



VET mates

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT YOUR PETS

AUGUST 2013



SPECIAL OFFER August is National Pet Dental Month. So...

... Totally Vets is offering a 20% discount* off all dental procedures performed during the month of August 2013.

To take advantage of this great offer, simply give us a call at either the Feilding (06 323 6161) or Taumarunui (07 895 8899) clinics, and one of our friendly reception staff will help you make an appointment.



PET DENTAL MONTH

*This flyer must be cut out and presented to Totally Vets on the day of the dental procedure to be eligible for the discount.

See inside for more dentistry articles and competitions

Are all dogs the same, just packaged differently?

Sandy Fitzgerald

While all breeds are similar in their pure intelligence, there are enormous differences between breeds for the development of certain characteristics - for example, all dogs have the potential to display "aggression" but some are much easier to stimulate into this reaction than others.

When choosing a dog, you should not only look at the genetic behaviour of the dog and its breed, but also their individual and breed-related energy levels. More often than not, people who struggle with "problem dogs" simply have the wrong type of dog for them and their lifestyle. The New Zealand Kennel Club categorises breeds into the following groups - Toy, Terrier, Gun Dog, Hound, Working Dog, Utility and Non-sporting Dog - and in order to make an informed decision, you need to look at each category carefully, their origins and what they were bred for, and what they require in order to successfully fit into modern life. Visit www.nzkc.org.nz for more information on the breed categories.

You must be aware that you can never prevent a dog from being what it is genetically predisposed to be - the way it thinks, its body shape and size and how it acts - because inbred postures and behaviours feel good to a dog. They are internally motivating and internally rewarding; this means the reward is not in the environment, but in the dog itself.

The most important point is that the animal's breed should always be considered - don't just choose a dog based on looks. 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/energy requirements. So long as the breed element of the dog is satisfied in a healthy way, the dog has more of a chance to be, and remain, happy, balanced and safe. When these hard-wired instincts and desires are not fulfilled, this is where behavioural problems will start to occur. When choosing a breed, you should make sure that it will fit into your lifestyle, and don't choose a dog that has a higher demand for energy and exercise that you are willing or able to give.

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 - this way you can gain the 'greatest friend in the world' for life.

Your vet is also a dentist

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 can cause problems if not kept clean and tidy.

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 (that furry feeling) which if left untreated, forms tartar (a mixture of saliva, minerals, food and bacteria). The gums can then become infected and bleed (gingivitis) which can cause the structures holding the teeth in place to become inflamed and destroyed (periodontitis), 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 (halitosis), have 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.

The other common problem is fractured teeth from playing with stones and other very hard objects - fractured teeth 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 root tooth abscess.

See Sarah's article for some easy ways to help care for your pet's teeth at home.

Virbac Dental

Here's something to smile about!



WIN
a years supply of dental products* for your pet!

PLUS
every clinic winner goes into the national draw to win a \$300 Lumino The Dentists voucher.

Purchase any product from the Virbac C.E.T., Aquadent or VeggieDent range between the 1st of August and the 13th of September 2013 and go into your clinics draw to win a years supply of dental products* for your pet!

*Terms and Conditions apply. See back of entry form for details. Offer only available at selected Veterinary Clinics.

Virbac passionate about animal health. www.virbac.co.nz



The West Highland White - or "Westie"

Helen Ryan

The story goes that the West Highland White Terrier, or "Westie" as they are commonly known, came about from breeding the white puppies thrown from Scottish and Cairn Terriers. A sprinkle of other terriers added to the mix gave us the breed we have today.

The Westie has a BIG personality and character. This little dog seems to have no idea of its true size and in their minds they are equal to the Great Dane and twice as handsome! This attitude means that their temperament can vary greatly. These dogs need a loving and firm hand, but can be known to snap if they are roughly handled or bullied. For this reason, they are not always the best choice if there are young children in the house.

Their independence and self-confidence can mean they can be somewhat stubborn. This can obviously lead to problems with training as they may not always agree with how their owner sees things. Training needs to be started when they are very young and kept fun and

positive or they can quickly become bored and unresponsive. They have a typical terrier prey-drive which means they love chasing balls - this can be a great source of exercise, however they also like to bark and dig holes. Digging under a fence to go on a great adventure is not unheard of.

Westies have a double-coat of hard hair on top and soft thick fur underneath. Although they do not shed their coat, they need to be groomed regularly to remove dead hair and keep their coat clean.

Health-wise they are prone to several problems, the most common being skin conditions. Atopic dermatitis is a very common heritable, chronic, allergic skin condition that tends to affect a higher proportion of males to females. This unfortunately is a problem that can only be managed and not cured. Affected dogs are often on special diets and medications throughout their lives. This issue on its own should be considered seriously before deciding to own this breed of dog.

This little character is not for the inexperienced or sedentary owner. The Westie is a bundle of energy with big ideas, so you are going to need to be on the ball to keep up with them.

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.





Home dental care for cats and dogs with bad teeth

Sarah Clarke

Several pet food companies make 'dental diets', which are an effective way of maintaining healthy gums and preventing tartar build-up. For those on a budget, these diets can also be effective by feeding them 3 or 4

times a week (every other day). There are prescription diets as well as over-the-counter options.

Dogs often enjoy chewing on bones, which is a cheap and practical alternative to buying dog treats. The key point here is to make sure the bones are too big to be swallowed (i.e. large cannon bones only)... or they can create another problem altogether. Bones should have just enough meat to keep your dog interested, and you should take the bone away once the meat has been chewed off. It is the scraping of the dog's teeth on the bones that helps reduce tartar and keep gums healthy.

For dental chews/treats to be beneficial for dogs, they must spend at least 2 minutes

chewing on them. If your dog eats them fast or swallows them whole, then they will not have time to achieve the benefits they are designed to offer. Some companies also make dental treats for cats - these are also a good choice, but cats can be notoriously fussy eaters.

The last product to mention here is water additives; these are an excellent alternative for pets that don't like chewing on toys or treats. Water additives contain a dilute antibacterial solution that is clinically proven to reduce bacterial levels in the mouth, reducing breath odour and tartar build-up. These products are recommended as they are affordable, effective and easy to use - just pop a capful into your pet's drinking water each day and your preventative treatment is sorted.

Arthritis - inflammation of the joints

Debbie Asplin

Arthritis is a common disease which can affect animals at any age, but is usually seen in our 'oldies'.

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 pets can include:

- Trouble getting up in the morning
- Limping

- A reluctance to walk, climb or jump
- Decreased activity and/or sleeping more
- Restlessness, or finding it hard to get comfortable
- Lagging behind on a walk
- Painful to touch/handle
- 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 on an appropriate pain management protocol. Please be sure to never give human medications to your pet before speaking with your vet.
- Acupuncture is quite a painless procedure and has shown to be effective in some cases.
- Stem cell therapy is a new and expensive technique that is currently emerging in veterinary medicine.
- 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 helpful. 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.

The what's what of small animal nutrition

Rebekah Willink

We are pleased to announce our second small animal client seminar - on the topic of dog and cat nutrition.

- What's really in our pet food, and should we care?
- Nutritional requirements and nutritional value - what does this mean, why is it important and how do we work this out to compare products?

- Making sense of labels - ingredient lists, feeding guidelines and claims etc.
- What is 'complete and balanced'?
- What to look for when wanting to feed the best nutrition for your pet, including value for money.
- Homemade vs. wet vs. dry vs. mixed vs. raw...
- Is 'life-stage specific' or breed size important?

We are very fortunate to have Nick Cave present this seminar to you. Nick is a senior lecturer in small animal medicine and nutrition at the Institute of Veterinary, Animal and Biomedical Sciences at Massey University - he really is an expert in his field and a very engaging speaker!

WHEN	Tuesday 24th September 2013
WHERE	Totally Vets Feilding clinic seminar room
WHAT TIME	7:00pm
HOW MUCH	Nothing - it's absolutely free!
RSVP	To the Feilding clinic reception team by Tuesday 17th September 2013

Don't delay, RSVP today - places will be reserved on a first-in first-served basis. We very much look forward to seeing you there.

My adventure to the 'big smoke'

Kayla Houghton

"As I approached the cage I heard some frantic scurrying and by the time I could see inside the enclosure I could only actually see one of two dogs.

The first dog looked as though he wanted to be swallowed up into the wall - he was slunk down, his bulging eyes were diverted and his emaciated body was pressed hard against the brick enclosure. This dog was known as 'Snoopy'. The second dog was nowhere to be seen, but the pile of quivering blankets gave away his location. This dog was known as 'Golem'. These two dogs had been removed from a dog-hoarding situation and were completely and utterly un-socialised to people. They were the first dogs of many that I was fortunate enough to work with during my three-month dog training internship at the San Francisco SPCA.

While at the SPCA, I worked with many dogs; those that needed some basic training and also those that needed behaviour modification

- these included dogs that were extremely fearful, dogs that had handling issues, dogs that were reactive on the lead and dogs that were rude, jumpy and/or mouthy. I also had the privilege of being able to sit in on, and assist in, the public training classes at the SPCA which included nose-work, 'Reactive Rover', puppy manners, basic obedience, dog play-group and puppy enrichment classes.

The training plans I put together for Golem and Snoopy helped change two feral dogs that were in a constant state of fear, into dogs that would wiggle their entire bodies in happiness when they saw me, or anyone else, approaching their cage - they are gentle, sweet and they just crave attention. The contrast between the first day I met them and now is huge, and it warms my heart whenever I think about them.

The San Francisco SPCA is a hub of knowledge and I have made many friends who I know I can call on if I ever come across a dog I don't know how to help. For me, the goal of going on this internship was to learn skills that I could bring back to New Zealand to help dogs and owners work together in a way that would strengthen their relationship and make it more enjoyable. I feel like the SPCA has given me the tools to be able to do this and I thank Totally Vets for supporting me wholeheartedly in my journey to develop my passion and knowledge in canine behaviour."

