feeding its daily meal just outside the door.
- When your cat is comfortably eating its meal in this new location, move the food bowl just inside the door so he or she has to stick its head just inside.
- Your cat should readily do this when he or she is comfortable eating the meal without backing out to look around.
- You can now gradually move the food bowl further into the cage, until the cat easily goes all the way into the carrier. For most cats, getting to this point takes around 3-4 days.
- Try hiding tasty treats or toys in the carrier for your cat to find throughout the day - this way, the carrier can be explored and nice things found.
- Your cat should always readily enter the carrier and walk out in a relaxed manner. If your cat looks vigilant or rushes out of the cage, then you may need to back-track a little and work in more gradual steps.
- How do you know when your cat loves its carrier? ...when it randomly enters and lies down to rest on its own.

Once your cat comfortably enters the carrier to rest, you can try closing the carrier door while he or she is eating. Your cat can then be kept in the carrier for short periods of time. Gradually work up to enclosing your cat in the carrier for longer sessions.

**Feel free to give us a call on (06) 323 6161 or pop in and see us for more advice.**

