



# VET mates

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT YOUR PETS

MARCH 2017



## Good news for cats with stress induced cystitis!

**Helen Sheard**

Hill's has added L-tryptophan to their c/d Multicare diet to create c/d Multicare Stress. L-tryptophan is an amino acid that helps alleviate anxiety and reduce stress. Studies found that there was less urine spraying and less fighting in cats living in multi-cat households when they were supplemented with L-tryptophan. Hill's c/d Multicare Stress is fine for all cats in a household to eat, even if they don't suffer from stress induced cystitis.

**Talk to your vet today!**

## Fat Cats and Portly Pooches

**Jeanette Parsons**

Like us, our furry friends can pack on the weight. This can happen for a variety of reasons, not just from sitting in front of the TV too much.

There may be a health condition contributing to the weight gain. In dogs, conditions like hypothyroidism and hyperadrenocorticism can cause your pet to put on weight through changes to their metabolism. Along with weight gain they often have other symptoms you might notice – like drinking more or peeing more, lethargy, or a change in appetite or coat. If you notice a weight gain in your pet along with other symptoms, a vet check is the best idea.

Conditions like arthritis or heart disease can indirectly cause weight gain in dogs and cats.

Joint pain or poor heart function make it harder for your pet to exercise. There may be treatments available to reduce the effect of these conditions, so again a vet check is a good idea. Reducing the amount of food offered in proportion to their reduced exercise can help. **REMEMBER**, do not put your overweight kitty on a crash diet, as this can cause a serious, sometimes life threatening condition called hepatic lipidosis.

You control the amount and type of food your pet eats. There's no point being proud of only feeding your portly pooch an inch of dog-roll a day, if the dog-roll has the highest fat content on the market. This is like eating a small portion of fish and chips at every meal – you may not be eating a large quantity, but only eating fish and chips isn't going to help you lose weight. A reduced fat dog or cat food may be beneficial. And for those animals that need to lose a larger amount of weight, there are prescription weight loss diets – like the furry version of Jenny Craig.



## PICK OF THE LITTER

# YOURS DROOLLY MIX UP DOG TREATS

A roolly yummy mixture of chicken tenders, duck sticks and chicken and sweet potato in a 500g pack.

Yours Droolly are great to use as a treat or training aid. Why not teach your dog to sit or stay then you can call him and reward him with a droolly treat!

Droolly treats are great to use when you are going out and leaving your pooch in the backyard. These can keep him entertained for hours depending on the size of the treat. Always make sure they have fresh clean water available.

In addition to a nutritionally balanced diet, daily exercise is important for a happy healthy pet.

We have a huge range of Yours Droolly in clinic. Flavours include duck sticks, chicken sticks, chicken and fish sticks, chews or the Droolly bones!

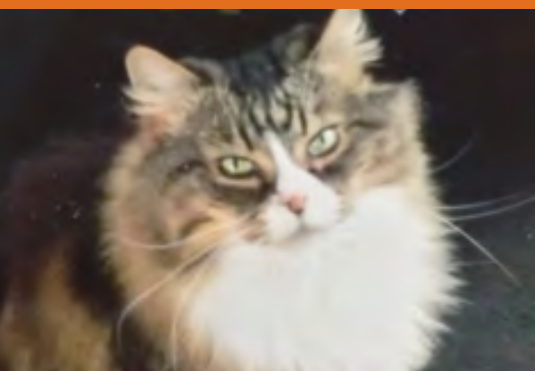


## Special Case: Sweetie.

Kea Keedle – Vet Nurse

Poor Sweetie came into the clinic with a nasty case of the flu. She had caught Cat Flu from a young unvaccinated cat that often prowled around her property. Due to Sweetie's age and the fact that she also was unvaccinated, she suffered with a high temperature, and a runny nose which caused her to stop eating. Our little old lady became quite unwell and had to stay with us for 4 days to receive treatment. Sweetie was hand fed yummy food while basking in her custom made humidified room to help ease her symptoms. After a few days full of tender love and care she was able to head home where she is currently getting spoilt rotten by her dad.

**This little story is a reminder that vaccinating your animal annually is extremely important. We need to help protect our furry friends before they get sick, and it can simply be a trip to the vet once a year.**



## Stop the cough - vaccinate against kennel cough.

Sarah Hart

**If you went away on holiday without your furry friend this summer, you may have had to make use of a boarding kennel.**

Prior to staying in boarding kennels it is important that your dog is up to date with all of his/her vaccinations. As well as the core vaccines recommended to protect against the main diseases affecting dogs (parvovirus, canine distemper, canine adenovirus) protection against kennel cough is a requirement of most boarding kennels.

Canine infectious tracheobronchitis, commonly referred to as kennel cough, is a highly contagious combination of viruses and bacteria infecting the upper respiratory tract of dogs. These include but are not limited to bordetella bronchiseptica, parainfluenza virus, canine adenovirus, mycoplasma, canine respiratory coronavirus and canine herpes virus. Environmental factors also play a part, therefore stress, temperature, humidity, overcrowding, poor immunity and high levels of exposure can increase the chances of infection.

Boarding kennels, dog shows, dog beaches, multi dog households, doggy day care and dog parks are common places where kennel cough can be contracted. It is spread by direct contact, through coughing, sneezing and/or sharing water bowls.

Signs of infection to look out for include a dry, hacking cough, nasal discharge, retching, vomiting and a high temperature. Coughing can persist for weeks, and is often more pronounced with exercise. Dogs can also develop a more serious condition known as bronchopneumonia if infection is particularly severe or if treatment is withheld.

The good news is that there are vaccines available to reduce the severity of these diseases. Vaccination stimulates immunity against the major pathogens responsible for kennel cough, and therefore minimises the risk of disease. Veterinarians have the option of an injectable vaccine which can be first given at 6 weeks of age or a vaccine which is squirted up the nose which can be started at 3 weeks old. The injectable vaccine requires two shots 3-4 weeks apart and must be given at least 7-14 days prior to entering the boarding kennels. The intra-nasal vaccine has a rapid onset of immunity and therefore can be given up to 72 hours before your dog stays in boarding kennels. Both vaccines require yearly boosters.

**If you have any questions or would like any more information, please contact your nearest Totally Vets branch.**

# Coprophagy: the dreaded Eating of the Pooh - why do dogs do this?

Sandy Fitzgerald

There are many reasons, from behavioural problems to nutrient deficiency. Dogs that have spent a lot of time in animal shelters or in other forms of social isolation are more susceptible to suffering from this issue.

This could be due to a dog's natural instinct to keep the den area clean and having no

opportunity to toilet elsewhere, or it may be that in the absence of anything else to play with, faeces become a toy or stress reliever.

Punishment will not stop this behaviour, and will only cause them distress and may escalate the problem. They may start quickly eating it to "hide" the evidence from you.

Running and picking the faeces up immediately while in the presence of the dog will also result in no improvement as this puts "Higher Value" on this resource making it a "Competition" to see who can get to it first. It is best addressed by picking up the pooh when they can't see you doing it.

Go back to the basics and re-toilet train. Teach Recall using a food reward as positive reinforcement; they will learn good things come in the form of tasty treats whenever they defecate and then run straight back to you. This allows you to put them inside and remove the faeces without them seeing you.

## Summer Fun

Helen Sheard

There's nothing better on sunny days than getting out and about with your dogs, but there are a few things to watch out for. Heat stroke is of course the number one thing we think of, but there are a few more insidious problems to avoid.

Barley grass seeds! These are the bane of dogs, especially those with hairy feet and ears.

The tips of the seeds are sharp and pointed and can penetrate skin, and can migrate an astonishingly long way through the soft tissues. As you can imagine they are horribly painful. They can also get stuck in the eyes and ears. It is a good idea to check your dog's eyes, ears and feet after they have been running through long seeding grass. Any small weeping wound, especially between the toes, may be due to a barley grass seed and should be seen by a vet as soon as possible.

We are lucky in the Manawatu to have so many bush walks where dogs are allowed to come too. The Karaka tree (or NZ Laurel) is a tall evergreen tree often found in coastal forests, and scattered through the Manawatu bush. Karaka berries are the size and shape of a large olive. They turn yellow and drop to the ground in summer and autumn. Some dogs will be tempted to eat these, but they are poisonous, and can cause seizures and death.

Then there are Cyanobacteria – also known as the notorious algal bloom. Not in fact algae at all, they are bacteria that use photosynthesis to convert sunlight to energy as a plant would. They prefer calm waters such as lakes, but when rivers get low and sluggish cyanobacteria may proliferate rapidly. Some cyanobacteria will produce cyanotoxins, which can cause a range of symptoms from vomiting and diarrhea to seizures and death. If there is a mat of algae-looking material in sluggish or calm water, it is best to avoid it. If you wouldn't want to swim in it yourself, don't let your dog go in either!

**This seems all doom and gloom, but we want to make sure you can make the most of the long summer days without any nasty surprises!**

Teaching a 'Leave' command and using distraction such as throwing a ball can help divert them from any tempting pile while out and about.

**Provide them with plenty of exercise – tired dogs are less anxious and are more likely to relax and sleep during the day. If you go out, leave them with a treat filled Kong or Treat-ball so they can entertain themselves. These provide hours of mental stimulation and keep them occupied whenever they are home alone.**

### PICK OF THE LITTER

## THE IMPORTANCE OF GROOMING YOUR PET

**A good brushing can do your pet the world of good! Grooming provides you a chance to go over your pet's coat with a fine tooth comb, which helps you keep track of any changes in your pet's skin.**

Depending on the breed of your pet and what type of hair they have, a regular bath may be a good idea. This is why it is good to take your pet to a professional groomer who will spend time washing and drying his hair and making sure there are no mats and tangles. Bathing helps remove excess oils and doggy odour. The groomer can also trim nails and check anal glands and if they notice any skin problems they will suggest an appointment with a vet.

**Make an appointment with our talented groomers today!**







## Microchipping - the heart of the matter

Helen Ryan

In the veterinary profession, significant time is spent reuniting animals with their owners. This can be under stressful and sad circumstances when the animal has been badly injured or has died due to its injuries.

It is not unusual for animals to not be wearing a collar and tag. Cats are great at losing theirs and some dogs don't wear their registration when they are hanging out at home.

Dogs (excluding farm dogs) are required by law to be microchipped by the age of 3 months when they are registered. Owners who don't register their dogs rarely have them microchipped.

Cats are not regulated and due to their lack of boundaries they can wander reasonable distances and get themselves into strife. Cats are in fact more likely to benefit from microchipping simply because of this behaviour. If you do end up finding a cat or have one attempt to 'adopt you' then a microchip check by the vet or an animal control officer at the council may reunite him or her with their original owner.

Scanning a microchip is the quickest and most effective way veterinary clinics or councils have to reunite a pet with their owner.

**It saves a lot of heartache for all concerned if owners are not left wondering what has happened to their pets. So if your pet is not microchipped already, please consider it – for their safety and your peace of mind.**

## The Limping Working Dog

Carin de Groot, Taumarunui

In the Central North Island we see a fair amount of lameness among our working dogs, which could be caused by a number of accidents. Working with cows and calves, jumping over gates and fences, falling off motorbikes, running on steep terrain with bluffs, walking on gravel roads - it is all risky work.

The classic scenario of "my dog got hung up in the fence and now he's not putting any weight on his leg" often involves a back leg and just about always results in a rupture of the cruciate ligaments of the stifle joint. In extreme cases the collateral ligaments on the side of the joint can rupture as well. Dogs with this injury will need surgery, and most recover well enough to return to work but inevitably develop some degree of arthritis in the affected joint.

Hip dislocation is one of the most common orthopaedic injuries we deal with. Often the limb is held with the knee joint turned inwards and the dog is reluctant to bear weight. We are usually able to put the hip back in under full anaesthetic, and afterwards the dog will need to have its leg in a specialised sling to prevent the hip dislocating again.

Fractures in working dogs are caused by a range of injuries. The long straight bones of the front leg (radius and ulna) and the back legs (tibia) usually offer the best prognosis. As long as the fracture is not infected, is not too close to a joint and doesn't have too many smaller fragments, repair can be straight forward. In suitable patients, if the bone fragments are nicely aligned, and it is possible to immobilise both adjoining joints, a cast can be applied. However, most of these fractures need orthopaedic surgery with plates, screws, pins or wire put in place to hold the fracture together.

If any fracture involves a joint it becomes even more complicated.

**Remember, if there are any signs that your working dog is lame or painful a visit to the vet as soon as you can will increase their chances of a successful recovery.**

