



SUMMER 2007/08

Your Vet



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Our Vets

DR NEVILLE ROBERTSON
BVSc(Syd), MVS(Murd)

DR ALAN WADE
BSc, BVMS(Murd)

Our Nurses

Debra and **Toni** are our full time qualified and registered nurses. We also have three veterinary students, **Brooke, Sarah** and **Jenna**, who work as nurses during weekends and holidays. Our nurses are all caring and compassionate people and are committed to looking after you and your pet.

Our Hours

Monday to Friday 7.30am to 7pm
Saturday 8.30am to 4 pm
Sunday 10am to 1pm

Consultations are by appointment.
We are closed on Public Holidays.

After Hours

For urgent attention after hours including Public Holidays contact either Murdoch Pet Emergency Centre (MPEC) on 1300 652 494 or Northern Suburbs Emergency Centre on 9345 4644.

Feedback

We aim to provide a modern hospital with up to date knowledge and skills combined with a caring and compassionate service. We would like to hear from you if you have any thoughts or comments on our service - just email or call us.

The Festive Season has many perils

Christmas time can be full of perils for unwary pet owners.

Our pets are often spoilt with kindness at this time, with anything from extra titbits given by doting relatives to a feast on the left-over ham bone or turkey carcass.

What starts off as a special treat can end up as a prolonged stay with the vet. Rich fatty foods can cause diarrhoea and gastritis. Raisins in the Christmas pudding can be toxic to pets. Cooked bones are soft. Large fragments can be gnawed off and then get lodged anywhere along the gut, causing impactions and obstructions. The fatty marrow and gristle from bones can cause an inflammation of the pancreas, resulting in severe abdominal pain, vomiting and a very unhappy pet.

These problems are generally treatable if caught early enough. But they may require anything from intravenous fluids via a drip, to full general anaesthesia and surgery.

The good news is these conditions can be prevented by sticking to your pet's usual diet and avoiding cooked bones altogether.

Food is not the only Christmas risk. Watch out for decorations. Pets are fascinated by dangling sparkly objects and can be tempted to chew and swallow decorations and tinsel, resulting in intestinal obstructions. Decorations containing glass are easily broken when batted about by eager paws. Glass fragments can cause lacerations or become impacted in foot pads. Puppies, kittens and house rabbits will play with the electrical cords of Christmas lights and may be tempted to bite them, resulting in electrical burns.

Assuming we've survived the festive food and cheerful decorations there is one final hurdle - Fireworks on New Years' Eve!

Many pets are frightened by loud noises such as thunderstorms and fireworks. Their fears usually worsen with each subsequent exposure and can culminate in some pretty daring escape plans. Frightened animals have been known to smash through windows, jump fences and squeeze through impossibly small cracks in fences and gates in order to escape from fireworks. Pets may end up lost and unfortunately are often injured in car accidents as they flee across busy streets.

If your pet has a firework phobia, avoid leaving it home alone if fireworks are

permitted in your neighbourhood. If this is not feasible, make sure it is locked safely indoors with a radio or television for company. You can also speak to your vet who can examine your animal and prescribe medication to reduce anxiety and provide sedation if necessary.



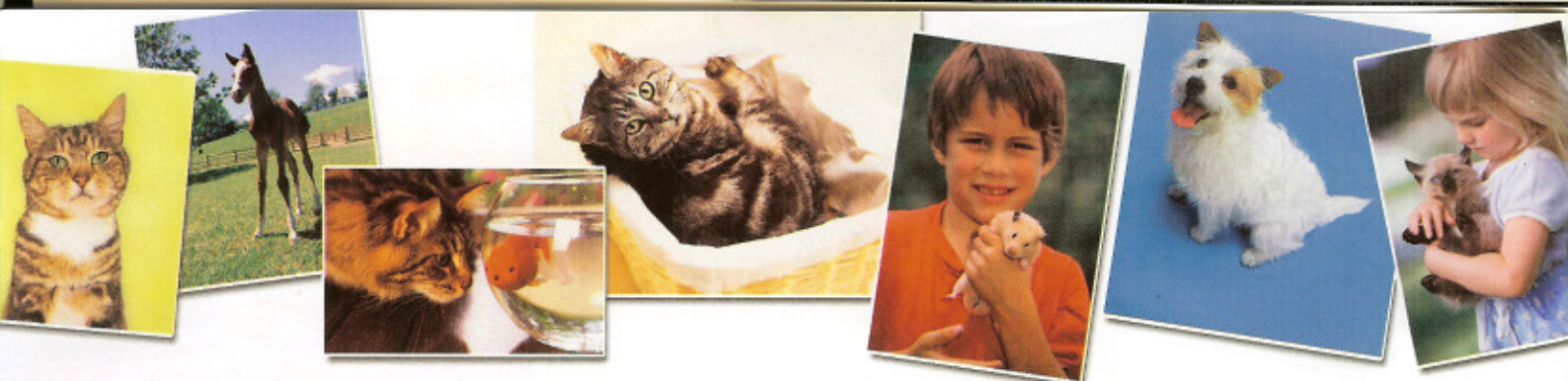
Make sure your bird has happy feet

Budgies and other caged birds can suffer from the comically named condition Bumblefoot. This disease is no laughing matter for the bird concerned and results in swollen, painful feet. Bumblefoot is caused by bacteria entering the bird's foot through damaged tissue. Birds kept in cages where the perches are all the same diameter are at increased risk of this condition because of constant pressure and wear on one particular area of their foot. Using perches with differing widths and textures will vary the point of contact with the foot and help prevent pressure areas. A tree branch (from a non toxic species) is ideal and will help keep those feet happy.



- •• Heatstroke in pets
- •• Kennel cough protection
- •• Taking care on the beach

inside



Protecting your dog against kennel cough

Kennel cough is an umbrella term used to describe a hacking cough in dogs caused by various viruses and bacteria. The two main causes are infection with parainfluenza virus and the bacteria, *Bordetella Bronchiseptica*. The latter is a similar bacterium to the one that causes whooping cough in humans. These bacteria and viruses cause an inflammation of the major airways resulting in a hacking, paroxysmal cough. The cough can end in a gagging and retching of mucous which may give owners the impression that their dog has something stuck in its throat. Coughing is often worse at night and is exacerbated by exercise and pressure on the throat region - such as pulling on a lead.

Kennel cough is highly contagious. Infected dogs can even transmit the disease prior to showing any symptoms. The treatment for kennel cough will vary from case to case depending on the age of the dog and the severity of symptoms. Puppies and elderly dogs (who may have pre-existing airway disease) tend to be the most severely affected. Treatment may include antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs and cough suppressants. In addition to medication prescribed by your vet, owners should rest their dog and isolate it from other dogs. Taking the dog into a nice steamy bathroom or humidifying the environment may also help.

As with any disease, prevention is better than cure. A vaccine that protects against the two major causes of kennel cough is available. Because many other bacteria and viruses can cause the problem it is still possible for a vaccinated dog to contract kennel cough. However vaccinated dogs tend to have a less severe form of the disease and recover more quickly than unvaccinated dogs. Speak to your vet about what is an appropriate vaccination for your dog.



Fun in the sun? Heatstroke in pets

Everyone should know the golden rule of not leaving pets unattended in cars in warm weather. However every summer many dogs and, unbelievably, children, die from heatstroke. However, dogs-in-cars is not the only way for your pet to suffer from this potentially fatal problem.

What is heatstroke, and how can we prevent it from happening?

Unlike humans, dogs don't cool off by sweating through their skin. The only way they can lower their body temperature is to pant, and to sweat a little through their paws. To pant effectively they rely on the air around them being cooler than their own temperature; this will allow the heat in their moist breath to dissipate and be removed into the environment. They also rely on the environment being a little dry. High humidity makes it harder for them to cool off.

Dogs suffer heatstroke when their internal body temperature gets much too high (an example is when severe seizures occur or the pet over-exercises); when the external temperature is too high and the dog cannot seek shade (dogs-in-cars); and when there is no access to water and shade on a very hot day.

'Pocket' pets like rabbits and guinea pigs are extremely sensitive to heat, and can die just lying in their cages on a warmer-than-usual day, if the sun's movement means their cage is no longer in the shade. Cats are far too sensible to let themselves get hot via over-exercising, but are just as susceptible as dogs if confined to a hot situation with no escape.

Heatstroke can occur when you least expect it. There are hidden traps. For example, 'over-exercise' can occur without an owner realising that it is too warm. A dog



running alongside a bicycle is likely to be doing somewhere between 15kph-20kph. The effect of wind on skin will keep the owner cool, but won't work for the dog. So the owner may think it is cooler than it really is. Dogs run for enjoyment and to keep up. They can develop a raised core temperature within minutes, but may not start flagging until it is dangerously elevated and their lives are already in danger.

Another example is the frantically ball-chasing dog, who will NOT give up chasing until the owner stops playing. The owner, believing he/she is helping their dog with some healthy exercise, keeps throwing the ball. Many dogs have suffered heatstroke for this reason, sometimes fatally.

To help prevent heatstroke don't leave your dog in the car, except on the very coolest of days; avoid heavy exercise except in the cool of the morning and late evening and ensure that they can access shade and water at ALL times in the garden.

If you have a guinea pig or rabbit, providing them with a frozen water bottle to lie against on days warmer than high 20's can make a big difference to their core body temperature. If you have a cat, keeping it well supplied with chilled gin-and-tonic should do the trick!

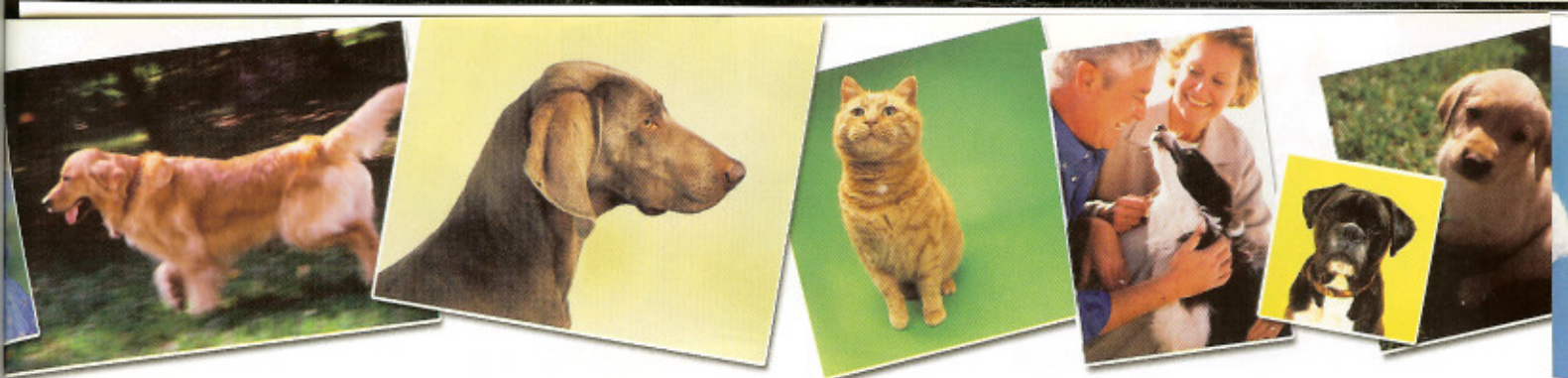
Slip, Slop, Slap is important for animals, too

Cats and dogs love to sunbake - dogs stretch out luxuriously and expose their sparsely haired abdomens, whilst cats tend to doze peacefully with their eyes half closed, faces tilted towards the warmth of the sun.

These differing preferences for enjoying the sun explain the different distribution of skin cancers in dogs and cats. Dogs tend to get sun related skin cancers on their tummies whereas cats' ears, eyelids and

noses are usually affected. Pets with white fur and pale skin are especially vulnerable to sun damage. Skin cancers may start as a small scab which never seems to heal, then can quickly develop into nasty ulcerated sores. If caught early they can be frozen or surgically removed.

We can help minimise sun damage by keeping pets out of the sun from 10am to 3pm, providing plenty of shade and using sunsuits and hypoallergenic sun blocks.



Find ways to make those flies buzz off

As many dog owners know, the trauma caused by fly bites can be a frustrating problem. Flies seem particularly fond of ear margins, especially the ear tip. They will occasionally settle for tip of the tail.

The bitten area gets damaged and may ooze blood, attracting more flies looking for a desirable snack. Hair loss occurs and the areas often become infected.

Treating fly bite dermatitis requires a two-pronged attack. First is the need to protect the damaged, at risk areas. This can be done by selecting from the vast armoury of creams, sprays and spot ons available on the market. Ask your vet about which product he or she finds most successful in your particular area, and be sure to use it frequently. Your vet may also need to prescribe antibiotics if the ears or other bitten areas have become infected.

The second part of the attack is aimed at reducing the number of flies in the dog's environment. Remove old bones and uneaten food. Regularly pick up any faeces in the garden. Sticky fly strips can be hung above kennels and around your dog's favourite resting areas. Finally, arm the kids with flyswats and tell them it's for a good cause!

Take care with your guinea pig's menu

Guinea pigs may be on people's menus in Peru (where they are kept for eating purposes), but in Australia we should be more concerned with what's on their menu. They are interesting animals because they are unable to synthesize their own vitamin C and must acquire it from dietary sources. Therefore it is vital that Guinea pigs are fed with food high in vitamin C content, such as dark green leafy greens. Favourites on the menu are broccoli, bok choy, spinach, cabbage and parsley. Without an adequate supply of dietary vitamin C guinea pigs get scurvy, a painful condition which can cause bleeding into joints, a rough hair coat and dental disease.



Did you know?

- 95% of cat owners admit they talk to their cats.
- A cat can be either right-pawed or left-pawed.
- A cat can jump as much as seven times its height.
- A cat cannot see directly under its nose. This is why the cat cannot seem to find tidbits on the floor.
- A cat has 230 bones in its body. A human only has 206 bones.
- A cat has four rows of whiskers.
- A cat in a hurry can sprint at about thirty-one miles per hour.
- A cat sees about six times better than a human at night because of the tapetum lucidum, a layer of extra reflecting cells which absorb light.
- A cat uses its whiskers to determine if a space is too small to squeeze through. The whiskers act as feelers or antennae, helping the animal to judge the precise width of any passage.
- A cat will almost never meow at another cat. Cats use this sound for humans.



Laughter is the best medicine

Some race horses are staying in a stable. One of them starts to boast about his track record. "In the last 15 races, I've won 8 of them!"

Another horse breaks in, "Well in the last 27 races, I've won 19!!"

"Oh that's good, but in the last 36 races, I've won 28!", says another, flicking his tail.

At this point, they notice that a greyhound dog has been sitting there listening. "I don't mean to boast," says the greyhound, "but in my last 90 races, I've won 88 of them!"

The horses are clearly amazed. "Wow!" says one, after a hushed silence. "A talking dog."

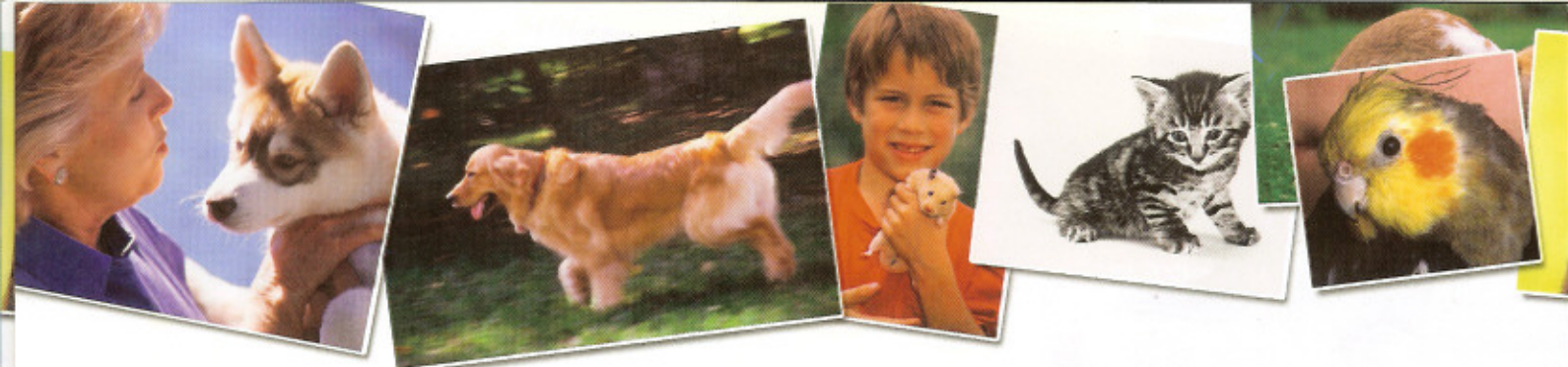
Think of your pet when making holiday plans

The best way to enjoy your holiday is to follow the Boy Scout motto - "Be prepared". If you can sail out the door knowing that your pet is safe and secure, with contingency plans in place, then a state of blissful relaxation is more likely.

1. If leaving your pet in a boarding establishment, visit the premises and make sure you feel comfortable with the set up. Book early. Most good boarding establishments are filled to capacity over summer.
2. Carers should be made familiar with your pet's routine. For example if you have a 'paws-on-the-floor' policy in your house make sure this is upheld whilst you are away. Habits such as sleeping on the furniture or in your bed can be very difficult to break.
3. Where possible get the boarding establishment or carer to feed your pet its usual diet. Sudden changes in diet frequently cause gastric upsets.
4. Provide the boarding establishment or carer with your holiday itinerary, your contact details, your vet's details and also your expectations should an unexpected emergency occur. For example if your pet is bitten by a snake or is involved in a road traffic accident is there a financial cap on treatment costs? Or would you prefer a 'spare-no-expense', 'refer-if-necessary', approach?
5. Ensure your pet's vaccinations are current.
6. If your pet is on medication, make sure there are sufficient supplies for the duration of the holiday.

Then relax!





Making that visit to the beach safer

In summer, what could be better than taking your best mate for a run on the beach? The sheer pleasure of watching his/her enjoyment and feeling the sea-breeze against your face is a better stress-buster than any amount of massage. Or is it?

Sadly, veterinarians see the results of many hidden dangers at the beach, all with the potential to ruin your day. The sea can fool us. It cannot provide the fresh water we need to keep ourselves and Fido cool on the inside (see article on heatstroke). Hot thirsty dogs will drink seawater, with potentially dire consequences. At best it may cause profuse vomiting and a very nasty diarrhoea in the back of your car. At worst it can cause salt-toxicity, leading to brain damage, coma and potentially death. So carry fresh drinking water for you and for Fido if the beach trip is to be much more than 20mins on a hot day.

Pet-to-pet aggression can happen when even the nicest dogs get over-excited. Carry a muzzle rather than risk injury to another dog (or worse, an intervening human being) which could result in a destruction order for your over-zealous pet. The only muzzles safe to use in a beach situation are the open plastic 'basket-weave' ones that allow air to circulate, and allow the pet to drink and, if necessary, vomit. Tight webbing muzzles that hold the mouth shut are dangerous and inappropriate during exercise of any kind.

Encourage your pet to swim if the sea is calm, but look out for rips in rougher weather, or susceptible locations. Most dog beaches are not patrolled. Dogs drown just as easily as humans, and humans have drowned trying to save their struggling pet. Swim with your dog if safe to do so. A good rule of thumb is 'don't let your dog swim where you wouldn't let a child swim'.

Parts of Australia have some potentially lethal creatures in their coastal waters and sand dunes. Naturally dogs should never be encouraged to swim in places crocs or sharks are known to inhabit. Remember that some estuarine rivers fit this category. Puffer fish, often discarded on beaches, are toxic when ingested, and some dune areas are crawling with snakes, even in metropolitan regions. And if that isn't bad enough, many vets have seen dogs that have swum for HOURS trying to catch up with a circling pod of dolphins, only to require veterinary attention on rescue, because of exhaustion and muscle damage. Who knew dolphins could be that dangerous!



Even simple SAND doesn't escape our list of dangers. Look out for hidden rocks or partially submerged reef as both can cause nasty lacerations to a gambolling dog. Additionally running then twisting suddenly in deep, damp sand is a sure-fire way to rupture a cruciate ligament in the knee. All sorts of other joint problems can occur due to the extra strain when running through sand. Even mildly arthritic dogs will often pull up really sore the day after a beach run.

Of course, none of this means that you can't enjoy a day at the beach with your furry best-mate. A few simple precautions, and some basic first aid knowledge is all you need! Take your mobile phone, a GPS, a first aid kit, a personal alarm, and then enjoy yourselves!

Buon Natale
FELIZ NAVIDAD

PEACE MELE KALIKIMAKA
Seasons Greeting
NOEL JOY
 joyeux noel

*On behalf of all of us, we
 extend our very best wishes to
 you, your family and friends,
 for a safe, happy and healthy
 Festive season.*

Practice Update

Complete Health

City Beach Veterinarians is committed to making it easy for you to look after all of your pet's needs.

Our Complete Health packages provide all of your pet's routine preventive health care. You do not need to remember when your pet is due for any products as we mail them to you monthly!

Each Complete Health package includes

- Monthly Flea Control
- Heartworm Prevention
- Intestinal worming medication
- Annual vaccinations

By taking out a Complete Health package you will save 5% off the price you would normally pay for the products and services listed above.

There are extra rewards for being a Complete Health member. These include

- \$20 discount off every primary consultation
- Unlimited free nail clipping
- Pet food discount vouchers
- Microchipping discount (transferable)
- For dogs there are 4 free hydrobaths which include blow drying.

Complete Health means peace of mind.

Puppy Preschool

Just like humans it is best to start training young! We run regular puppy classes that are great fun and informative. Your pup will learn to socialise with other pups, enjoy visiting us and you will start to learn the basics of training.

This is a great start to your pup's life and helps cement a long lasting relationship between you and your pet. Ask one of our nurses for more information.

Vet Profiles:

Dr Neville Robertson

Neville graduated from Sydney University in 1985. He moved to WA a year later to take up a position as an Intern in Veterinary Anaesthesia at Murdoch University. Nev has completed a Masters Degree in Veterinary Science at Murdoch University and is the Australian Small Animal Veterinary Association Committee's WA representative.

Dr Alan Wade

Alan graduated from Murdoch University in 1988. Alan worked extensively in the United Kingdom before returning to Australia 9 years ago. He has worked in many large practices and gained significant experience dealing with complicated cases over the years.