



VET mates

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT YOUR PETS

AUGUST 2016



August is national pet dental month!

All over New Zealand owners are being encouraged to lift a lip on their pets and check what their teeth are looking like. Tartar, gum redness or bad breath could all be signs your pet needs a dental check-up.

After great results from previous years, Totally Vets is again offering a **20%** discount off all dental procedures performed during the month of August 2016.

To take advantage of this great offer, call your local clinic (Feilding and Taumarunui only) and one of our friendly reception staff will help you make an appointment.

Smile!

Helen Sheard

Shiny white teeth and healthy pink gums are what we want to see in our pets, but did you know 80% of cats and dogs over the age of three years have some degree of dental disease?

Tartar buildup, bad breath and pain when eating can all be signs of tooth problems. If left without treatment teeth can become loose and develop infections. Gums become inflamed in reaction to tartar and can bleed and become infected too.

Mild cases of dental disease may be improved with dental biscuits or chews, twice daily teeth brushing and additives to the drinking water, much like a drinkable mouthwash. If gum recession has occurred or tartar is thick then a dental scale and polish under

general anesthesia is usually required, as teeth may need to be removed. Cats can also get resorptive lesions, where the enamel of the tooth dissolves and exposes the nerve endings within the pulp. These lesions are very painful, and affected cats may paw at their mouths, drool and refuse to eat.

Another common problem is fractured teeth from playing with stones or chewing on bones - these can be very painful especially if the pulp is exposed. If seen within 48 hours 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 Feilding now has a dental x-ray machine! This is a great tool as we can look at the tooth roots to decide whether we really do need to remove a suspicious tooth. Believe it or not dentists worldwide, human and animal, don't enjoy pulling teeth out, and we don't like to do it unless we have to!





The Coat of Confidence

Jessica Holly, feat. Storm

Does your animal suffer from anxiety? Does your cat or dog get nervous around firework season? Is the trip to the vet one you normally dread?

Let me introduce you to the Thundershirt. Thundershirts are drug free, and work by providing constant gentle pressure to the animal's torso, which results in a calming

effect (similar to swaddling a baby). Scientific studies exploring the effectiveness of Thundershirts have reported 80% success rate from families whose pets are wearing them. Storm is a domestic longhair cat who is a full supporter of the Feline Thundershirt. Storm's parents call it her "Coat of confidence". She wears the Thundershirt to the vets, cattery and when people come around for cups of tea. The Thundershirt has improved Storm's anxiety and makes her feel calmer in otherwise stressful situations. Totally Vets have Thundershirts in stock for your canine and feline companions. Storm was pleased they had one in grey, which did not clash with her overall dress sense.

PICK OF THE LITTER

Royal Canin Dental Diets – Buy One Get One Free!

When your pet has a dental procedure during the month of August, you can buy a bag of Royal Canin Dental food and receive a second bag of the same size for free!

All Royal Canin dental diets are a complete and balanced food meaning they can be fed long term, and are available for both cats and dogs. The size and coarseness of the kibble provides a brushing action as your pet chews, and they have included a compound that helps reduce tartar formation. These diets are often effective at removing mild tartar, and are wonderful as an aid to slow down the return of tartar after a dental clean and polish.



Early tetanus – note the ears pulled right up.

Tetanus in dogs

Helen Sheard

Tetanus is – fortunately! – an uncommon problem in dogs. The bacteria which causes tetanus (*Clostridium tetani*) can lie dormant in the soil for many years. It usually enters the body through an open wound, especially one contaminated with soil.

Once the bacteria is established it starts producing a toxin which affects the local nerves, spreading up the nerve fibres and eventually reaching the brain. The toxin causes the nerves to tell muscle fibres to contract – to go into tetany – so the first signs are muscle tension and stiffness in the affected area. For example if a wound on a toe becomes infected, the early signs may be a stiff stilted gait in that limb. As the toxin spreads further stiffness can develop in all four limbs (sawhorse stance) and cause a stiff elevated tail. Contraction of the facial muscles results in elevated ears, sunken eyes, third eyelids protruding and sometimes a sardonic grin as the lips are pulled back. The early signs may be subtle and easily missed. Death can result through contraction of the diaphragm and heart muscle. If the signs are only slowly progressive then the prognosis is much better, though the effects of the toxin can last up to 6 weeks. Treatment involves high doses of antibiotics, and tetanus anti-toxin. Severely affected dogs may also need IV fluids and nutritional support as they may not be able to open their mouths through the muscle contraction (hence the colloquial name 'lockjaw'). There is no vaccine available for dogs simply because it is such an uncommon disease. Cats may also be affected by tetanus but it is rarely seen as they are much more resistant.

Stop Your Begging!

Sandy Fitzgerald

Begging is a learned behaviour and a dog only needs to be rewarded once for it to become a habit – only once do you need to offer a scrap off your plate to turn your pup into an annoying or demanding beggar. Dogs won't remember the nine out of ten times that begging didn't pay off, only the ONE time that did.

Solution! The best way to avoid begging is to never reward for it. If the mistake has already been made, don't despair! With patience this behavioural issue can be eradicated. Note that dogs may 'up the ante' and whine, bark or

growl when you first stop pandering to their begging.

Ideas about eating before your dog to establish 'dominance' are now a little outdated, but are still seen as a good way to set yourself as the one in charge of the valuable resource that is food. As long as you are happy that you have a healthy balanced relationship with your dog, and he is obedient, then don't get too concerned about this aspect.

Use 'down', 'stay' or 'mat' commands to keep your dog away from the table while you eat. Once you are finished you can reward them for staying away. If they act aggressively (demand barking) or whine, place them in another room or outside with the curtains closed so they can't see you. Don't let them back in until the table is cleared.

Another option is to teach them the 'Away' command, and use a hand gesture to signal them to move off. Don't forget to reward them when they move away. Once they are familiar with this command, start using it at mealtimes when they get too close.

Behavioural issues?

Come see Sandy at the Feilding clinic – she's amazing!

- Editor.



Weight Loss in our Senior Pets

Suzanne Lane

As our pets age, we may notice they are looking thinner than usual. We may think weight loss is part of the natural aging process, but this is not always the case. A number of medical conditions can cause our pets to lose weight but with appropriate treatment some of these conditions can be successfully managed to maintain a healthy and happy pet.

Causes of weight loss can be varied, from worms, food allergy or dental disease through to heart, kidney, liver, gastrointestinal or urinary tract disease. Some of the more common diseases afflicting the elderly patient include: hyperthyroidism (over-active thyroid gland) in cats, diabetes, arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, liver, kidney and heart disease, and cancer.

Clinical signs which may help your vet with their diagnosis include your pet's eating, drinking, and toileting habits, and whether there is any vomiting, coughing or retching. Further questions which might be asked include whether their breathing is normal, if they are as active as usual, how long weight loss has been occurring and whether there is any access to toxins.

On physical examination there may be obvious abnormalities such as an abnormal heart beat, enlarged thyroid gland or decaying teeth. To gain a full picture of your pet's health status (or if the cause is not obvious on clinical exam) additional diagnostics such as blood testing, urine and faecal samples, x-rays or ultrasound may be indicated. Some disease processes may be simply treated (such as worming for parasites or performing dental extractions on decaying teeth); others may require life long therapy such as heart disease and hyperthyroidism.

To help manage our pets through their senior years (8 years and older), we offer six-monthly and annual health check ups so we can recognise and treat disorders early.

PICK OF THE LITTER

Chomp and Chew

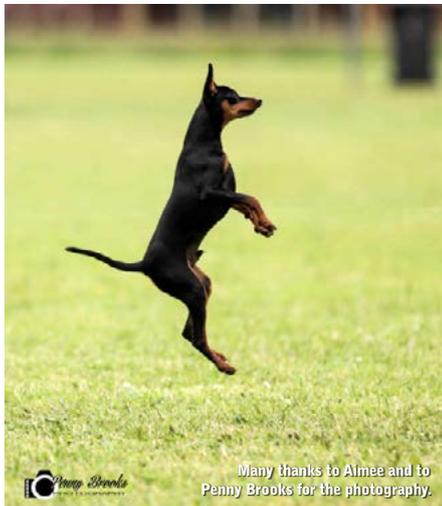
Dental chews are one of the many ways you can keep your pet's mouth healthy. For dogs that don't chew their normal biscuits much (think Labradors here!) or are on a jellimeat or dog-roll diet, giving them something to chew can help keep tartar at bay. Greenies and Vegedents are two such treats we have in stock. They are very firm but completely edible and the shape is designed to best rub against teeth. Greenies are also available for cats!

If you do give your dog bones instead, make sure they are big cannon bones that don't have bits that can be chewed off, and remove the bone as soon as the meat is gone. They should also be raw so they don't splinter. Ideally monitor your pets when they are eating any treat!



Breed Profile - the Miniature Pinscher

Aimee Hamlin



The Miniature Pinscher was originally bred as a house 'ratting' dog and is widely accepted to have evolved from the ancient German Pinscher family of dogs (Pinscher meaning 'Terrier'). It is a far older breed than, and unrelated to, the Dobermann despite commonly being mistaken for a smaller version of them!

They are a small (10-12" at the shoulder), compact, short-coated dog whose ears may be erect or dropped. They come in a variety of colours with Black & Tan and Red being most common. When they move they are distinguished by their distinctive 'Hackney Gait', and a lively and animated attitude, often leading to them being referred to as the "King Of Toys".

A Min Pin is a real character and when well cared for and properly socialised will give you

hours of hilarity well into their teens. Fearless, intensely curious and full of vigor, they are like 'living with toddlers that never grow up' and are not a beginner's breed. They need to investigate everything and will go to great lengths to do so - so they need secure fencing, entertaining, training and watching. They can succeed at any and all disciplines (depending on their mood on any particular day), and when raised with gentle children they adore them. They are excellent guard dogs - nothing gets past a Min Pin. Ever.

Min Pins are generally very healthy, however it's important to remember that they are an inquisitive small dog and injuries such as broken bones from leaping from heights or being stepped upon can happen. They're a fairly rare breed in New Zealand and should be checked for patella luxation as a minimum and should only be obtained from reputable breeders to ensure good sound temperaments, appropriate health testing and supportive advice.

Glaucoma in our pets

Jeanette Parsons

Have you been to the optometrist and had a puff of air blown into each eye? This checks the pressure within your eye, and tests for glaucoma.

Glaucoma occurs when the fluid that is normally produced within the eye is not able to exit through its usual drainage system. In a healthy eye, the fluid keeps the eye inflated, and when it can't drain correctly, pressure builds up within the eye and can cause blindness. Unfortunately our pets can develop glaucoma also.

In our animal friends, glaucoma often occurs quite quickly, and there may be irreversible damage to the eye before we even recognise the signs. Symptoms include a painful red eye that is sensitive to light, a cloudy cornea and a dilated pupil. The high pressure within the eye damages the optic nerve and retina causing blindness, and makes the affected eye larger.

Primary, or inherited, glaucoma occurs when the drainage system in the eye has not been formed correctly. This is the most common cause in dogs. Breeds genetically predisposed to this include the Bassett Hound, American and English Cocker and Springer Spaniels, and Poodles. Primary glaucoma may initially occur in just one eye, but often develops in the second eye within 12 months.

Secondary glaucoma occurs as a result of other problems within the eye, including lens problems, uveitis (inflammation of the iris) and cancer, and is more common in cats.

Sudden onset of glaucoma symptoms is a medical emergency. Treatment aims to reduce the pressure within the eye by decreasing fluid production and improving drainage, and must include treatment of any underlying causes.

If your pet has any of the symptoms of glaucoma, please make an appointment immediately, even if it is out of business hours. The more quickly the disease is identified and treated, the better the chance of saving your pet's vision.



New Feilding clinic opening hours:

Monday and Tuesday 8am - 6pm
Wednesday 8am - 7pm
Thursday and Friday 8am - 6pm
Saturday 9am - 4pm
Sunday 10am - 12pm
by appointment only.

Feilding small animal after hours care is being provided by Massey University Companion Animal Hospital.