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Newsletter- Spring 2011



- [Clinic News](#)
- [Common Myths](#)
- [Microchips](#)
- [When toileting is a pain](#)
- [Fur Balls](#)

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter! As part of our ongoing care for your pets, we like to keep you informed of staff news, new services we are now offering and problems which could affect your pets, particularly at this time of year. Our seasonal newsletters will be accessible on our website, from the clinic and via mail out. Let us know if you would like to receive our quarterly publication and we can add you to our mail or email list.

Clinic News

Lee is back at the end of the year from her 12 month sabbatical overseas. We are excited to have her back working again at ERVH.

In our last edition we broke the exciting news about Alex's engagement, well now she is married!! Alex and Leigh married at a family affair in New York during April.

A big congratulations to Anita and Nat who did a fine effort participating in the Oxfam walkathon

They finished the 100km walkathon in 22 hours and managed to raise \$3,500 towards a fine cause.

You may have noticed a new white car parked in our car park. This will soon be dressed in our clinic logo and you may then see it buzzing through the local streets.

Devon has a new four legged member in the family, Sullivan, a gorgeous 5 month old Whippet. He is all action, a social butterfly and forever a cheerful chap - he will fit in well to the Rankin family.



Common Myths

Often we're asked about whether a common myth about pets is true. Here are some popular ones and their often surprising answers:

• **Feeding garlic prevents fleas**

There is no evidence to support the claim that feeding your pet garlic will prevent fleas. Garlic is a member of the onion family and therefore can actually be toxic to dogs

• **Cats purr when they are happy**

Cats do purr when in pleasurable situations. Kittens purr when they are suckling and cats purr when in contact with a familiar person or object. But there is one exception; vets often find cats that are in pain or have chronic illness will purr. This leads us to believe that purring can indicate other emotions too.

• **A wet nose means a healthy dog**

This is the most common and loved myth about pets. The myth says that a hot dry nose means the dog has a

temperature and is unwell. The only way to tell if a dog has a temperature is to use a thermometer and a dry nose is not an indication of poor health.

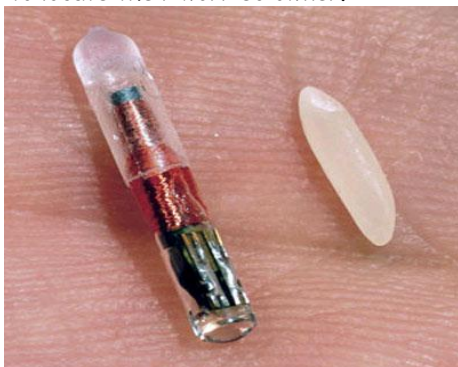
• Dogs eat grass only when they are sick

It's a natural instinct for a dog to eat grass. Observing dingoes and wolves has shown that they eat small amounts of grass as part of their normal diet. However, if your dog is eating large amounts of grass and vomiting continuously, ask us for help.

Microchips

Microchips are the size of a grain of rice and comprise of tiny transponders within an inert tube. They are inserted under the skin between the shoulder blades of your pet. Each chip has its own identification number that is linked to your contact details via a computer data base. The identification number in the tiny transponder is read through the dog's skin by a scanner emitting low-frequency radio waves.

All veterinarians and pounds have microchip scanners, so any micro-chipped pet found wandering can be easily scanned to locate their worried owner.



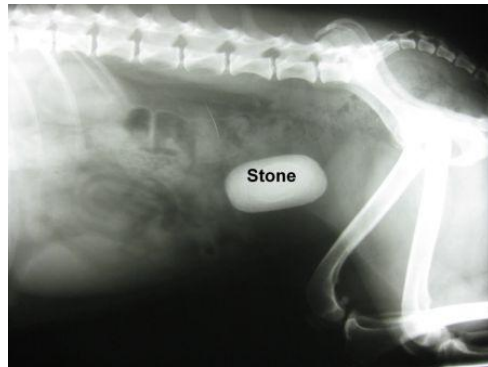
Microchip size compared to a rice grain

Since 2007 it has become law that all puppies and kittens must be microchipped. However, it is not just because of the law that we recommend microchipping, it is more to avoid potentially losing a loved one forever.

Fortunately for one of our clients, nothing could be closer to the truth. A family, 3 years after thinking their beloved cat had disappeared, were called to be informed their cat had been brought into a vet clinic in their old neighbourhood. The family had moved 3 years earlier to a suburb several kilometres away. The cat had obviously tried to return to his old residence and did not know how to get back until he was re-united with his family through his microchip.

When toileting is a pain

The urinary system is very good at getting rid of wastes and salts. In some dogs and cats these salts have a tendency to form crystals or stones in the urine. Understandably, these cause irritation inside the bladder and can cause infections. The treatment depends on the type of crystal or stone involved - some can be dissolved simply by a change in diet but others need surgical removal.



This stone was removed from a 7 year Pomeranian who came to us because she was going to the toilet frequently and had blood in her urine. An xray of her abdomen showed a large stone present in her bladder causing the irritation. Prompt removal of the stone and a change of diet has allowed her to be symptom free. So if your pet is showing signs of frequent or uncomfortable urination, a visit to the vet is recommended.

Fur Balls

As the weather warms up, so too do our furry four legged friends. For most dogs and cats this means a shedding of fur to remove the downy undercoat to reduce the insulation they carry around with them every day. For us this means extra cleaning but this also applies to cats. They pride themselves on keeping a clean coat by regularly grooming. Unfortunately for them their abrasive tongue acts as a brush and collects a lot of the loose fur which then has no other escape than to be swallowed. This collects in the stomach and is churned around into a knotted structure which if trying to escape through the intestines becomes cylindrical. If too large to pass it may be vomited up in what we traditionally know as a fur ball. If it gets all the way to the other end then passing this cylinder of fur can be an issue for some poor cats and constipation can be a result. Faecal softeners such as catlax or suppositories can often be of help for these issues. In a few very unfortunate cats some fur balls get caught midway and neither vomiting nor assistance for constipation will work and we have had to go in surgically to remove these hardened knots of fur from the intestine. Prevention is the key, some tips for this Spring/Summer

- Regularly grooming your cat even before the warm weather starts.
- Providing Hair Ball diets which assist with fur passage through the intestine
- Using catlax once or twice a week if your cat is prone to fur balls
- Organising with the clinic for your cat to be groomed

Clinic Hours (By Appointment)

8am-7pm Weekdays

8am-4pm Saturday

10am-12 noon Sunday

HOME VISITING SERVICE AVAILABLE