



VET mates

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT YOUR PETS

NOVEMBER 2014



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...

...priced from just \$9.50 each!

Presents are available for purchase from 1 December 2014, 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 2015.

Emergency! ... or not?

Sally Browning

Have you ever been at the vet clinic in the small hours of the morning for something that wasn't as bad as it seemed? Wouldn't it be great to have a better idea of what is considered urgent and how to tell when your pet does need emergency attention?

Some definite 'see the vet now' indicators include seizures, fainting or collapse, or any suspected poisoning, including antifreeze, rodent or possum poison and snail bait. Cats in particular can be fatally sensitive to insecticides such as flea-control medications that are safe for dogs, petroleum-based products or certain medications.

Cats can also suffer from lower urinary tract disorders. If your cat seems to be uncomfortable, is crying or distressed, is straining and passing only a few drops or no urine, take it directly to the emergency vet. Unblocking the urinary tract is a life-saving procedure.

Cat fights are a fact of life. If the fight has just occurred and your cat seems fine, you are probably safe to wait and see your vet the following day. If your cat is extremely distressed, or has received an obvious eye

injury (to the inside lid or globe of the eye), this is an emergency. Sometimes an alarmed owner is confronted with a burst, pusy abscess which developed from a fight. As long as your pet is well in itself, this is not an emergency. Make your cat as comfortable as possible and book an appointment at the vet clinic for the next day.

Sometimes situations that might not seem urgent really are, such as eye injuries or allergic reactions with swelling around the face. More than two or three episodes of diarrhoea or vomiting within an hour or so could also indicate a problem, as well as any breathing difficulty or extreme lethargy.

Animals can sometimes 'seem fine' after traumatic accidents, such as being hit by a car. If the accident seemed serious, even if your pet looks fine, you should take them to a vet immediately as internal injuries can result in death if left untreated. Animals are often better at hiding illness than humans, and can be in shock or have serious injuries without showing any obvious signs.

While it may be possible to wait until your regular vet is available, put yourself in your pet's place - don't let him/her suffer. If you're in doubt about the seriousness of a problem, please give us a call at Totally Vets. Remember that it's better to make a trip you needn't have made, than to miss the one you should have made.

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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.

Lactating bitches, milk fever and oral calcium supplements

Sally Browning

Bitches have a huge demand for calcium in the very last stages of pregnancy when the puppy's bones harden, during uterine contractions when giving birth and when lactating. Calcium is pulled from the bones to supply this demand in normal pregnancy and lactation and also the gut becomes more efficient at using calcium in the diet.

Problems can occur if the normal diet is poor or unbalanced (calcium/phosphorous balance is incorrect), if the bitch goes off her food in late pregnancy, or if the owner mistakenly supplements calcium during pregnancy, as this switches off the normal mechanism to pull calcium from the bones. Problems occur most often in small dogs, very large litters and usually in the first 21-45 days of milk production.

Eclampsia or milk fever is caused by low blood calcium - signs include panting, muscles tremors, stiff gait, anxiety, aggression and a raised temperature. Severe cases have seizures, coma and possible death. Any of these signs in a lactating bitch are an emergency and need urgent veterinary attention.

ADVICE TO OWNERS

1. Feed a good quality maintenance food during pregnancy then introduce premium small breed puppy food as lactation establishes. Avoid all-meat diets or organ meats as these have an incorrect calcium/phosphorous balance.
2. Feed smaller more frequent feeds in late pregnancy. Free feed premium puppy food while feeding puppies unless the bitch is fat.
3. Consider oral calcium supplement in dogs that refuse to eat the above - after birth not before!
4. Use calcium supplement after veterinary treatment for milk fever and in any subsequent litter a bitch has, if she has had previous episodes.
5. Start to wean pups from 4 weeks old and consider partial hand feeding of very large litters to ease the pressure on mum.



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.

SPECIAL CASE

Beautiful Bear

Debbie Asplin

We first met Bear, a 3 year-old Golden Retriever, after a stormy Friday night - his gate had blown open in and he was found walking himself back home. He wasn't really using his right hind leg and was walking round in circles.

When he arrived at the clinic Bear couldn't walk at all. He was quite subdued and had a bump and grazes to his head. After a thorough examination all Bear's vital signs were ok and he could feel his hind legs but couldn't make them work. Bear was immediately given ongoing pain relief, antibiotics and IV fluids for shock treatment. We also took blood samples, and then x-rays to check for fractures and/or chest injuries. Bear was kept close by for constant monitoring but as the day went on his mentation got progressively worse.

Sunday: Bear could move from side to side while lying down but when we tried to have him stand this made him groan and feel nauseous. Vet Suzanne's thoughts were now pointing toward vestibular disease/head injury due to his initial walking in circles, nausea and weak legs. Several anti-nausea medications were now added to the treatment plan.

Monday: While Bear was out for his examination he wobbled to his feet and walked! Although very unsteady and still intermittently circling, this was very much an improvement. He still did not like being lifted and continued to appear restless and circle in his cage unless settled.

Tuesday: Bear was telling us he had a really bad headache! He was put into a dark quiet space, he had to be forced to eat but his tail wagged! As he tried to do more, it was very obvious he got worn out easily.

Wednesday: He was still wobbly with his walking but had improved, and there was less circling today.

Thursday: Bear had eaten all his food himself overnight, went outside and cocked his leg



to go to the toilet and was almost walking normally!

Friday: Bear went home for his human sister's birthday!

Bear and his family were a pleasure to deal with and to this date he has made a 99% recovery, he is just sometimes a little slow sometimes with responding to commands.

STAFF NEWS

A Travel Log from Sally

Some of you may have noticed that I have been away for a while - I was fortunate enough to have a six week break from vet clinic life to indulge in my other passion; equestrian sports.

I travelled to Normandy, France for the World Equestrian Games with a group of other enthusiastic spectators to support our Kiwi eventers, sole show jumper, para dressage rider and vaulting team. While the riders did not leave with any medals this time, it was fantastic to be there to wave the silver fern and cheer them on. The riders from all over the world put on a wonderful feast of sport that I was privileged to witness.

Normandy is a very beautiful part of the world with a significant place in history - I learned a lot about the scars that WWII has left on the



A snap of Andrew Nicholson, NZ representative 3-day eventer.

environment and in people's hearts and seeing history is certainly different from learning about it in dusty books at school! The courage of all those brave men and women involved in liberating Europe from tyranny deserve our unreserved thanks and praise.

I also enjoyed visiting the many abbeys and chateaus that are in abundance everywhere. Mont St. Michel was a particular highlight. The French dedication to the art of pastry making was also pretty good!

After a quick visit to England to visit relatives and see 'Warhorse' in London, I flew home via Dubai for a few nights. What a contrast! The city has no history and has risen out of the desert in amazing fashion. I really liked its energy and fusion of many cultures into a vibrant exciting place to visit.

So now I am back, feeling refreshed and enthusiastic to see you all again soon.

Straining to go - number one vs. number two

Suzanne Lane

We often get queries from clients about what to do when they see their pet straining. Some things we may need to know are if the animal is straining to pass urine or faeces (which can sometimes be a tricky question to answer), is the animal a girl or a boy, and how long they have been straining for.

“NUMBER ONES”

The inability to urinate can be life-threatening. The bladder fills like a balloon and can eventually pop or become overstretched so that the nerves in the bladder wall no longer work. Before these scenarios, electrolyte imbalances can occur, resulting in vomiting, dehydration, heart irregularities and an increased breathing pattern.

Some animals show obvious signs of difficulty by squatting or lifting their leg with nothing coming out. Some can vocalise whilst straining (cats will yowl) and some may show large tummy contractions to push something out, without result. However sometimes the signs aren't so obvious; the pet may just act out of the ordinary or become lethargic. Some signs mimic those of a urinary tract infection by the animal urinating little and often or licking at themselves excessively because they are irritated. A physical examination of the animal is necessary to determine whether it is inflammatory irritation to the bladder, or a true blockage. Other tests may be indicated such as x-rays, blood tests, intravenous fluids, urinary catheterisation and sometimes surgery.

Boys have a smaller urethral diameter than girls which means if a bladder stone is the culprit, a girl is more likely to pass the stone whereas a boy is more likely to get a stone stuck in the urethra. However both sexes can get a stone stuck in the outlet area of the bladder. Male cats can get a crystallised



or mucous plug at the end of the urethra preventing urination also.

In boy dogs prostatic enlargement can be driven by hormones or can be a result of cancer. The prostate sits between the colon and the urethra and if the prostate is large enough it can put downwards pressure on the urethra, effectively squashing it.

Other causes for urinary difficulties may be bladder or urethral cancer and spinal or pelvic injuries can result in bladder nerve injury. Trauma, foreign body, perineal hernia or dystocia in a pregnant bitch or queen can also result in urinary problems. A badly constipated animal may also have urinary issues, whereby the faeces have become so large that they are compressing down on the urethra. In this instance - the animal cannot pee or poo.

“NUMBER TWOS”

Animals will commonly present as straining but not producing anything. This can be a truly constipated dog or it may be mimicking another condition and a physical examination is required to get to the bottom of the problem (pun intended).

Anal gland concerns can mimic the signs of constipation. The animal may look to be straining, licking at themselves or scooting their bottoms along the ground. The anal glands are scent marking glands which sit in the rectal wall and their purpose is to coat faeces with the scent of the dog as a way of marking territory. These glands can become blocked or infected, and then they sit like marbles which can irritate the animal.

Large bowel diarrhoea may be mistaken for an animal trying to strain to pass faeces but in fact it is passing something, just little and often and usually runny.

Bones, carcasses, scraps, plastic bags and other foreign material can be contributing factors in the constipated dog. Dehydration can either contribute to, or result from, constipation. It can be an expensive procedure to unblock the severely constipated animal and intravenous fluids are required to rehydrate the animal and try to soften the faeces. Sometimes a full general anaesthetic is required so that an enema can be given to help break up the rock-like material, and animals can be very sore afterwards.

Animals which have received pelvic injuries from road traffic trauma can end up with narrowed pelvic canals which can affect the ability of an animal to pass a normal sized poo.

Prostatic disease can contribute to 'pooing problems' by putting pressure upwards and compressing the colon. If an animal has an enlarged prostate as a result of the dog being an entire male then we may recommend de-sexing as a solution to urinary and faecal problems.

Unfortunately some animals have repeat issues with constipation. In some instances this may be attributable to spondylosis (arthritis of the spine) or lumbosacral spinal disease - both of which make posturing to defecate difficult. This can be a double-edged sword, with the nerves involved in moving the bowel no longer working properly, and the wider the diameter of the colon meaning the larger the size of the poo which can accumulate.

Going "number ones and twos" is an important part of life. If there is doubt that your pet is toileting properly then contact us without delay.