



VET mates

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT YOUR PETS

NOVEMBER 2013



Who's been a good boy then...?

Treat your cats and dogs this Christmas to their very own present, ready and waiting for them underneath the tree on Christmas morning.

Each gift is beautifully wrapped and contains a selection of toys and treats specially chosen for your four-legged friend...

...all for only \$8.00 each!

Presents are available for purchase from 1 December 2013, from the Feilding branch only

TOTALLY VETS WOULD LIKE TO WISH YOU ALL A VERY SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO BEING OF CONTINUED SERVICE TO YOU IN 2014.

The importance of puppy socialisation

Kayla Houghton

From the very moment you choose your puppy, the urgency of socialising and training has already begun.

An adult dog's temperament and behaviour habits (both good and bad) are shaped during puppyhood - very early puppyhood. Did you know it takes a human baby 13 years to get to the same point of maturity that a puppy takes only a year or less to get to?*

The term 'socialisation' means exposing your puppy to new people, animals, places and experiences in a positive way. We never want our puppy to be frightened by new things so we shouldn't push them into situations they are uncomfortable with. If we do push them over their threshold, they may develop a life-long fear of that stimulus.

Here is a common example: Emma takes her 10 week-old puppy Maddie to a friend's house for a play date - they have two bouncy Labradors that bound over to say hello. Maddie is frightened by this and hides behind Emma's legs. Emma tells the puppy not to be scared and pushes her out to play. The dogs bounce all over her, and playfully hit her with their paws.

The next time Maddie sees an adult dog she remembers how they hit her with their scary paws and she feels she needs to keep herself safe, so she growls and snaps at them in fear.

While both socialisation and basic training are very important we have to keep in mind that there is a very limited window of opportunity to socialise a puppy, so it is essential for owners to be proactive and not put the task off "for another day". Most puppies go to their new home between 8-12 weeks of age and the puppy socialisation period ends at around 16 weeks. This means we have a maximum of only two months to expose them in a positive way to as many things as we can.

Totally Vets runs a very popular Puppy Preschool where owners learn lots of valuable information, puppies begin to learn basic obedience and most importantly they receive lots of positive experiences of the vet clinic, of new people and of other puppies. Even for the most experienced dog owner, we recommend that every new puppy should attend a Puppy Preschool. Even if you have taken a previous puppy to class and learned the information, your new puppy will benefit hugely from the socialisation they will receive by attending. It is a common misconception that a new puppy will gain adequate socialisation from a resident adult dog at home. While they may form a strong bond and become the best of friends, this adult dog is a familiar family member and may not help your puppy to learn vital socialisation skills for meeting and interacting with new dogs and puppies.

Start your puppy off on the right paw - book in to our Puppy Preschool today.

*FROM BEFORE YOU GET YOUR PUPPY, BY IAN DUNBAR

Holiday vaccination reminder

As many of you plan your summer holidays, your pets are oblivious to theirs!

If your pets are going to the boarding kennels or cattery this summer, ensure you find out

from your particular 'pet hotel' exactly which vaccinations they require, well before you get there.

If your pet hasn't been previously vaccinated and depending on his or her age, they may require an initial course of two to three vaccinations, three to four weeks apart to ensure full protection. It is therefore important to ensure you allow enough time for these before your holiday.

Most boarding kennels require dogs to be up-to-date with their routine vaccinations but

some require an additional vaccination to help protect against canine contagious cough - a respiratory tract infection which causes a dry hacking cough that can last for several weeks. We strongly recommend vaccinating against this disease. The kennel cough intranasal vaccine works very quickly and should be given at least 3 days before boarding.

Most catteries also require your cat to be up-to-date with vaccinations and all routine vaccinations in dogs and cats should be given at least two weeks before boarding.

PICK OF THE LITTER Nutro Natural Choice cat and dog food

- Real chicken, lamb or venison meat as the number one ingredient
- No corn, corn gluten meal or wheat
- No added colours, flavours or preservatives
- 100% money back guarantee

NOVEMBER DEAL!



Cat food

\$10 off all sizes, all formulas



Dog food

\$10 off 2.2kg and 6.8kg bags, all formulas

The big C

Suzanne Lane

Cancer forms in the body when normal cells go "haywire". Normally the body has specific processes and cells in place to kill off abnormal cells - it is when this fails that cancer results.

Any organ of the body can be affected - the skin, mouth, tongue, ears, eyes, internal organs, bone, blood... the list goes on. Some forms of cancer may occur as lumps which can either be benign (non-spreading, but locally growing), or metastatic (spread to other places like the lungs or lymph nodes). Cancers of internal organs may affect the animal in ways which show clinically as changes in their eating and drinking habits, vomiting or diarrhoea, weight loss, difficulty breathing or a change in behaviour.

Sometimes a diagnosis of cancer can be identified during an initial physical examination in a consult but sometimes further diagnostic tests are required such as blood tests, x-rays, aspirates or biopsies of lumps or ultrasound. Some types of cancer require thorough work-ups to "stage" the cancer (determining severity and/or prognosis) and decide how treatment should proceed.

Treatments can involve surgical removal of a diseased organ or lump, or may require

anti-cancer drug therapy. Some forms of drug treatment appear to have little side-effects (such as the medication given to hyperthyroid cats who have a cancerous thyroid nodule). However some forms of cancer therapy involve closer monitoring such as treatment of patients with lymphoma, a form of white blood cell cancer. In these patients, chemotherapy is required. Although our small animal pets don't lose their hair coat with these drugs, they may feel nausea and require regular check-ups and blood cell counts to ensure that their white blood cells (immune cells) aren't lowering too much.

Osteosarcoma (bone cancer) is most frequently diagnosed in large breed dogs and it can develop in any bone, but more commonly occurs in the limbs. Initial signs can include intermittent, progressing to constant lameness, with pain and swelling as the tumour grows. Affected bones become weak and can break with minor injury. It has a high rate of spreading to the lungs, lymph nodes and adjacent soft tissues or bone. Treatment options can range from palliative care (pain relief management) to surgical amputation of the affected limb or a combination of surgical amputation and chemotherapy. The latter options can extend survival time for up to 1-3 years if combined with chemotherapy.

Ensuring regular health-check appointments is an important part of helping your four-legged friend to remain happy and healthy for as long as possible. If you notice anything 'out of the ordinary' with your pet, please don't hesitate to seek advice - as always, we are here to help.

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.





Have you ever considered pet insurance?

Rebekah Willink

Advances in veterinary medicine mean 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 pet's healthcare. It will 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.

There are multiple pet insurance companies in New Zealand, all of which offer a variety of policies to suit your needs and budget - and premiums can start from as little as just \$30.00 per month.



SPECIAL CASE 'Shyla-the-miracle-foot-healing-dog'

Rebekah Willink

Shyla, a 1½ year-old female Huntaway presented to the Feilding clinic with, as Suzanne described it to me, 'the most horrible foot you've ever seen!'

We didn't know how Shyla had managed to injure herself, but she arrived with a large cut/wound on the underside of her left hind paw which ran from one side to the other. Amongst all the pus, you could see right down inside her foot and visualise the tendons in the foot as they ran off up her leg. Her foot had swollen

to about three times its normal size and there was so much infection present that pus had burst out two holes on the top of her foot between the toes. It was fair to say Shyla's foot was pretty smelly.

Straight away Shyla was started on two types of strong antibiotics (along with pain relief medication) and as we were initially concerned about a "flesh-eating" bacterium, a wound swab was sent for culture at the laboratory.

The results later returned showing that there were five different types of bacteria present - but luckily nothing that couldn't be managed with broad-spectrum antibiotic cover.

Because the wound was so badly infected, it was impossible to repair surgically, so we started managing it with careful cleaning and wound dressings. The dressings we first chose to use were designed to draw out bacteria and adhere to infected tissue so that when the dressing was changed, this tissue was removed. Shyla had to be sedated for dressing changes so that we didn't cause her any unnecessary pain or discomfort. There was initial concern that her foot was so badly infected, her leg may have required amputation - but Shyla's owner was willing to give her a chance and much to our surprise there was a visible improvement in the first 24 hours.

For the first 8 or 9 days, Shyla had her dressing changed daily. After this time, it was clear that we were "winning" and the wound was looking fantastic, so the dressing type was changed to one that promoted new tissue growth and wasn't so painful to remove.

We trialled a dressing change without sedation, and Shyla was a superstar patient! Shyla's body was busy making new granulation tissue and the wound was slowly shrinking in size and healing before our eyes. Once we got to the point of not needing to change the dressing every day Shyla went home with strict instructions to keep her foot clean and dry, and return to us for dressing changes every 2-3 days.

Almost a month after we first met her, we finally decided that 'Shyla-the-miracle-foot-healing-dog' was done with bandaging and her foot had healed well enough to be left uncovered. She returned to see us another week later and you'd never know she almost lost her foot - the healing power of the body is simply amazing!



Guinea Pigs (cavies)

Helen Ryan

If you've been in to the Feilding clinic recently you may have noticed our resident guinea pigs on show.

Our current guinea pigs are a mother and daughter pair and it's been great to be able to watch the mum through her pregnancy, and see the resulting babies - they are absolute characters.

The thing I found most fascinating about guinea pig babies is that they come out looking exactly like a smaller version of their parents - they have a complete coat and their eyes are open. They only need to receive the sow's milk for approximately 5 days and they can start eating solids within a few hours. They produce litter sizes ranging from 1-6 pups, which are born after an average gestation period of 63

days. The thing to be very careful about is that pups are sexually mature from 6 weeks of age which means that the boys need to have been separated from the girls by this age. It is best that sows do not breed until they are at least 4 months old and to avoid any unplanned pregnancies they should be kept in same sex groups.

Guinea pigs should be fed a variety of foods to not only provide their nutritional requirements (they require Vitamin C to be added to their diet) but to avoid them getting fussy later on as they have little tolerance to food changes. We feed broccoli, carrots, apple, fresh grass, hay, pellets and plenty of fresh water.

There are many different hutch designs for a guinea pig. The main criteria are that they are protected from damp and draught and have sufficient room to exercise. Guinea pigs can be housed outdoors in New Zealand during the warmer months as long as the hutch has an area that has plenty of warm bedding and is insulated. They need to have somewhere to hide and make sure there is a toilet area separate from the sleeping and bedding areas.



Some interesting facts about guinea pigs:

- Guinea pigs are originally from South America and are not actually related to pigs
- Most rodents are nocturnal, but the guinea pig is not
- When happy, guinea pigs can purr like a cat
- Like pigs - the male is called a boar, the female is called a sow but the babies are called pups

Pop in and see our guinea pigs next time you are passing - they'd love to meet you.

The importance of the right start...

Helen Sheard

'Hoon' is now an 8 month-old Bearded X Huntaway with long legs, a fast run and showing lots of natural talent. At 6 weeks-old however he was nearly put to sleep because his hind legs were bandy, he was in pain when he walked, his kneecaps clicked in and out and he was knuckling over on his front legs.

The reason? He was being fed an inappropriate diet of weet-bix and cow's milk, and was absolutely chock full of intestinal

worms. After only 2 months of being fed a commercial large breed puppy diet and being wormed regularly, his legs were straight, and he was no longer in pain when he walked.

The white dotted lines show the bowing of the femur and tibia (thigh bone and shin bone) from behind. In this view you can also see the knuckling over in the front right leg.

From the side, you can see the relative disproportion of the leg bones - the femur (yellow line) is shorter than it should be, resulting in a very upright leg and unstable knee. The blue line follows the tibia.

This highlights the importance of starting any puppy off right - not just working dogs. Commercial puppy diets are balanced in calcium and phosphorus for the correct rate of bone growth, and have adequate energy to meet puppies requirements.

Toxocara roundworms can lie dormant in the muscle tissues of the bitch until she whelps; the roundworm larvae then migrate to the mammary glands infecting the puppies as soon

as they feed. For this reason, we recommend starting a worm treatment programme when puppies are two weeks old - treating every two weeks until they are 12 weeks-old, then monthly until they are 6 months-old. After this, three-monthly worming is recommended for life, along with adult dogs.

