



VET mates

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT YOUR PETS

AUGUST 2015



SPECIAL OFFER

Royal Canin Dental Diet

For a limited time... with every dental procedure, **BUY ONE BAG** of Royal Canin Dental Canine or Feline and **GET ONE FREE!**

These veterinary-only prescription diets are recommended for pets prone to developing dental tartar or after the teeth have been cleaned, to help minimize the recurrence of dental disease. They are a complete and balanced food, and can be fed for life.

- The kibble's shape, texture and size help produce a mechanical brushing effect on teeth
- Limits the development of dental plaque and tartar
- Helps to control bad breath

Pop in and talk to us today if you think your pet might benefit from this great food- we are here to help.

Pets need the dentist too

Christine Moloney

The mouth is the entranceway to your pet's body - it can be an indicator of how healthy the rest of the body is and it can cause problems if not kept clean and tidy.

Did you know? Up to 80% of dogs and cats over three years of age show some signs of dental disease. The progression of dental disease can be as follows:

The teeth should be shiny white and the gums salmon pink. As in humans, if the teeth are not cleaned they begin to have a buildup of plaque which if left untreated forms tartar - a mixture of saliva, minerals, food and bacteria. The gums can then become infected and bleed which can cause the structures holding the teeth in place to become inflamed and destroyed, and the offending tooth can slowly become loose. The gums may recede to expose the tooth roots, and the bone between the roots gets resorbed causing the tooth to loosen even more. Worse still, the enamel of the tooth may develop erosions or ulcers and eventually the tooth will fall out.

At the same time, your pet will experience pain, develop bad breath, experience difficulty eating, may begin to dribble, paw at its mouth and have a reduced quality of life. Dental

disease can also lead on to liver, kidney or cardiac disease due to the spread of bacteria from the mouth into the bloodstream.

Another common problem is fractured teeth from playing with stones and other very hard objects - these can be very painful especially if the dentine is exposed. If seen within the first 48 hours of damage a cap can be put on the exposed tip to stop bacteria tracking down the tooth, otherwise the tooth can be rescued with a root filling at a later date. If left untreated the tooth may become infected and develop a tooth root abscess.

Totally Vets stocks and sells a number of quality home-based dental care products for pets - from chews, mouth rinses and specific dental care foods to pet-specific tooth pastes and brushes. Simply pop in to see us at the Feilding clinic for advice about dental care for your pet; we are here to help.

AUGUST IS NATIONAL PET DENTAL MONTH.

Totally Vets is offering a **20% discount** off all dental procedures performed during the month of **August 2015**.

To take advantage of this great offer, simply give us a call at the Feilding clinic on 06 323 6161 and one of our friendly reception staff will help you make an appointment.



Have you ever considered pet insurance?

Rebekah Willink

Advances in veterinary medicine means that your vet can do more for your pet in the event of an unforeseen accident or illness, but the treatment can be expensive.

For pets, there is no 'public health system' so you can compare paying for veterinary care to paying for private health care for yourself - we all know how much that can be, which is why some people have health insurance. In New Zealand, pets are fast becoming much more than just pets - more and more of us are considering our furry friends to be members of our families, which can lead to distress and sometimes heartbreak if treatment decisions have to be based on finances.

Having pet insurance will allow you to budget monthly for your pets' healthcare and give you piece of mind that if any illness or accident should occur you can concentrate on what is best for your pet, rather than worrying about the bill.

Also, don't forget about our Q Card, Farmers Card or Vetcare Finance options - we are here to help.



PICK OF THE LITTER ACANA dog and cat food

Totally Vets is proud to stock **ACANA**, made by award-winning Canadian pet food company Champion.

ACANA is a premium food for any pet; however it can be particularly good for those with skin issues, as there is a grain free variety, no additives, and only natural preservatives (vitamin E). This food is also recommended by Holistic veterinarian Dr. Liza Schneider for general health as well as skin health.

This is what Champion has to say about their ACANA brand:

*"Biologically Appropriate™ **ACANA** represents a new class of foods that mirror the high and various inclusions of fresh, whole meats that dogs and cats would encounter in their natural environment - meats they are naturally evolved to eat. Worlds away from conventional pet foods, Biologically Appropriate™ **ACANA** is rich in protein and low in carbohydrates and features an unmatched variety of poultry, meat and fish that are fresh, preservative-free and bursting with goodness that nourishes completely."*

- Biologically appropriate. Your dog or cat has specific dietary needs that 'Mother Nature' cultivated
- Fresh regional ingredients. When we say fresh, we mean it. Never-frozen and preservative-free ingredients
- Never outsourced. Because food worth eating, the truly nourishing food, should never be provided by the lowest bidder
- No water added. We gently steam-cook our foods in their own natural juices

Flea frustrations

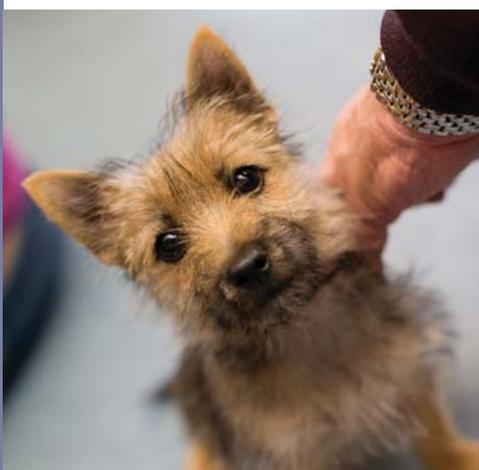
Rebekah Willink

Fleas are an issue all year round - so it's important to keep on top of flea treating your pets, and be sure to treat all pets in the household at the same time.

In a natural setting the flea lifecycle does slow down over winter, because the cold weather causes the flea to lay dormant, but with our homes warm all year round and our pets living inside, flea control needs to be managed all year round to avoid ending up with a 'flea burden' come summer.

Did you know? The fleas you see on your pet are only the tip of the iceberg - 95% of the flea population actually exists in the environment, as eggs, larvae and pupae, which are invisible to the human eye and almost impossible to control. We can however control what is on our pets and in our homes with a year-round flea control program. Those who stop treating for fleas through winter will be those more likely to end up with a home and environmental burden when the sun comes out.

Totally Vets sells a wide array of flea control products and are able to offer advice in order to help you create an optimal flea control program for your pets.



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.

Aching arthritis

Debbie Asplin

Arthritis is a common disease which can affect animals at any age but is usually seen in our 'oldies', and clinical signs are often exacerbated by chilly winter weather.

The majority of joints have a smooth layer of cartilage covering the ends of the bones and there is also 'lubrication' within the joints, called synovial fluid. Arthritis occurs when, for whatever reason, the cartilage becomes damaged or worn to the point where bone is rubbing on bone with no cushioning, causing pain and inflammation. Also the synovial fluid may lose some of its effectiveness and the lubrication in the joint is lessened. Arthritis is commonly seen in the hips, elbows, stifles, hocks and shoulders, but it can affect other joints, including the spine.

Signs of arthritis in cats and dogs can include:

- Trouble getting up in the morning
- Limping
- A reluctance to walk, climb or jump
- Declined activity and/or sleeping more
- Restlessness, or finding it hard to get comfortable
- Lagging behind on a walk
- Painful to touch/handle or aggression
- Licking at a joint
- Changes in behaviour
- Loss of appetite

Managing arthritis often requires a multi-factorial approach:

- Weight control. Arthritis is worsened by carrying excess weight, so it is important to feed an appropriate diet and to not over-feed.
- Exercise. Moderate activity will strengthen muscles, keep ligaments and tendons flexible and help keep joints moving. Swimming can be ideal in some cases as a 'low-impact' form of exercise.
- Dietary supplements. Joint health supplements can include glucosamine, chondroitin and green

lipped muscle extract and are safe to use in most patients.

- Prescription medications. There are many options available including anti-inflammatories and drugs for the relief of chronic pain. Your vet will decide upon an appropriate pain management protocol and please be sure to not ever give human medications to your pet before speaking with your vet.
- Acupuncture. This is quite a painless procedure and has shown to be effective in some cases.
- Environmental changes. Be sure to make your pet's favourite sleeping place easily accessible and consider raising their food and water bowls slightly. Magnetic underlays, coats and collars may be of use. Padded beds that are warm, out of the cold, damp and draught are also of benefit.

Unfortunately there is no cure for arthritis but by getting onto things early so that further damage is prevented or slowed, and by reducing pain and inflammation, you can make your pet's life easier and more comfortable.

Pop in and see us to check out our large array of 'winter woollies', to help keep your pet warm and cosy this winter.

Hot Spot skin infections in dogs

Sally Browning

Our clinic saw quite a few nasty skin infections in dogs following the recent floods - most had had some skin exposure to dirty flood water.

As these infections are normally seen in the hot summer months, it reminded us to write an article about how dog owners can recognise and help start to treat this nasty skin problem as soon as possible.

'Hot Spots' or superficial bacterial pyoderma are caused by Staphylococci bacteria. These

bacteria are present on the skin normally, but under the right conditions they can very rapidly cause nasty skin lesions like those seen on the dog pictured. For infection to occur you need a small break in the skin + moisture. In summer this is usually caused by a dog chewing at the site of a flea bite or other skin irritation - the bacteria then breach the normal skin defences and multiply rapidly. An expanding, painful infection occurs, characterised by thick yellow/green discharge and red swollen skin.

Often we are presented with these infections after they've already been present for several days, and we frequently need to sedate these patients to treat them as the skin lesions can be extremely painful. Treatment consists of clipping the fur from area widely (bad haircuts are us) and scrubbing with an antibacterial lotion. Antibiotic treatment is also required.

So what can you do? The first step is to routinely treat your dog for fleas all year



round, and feed a suitable diet to help keep their skin healthy and itch-free. Secondly if a hot spot starts you can begin treatment at home to prevent a large infection. Clip the hair away from the infection as much as possible and bathe the infection with salt water - no Dettol or Savlon, but don't get the surrounding hair wet as this spreads the infection.

Make an appointment to see us at the clinic as soon as is practical so the spread of the problem is limited - antibiotics will be needed.

Food for thought - before you get a puppy

Rebekah Willink

There are some important things to take into consideration before thinking about getting a puppy, so that once you 'take the plunge' you and your future four-legged friend will be set up for a lifetime of loveliness.

BREED

Bottom line - all breeds are not created equal. Breed history should always be considered and a potential owner should never choose a dog based on looks alone. The more you know about the breed, the better the choice you will make as this information will give you an insight into their behaviour, temperament, personality, trainability and exercise requirements. Working breeds need jobs to do, herding breeds will chase things, guarding breeds will bark and terrier breeds are more likely to be 'mouthy'.



EXERCISE NEEDS

When choosing a breed, make sure that you don't choose one with a higher demand for energy and exercise that you are willing or able to give. Exercise needs are 'hard-wired' into a breed, and it is when these needs are not met that behavioural problems are likely to occur.

LIFESTYLE AND ENVIRONMENT

A dog should be suitable to not only your lifestyle, but your surroundings. For example, if you live in a 'shoebox apartment' a large dog is probably not a good choice. You don't want your dog to develop health issues, be bored, or destroy things. Large dogs really belong in big places with lots of outdoor space.

INSIDE VS. OUTSIDE

Dogs are social creatures, and love nothing more than being part of a family. There are many breeds that are unsuited to long periods of social isolation, and when this happens

anxiety and behavioural problems can occur. Not all dogs are built for cool outdoor temperatures either.

ONE OR TWO?

While it may be true that two puppies will keep each other company, they may do so at the cost of your relationship with them. The tendency is for them to 'super-bond' with each other, rather than with you. Rearing two puppies successfully takes an enormous amount of work, as you need to be able to give them each individual quality time, space, exercise and training.

There are many great websites and questionnaires available to help you choose, by matching the breed best suited to your lifestyle, and we are here to help and offer as much advice as possible prior to you deciding to add a four-legged friend to your family - to help you gain the 'greatest friend in the world' for life.

Chewing gum - the sweet killer

Suzanne Lane

What appears to be a harmless piece of gum to us can be life-threatening to our four-legged friend. Chewing gum toxicity occurs as a result of xylitol, a sugar-alcohol sweetener used in many human food products.

While xylitol is considered safe in people, in dogs it can result in life-threatening hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar levels), severe

liver disease and blood clotting disorders. And it only takes as little as 0.1g/kg - that's the equivalent of one or two pieces of gum in a 10kg dog. Symptoms may begin as early as 30 minutes after ingestion and can last up to two to three days.

In the UK last year over 170 sick dogs were treated for the ingestion of xylitol-containing products and in the US it is considered an emerging toxicosis due to an increase in the number of products containing xylitol such as sugar free gum, mints, nicotine gum, chewable vitamins, oral-care products and baked goods.

In the Manawatu last year one very lucky dog had a narrow escape from xylitol toxicity after ingesting an entire packet of chewing gum - wrapper and all! Having witnessed the event, the owner quickly had the dog admitted

to the vet. The dog was immediately made to vomit successfully expelling the remaining chewing gum and wrappers. Over the next hour, the dog was monitored for signs of weakness, lethargy, imbalance, collapse or seizures. Frequent glucose readings were recorded every 10 minutes to ensure there were no signs of developing hypoglycaemia.

In some cases treatment may include hospitalisation and intravenous fluids with dextrose supplementation. In more severe patients with liver impairment, antioxidants and liver protectants may be instituted and for blood clotting disorders, plasma or blood transfusions may be required. Uncomplicated hypoglycaemia carries a good prognosis but the prognosis is guarded in those patients developing liver failure and coagulopathies.