



# VET mates

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT YOUR PETS

FEBRUARY 2015



## NEW Totally Vets Gift Vouchers

Stuck for a gift idea? Give the gift of choice.

Totally Vets Gift Vouchers can be used to purchase products in store, pay for services or make an account payment.

Vouchers are available in values of \$10, \$20 or \$50, are valid for 12 months from the date of purchase and are redeemable at any Totally Vets clinic.

Available for purchase now.

## Big bad bite wounds

Suzanne Lane

Bite wounds have been described by one veterinary emergency specialist as "a combination of a crushing injury and a stab wound with the injection of some really nasty oral and faecal bacteria."

On the surface there may be a small wound but lying beneath there may be a large under-run wound or deep penetrating tract with a bunch of hair pushed in to the area and bruising or crushing of the muscle. Sometimes other foreign bodies may be carried in to the wound such as dirt, a tooth or a claw. Crushed or dead muscle can act as a culture medium for bacteria and also as a stimulus for a serious life-threatening condition known as systemic inflammatory response syndrome (SIRS).

It is important not to under-estimate the size of a wound or the extent of the injuries. Often a wound will need surgical attention to open the area wider; to examine the depth of the injury and to remove foreign material and dead tissue. Extensive flushing is needed and a drain may be placed to allow oxygen to circulate the wound and prevent the growth of bacteria.

More important than the visible wounds however, may be the overall status of the animal and the possibility of crushing or blunt trauma injury. An animal traumatised by a

fight may present in a state of shock - pale, faint and cold. Hypovolaemic shock can be more life-threatening than the obvious wounds and treatment may include intravenous fluids, oxygen therapy, pain relief and antibiotic coverage. Minor clipping and cleaning of the wounds may be attempted whilst the animal is receiving shock therapy but thorough investigation may only be safe after many hours of stabilisation.

Some examples of bite wound cases which demonstrate potential dangers:

- A Border Collie with multiple dog bite wounds developed a life-threatening heart arrhythmia either as a direct result of trauma to the heart or circulating stress hormones. Only after 12 hours of shock treatment and anti-arrhythmic drugs could the bite wounds could be properly addressed.
- A Fox Terrier with bite wounds around the neck where the muscle swelled extensively. Air was also trapped within the muscle layers and together this resulted in crushing injuries with a very sad ending.
- A cat grabbed about the abdomen by a dog. Although there were no visible wounds the attack had ruptured the cat's bladder and torn the ureter from its kidney. After being treated for shock, the damage was surgically repaired with a good outcome.

**In essence - don't under-estimate bite wounds... there may be more lurking beneath the surface than meets the eye!**



## PICK OF THE LITTER

# Summertime treats

Freezy Pups® - delicious frozen treats for dogs

- Human grade, certified organic ingredients
- Wheat, corn, soy and gluten-free
- No preservatives, artificial colours or flavours
- Less than 4 calories per treat
- The reusable tray is non-toxic, food grade recyclable plastic

These eco-friendly dog treats are available now at the Feilding clinic.

## Freebies

We've got a bunch of great freebies\* to give away... check it out!

### Collapsible travel water bowl

FREE with all purchases of Eukanuba dog food, 3kg or larger

### Cat cubby hole

FREE with all purchases of 15 litre Trouble and Trix cat litter

### Wet food pouches

6 pouches of wet food FREE with all purchases of Royal Canin feline Maintenance diets

### Cat play tunnel

FREE with all purchases of Iams cat food, 2.55kg or larger

### Chocolate... a treat for your pet, a treat for you.

FREE Whittakers chocolate with purchases of Yours Droolly 400gm dog treats

FREE Donovans chocolate with purchases of packs of Frontline Plus or Nexgard flea treatment

**Be sure to call in to the Feilding clinic today to take advantage of these, and more, special deals.**

- all freebies available only while stocks last.



## Heat stroke is a HOT issue

Helen Ryan

Summer is a fun time for all, but the heat can be lethal to our pets:

- Pets cannot sweat like we do. They release heat through their tongues, foot pads and nose which is much less effective than sweating
- Heat stroke can be life-threatening - and it occurs quickly
- Big dogs, dogs with flat faces, overweight, older, dehydrated or anxious pets are more at risk
- Even relatively cool areas can be dangerous if the animal is unable to access cold water.

Signs of heat stroke include:

- Excessive and prolonged panting
- Bright red or blue-purple gums
- Thick, ropey saliva

- Lethargy, weakness, seizures, collapse
- Excessive drooling

What heat stroke can cause:

- Organ failure
- Muscle damage
- Bleeding disorders
- Brain damage
- Airway swelling

Heat stroke is one of few true emergencies and is usually avoidable:

- Don't leave your pet in an enclosed space for any length of time - especially the car
- Don't exercise your pet during the hottest part of the day
- Ensure there is access to shade and lots of fresh water, both before and after activity

To help, you can hose down your dog with cool water (not cold). Let the water run continuously in the groin area as there are large numbers of blood vessels there which will allow for more rapid cooling of the blood. Do not cover your pet with a wet towel as this will limit the evaporation.

Every year, a number of Totally Vets' clients lose their dogs to heat stroke. We really hope that knowing how to avoid heatstroke and being more aware of the risk factors and warning signs will help prevent unnecessary deaths.

**If you suspect heat stroke in your pet please ring to let us know if you are coming to the clinic, so that treatment can be started more quickly, which will give a better chance of a successful outcome.**



Totally Vets prints **Vet Mates** on paper using FSC certified mixed source pulp from Well Managed forests and other controlled sources. The paper is produced under an environmental management system ISO 14001.

# Mastering the litter tray

Rebekah Willink

Most kittens are very easy to litter train and may already have learned by watching their mother by the time you get them home. However, there are a few simple tips which will ensure your new kitten is using their litter tray in no time.

- Show the kitten where the tray is by placing them in it and letting them have a sniff and a scratch around.
- Put your kitten in the tray regularly, particularly after meals or when they wake up.

- Make sure the tray is kept clean at all times. Cats are very clean animals and may refuse to use their tray if it is dirty.
- Put the tray in a quiet spot in the house. Much like humans, cats don't like being watched or disturbed when they're doing their 'business'.
- Never punish your kitten if they have an accident outside the tray. Supervise them closely at all times and praise them while they're in the tray. The kitten will soon associate their litter tray with praise and will want to go in there.

## AVOIDING PROBLEMS

- Choose a tray that is easy for your kitten to use. If necessary, improvise for the first few weeks with a shallow, disposable container.
- Supply at least one tray for every cat in your household. Place each one in a quiet, low-traffic corner with easy access.

- Keep the litter tray away from your cat's food, no one likes eating near the toilet!
- Choose a tray that is deep enough to keep cats from scattering litter when they dig, and large enough so they can make a complete turn.
- You can use an open tray, but for cats who want more privacy you could choose a hooded tray.
- If your cat has come to you from another home, find out what litter they used there. Some cats refuse to use a litter type they don't like.
- Never leave your cat indoors without a litter tray. If your cat holds their urine in for long periods of time bladder problems can occur.
- House soiling in a normally house-trained cat can be due to physical or behavioural problems, so it is important to find out the cause in order to treat the problem effectively.

## SPECIAL CASE Courageous Carter

Tash Kirk

One of the biggest and most memorable nursing experiences I have had since joining Totally Vets was with a dog called Carter.

Carter came to us on an early Monday morning back in November after being involved in a car accident. He had multiple scrapes and abrasions to his feet, legs and

belly, and it was obvious from that moment that he was going to be with us for a while. We immediately connected him up to IV fluids to help treat him for shock, and soon started the routine that I got to know very well - regular bandage changes on his wounds.

Due to the severity of his wounds and the fact that there had been such an impact to his body we decided to x-ray his back legs, which were the most damaged. Luckily (or unluckily, depending on how you see it) he managed to escape with only two broken toes! After surgery to amputate them it was recovery time; which included a lot of TLC, bandage changes and the occasional Duck Deluxe treat!

Carter fast became a favourite of all the staff, myself included, for he was always happy to

see you and never put up a fuss when it came to the third bandage change of the day. A rep for Royal Canin was visiting the clinic one day when she got talking to one of the staff, who mentioned Carter and how great he had been... and she so kindly gave him two giant bags of Skin Support food to help him on his road to recovery.

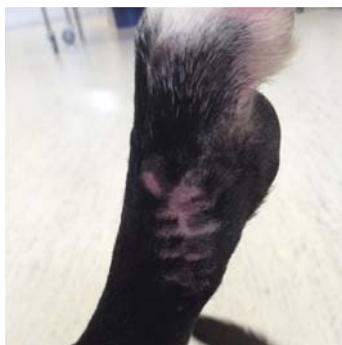
After two weeks of being in hospital full-time, Carter finally got to go home... and with the continued care from his great family Carter's recovery skyrocketed.

We still got to see him once a week for check-ups and he was always happy to come back and hang out with us for a day - mainly for the Duck Deluxe treats of course!

### BEFORE



### AFTER



Above: These before and after photos show the amazing healing power of the skin, after only a couple of weeks. Wow!

# The Dachshund - the long and the short of it

Helen Ryan

The name Dachshund is of German origin and means "badger dog". Because of their long narrow build they are often nicknamed 'the sausage dog'.

Dachshunds actually come in three sizes. The standard size was bred to scent, chase and flush out badgers and other burrow-dwelling animals, while the miniature was developed to hunt smaller prey such as rabbits.

Not surprisingly their appearance fits their job description as the dachshund is built for extreme digging. They are long bodied and muscular with short, stubby legs and unusually large and paddle-shaped paws. They have a deep chest like a greyhound, which provides increased lung capacity for stamina when hunting prey underground. The distinctive long nose gives it an increased area for detecting its prey.

There are three types of Dachshund which can be classified by their coats: short-haired/



smooth, long-haired and wire-haired. Although commonly seen as black and tan or red, which ranges from copper to deep rust, there are actually a wide variety of colours and patterns. Colours can be combined with brindle stripes, dapple spots or even piebald.

Their temperament and body language give the impression that they do not know or care about their relatively small size - often quite happy to challenge larger dogs. One thing that stands out is that they are stubborn, which can make training them a challenge. They have a determination with prey-orientated activities that may make it difficult to get their attention

back. They require patience, consistency and companionship - no good will come of leaving this dog alone too frequently.

It is hardly surprising that they are prone to spinal problems and the risk of injury may be worsened by obesity, jumping, rough handling or intense exercise which places greater strain on the vertebrae.

Totally Vets has its very own resident Dachshund in Lulu, who belongs to Chris Carter and his wife Lesley. We're pretty sure that even though she's smaller than the cats she rules the roost in the Carter household!

## Working dog snippet: The Dangers of Dog-roll

Helen Sheard

Given how many working dogs there are in New Zealand (it is estimated to be about 200,000) it's interesting that it has been only in the last 5 years or so that large scale studies have been undertaken into the health and diseases of these dogs.

New Zealand working dogs are expected to be both sprint and endurance athletes, quite unlike any other type of dog in the world. And so, we segue to the subject of the article.

The Vetlife group of veterinary practices in Central Otago are in the throes of carrying out a survey of working dog health and disease on a large scale, collecting a wealth of important data. The survey is only in the early stages, but so far some preliminary concerns have come to light.

Several farmers reported losing dogs to asphyxiation, after they choked on chunks of dog-roll. Some farmers were present when it occurred, but were unable to save their dog. A post-mortem examination was carried out on an 18 month-old huntaway who was found dead in her kennel. Chunks of unthawed dog-

roll were found in her stomach, and one chunk was wedged in her oesophagus, cutting off her windpipe. The fact that the dog-roll wasn't thawed properly in all likelihood contributed to the fatal nature of the episode.

The recommendation following this revelation was either to leave slices of dog-roll whole, so they have to be chewed, or to mash the dog-roll up to a mince-like consistency. Cutting dog-roll into bite sized portions often meant the dogs would swallow them whole. The alternative of course is not to feed dog-roll at all.

Hopefully the Vetlife group will keep us updated as they get further through their "Team-mate" project.