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CLINIC HOURS

Consultations are by appointment during the following hours:

Monday to Friday: 9 – 11:30am and 2 – 4.30pm
Saturday: 9am – 11am
Sunday: Closed

After hour emergencies – at night, on weekends and Public Holidays – will be attended by the rostered Vet from this practice. Call the main clinic number and a recorded message will direct you.



YOUR VET

WINTER 2021

FREE!

In this edition we talk about...



HYDRATING THE HOUNDS



IS A GUINEA PIG THE RIGHT PET?



PREVENTING WINTER BLUES



FELINE AFFECTION

The 'whys' of desexing

When you welcome a pet into your household, your veterinarian will recommend preventative healthcare, such as vaccinations and nutrition. Desexing may also be at the top of the list.

Desexing is also called spaying and castration or neutering; it's a common surgical procedure done under anaesthetic to sterilise a cat or dog in order to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Aside from this there are other health and behavioural benefits to desexing – we've mentioned a few below, but it's best to consult your veterinarian for more detailed information.

REDUCED HEALTH RISKS

Desexing your pets doesn't mean they won't ever get sick, but it may prevent the risk and likelihood of some illnesses. For example, mammary (breast) cancer in females, and testicular cancer and prostate disease in males. Also, a desexed animal will not get false pregnancies or uterine infections.

RSPCA shelters take in around 70,000 dogs and cats annually – many from unplanned breeding

PREVENTING LITTERS

As cute as puppies and kittens are, it can be stressful having them in your home. You may not have the time or resources to look after your pet and her litter. While there may be a fee for desexing, it's small compared to the costs associated with treating pregnancy-related problems. Eclampsia, infection from foetus loss, a difficult birth, and emergency c-sections can all be complications during an animal's pregnancy.

PHYSICAL AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES

Desexing stops the "heat," or reproductive cycle in females. When female cats or dogs are in heat, physical and behavioural changes can occur.

A female dog's vulva becomes swollen with some blood-tinted discharge. This occurs about twice a year dependent on their age and breed.

Cats can have behavioural changes. Many become more affectionate; constantly wanting attention. They may be more vocal, urinate more, or spray urine onto objects to signal male cats of their readiness for mating.

Female cats can start breeding as young as 4 months old while female dogs can start around age six months

Unneutered male dogs and cats can sense a female on heat, and will roam some distance to find them. As a result they may become lost, involved in fights, or have an accident. They will spray urine where the female lives, to mark the territory and female as theirs.

A common myth is that female animals will become more friendly and sociable if they're allowed to have a litter. This isn't true, and just adds to the problem of overpopulation.

Some studies have shown that desexing dogs (particularly males) may reduce aggressive behaviour.

We can advise what's best for your pet and provide you with the facts on desexing. We can also inform you about vaccinations, microchipping, preventative healthcare and anything else relevant to your pet.



Our newsletter is free! You can take a copy with you.

CROSSWORD CORNER

All answers can be found in this edition of Your Vet

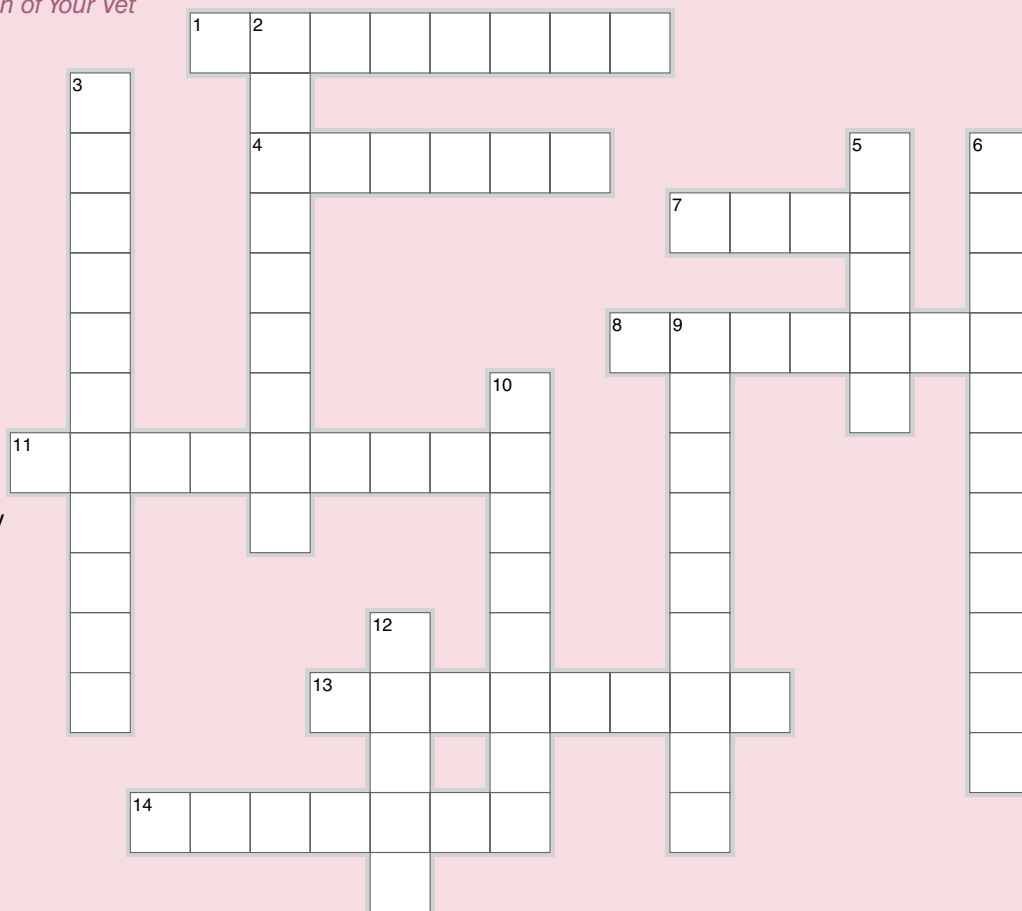
Solution is on the back page

ACROSS

1. Tiredness and lack of energy
4. Animal offspring
7. Unconsciousness
8. Relating to the breast
11. An animal that eats only plants
13. Ability to move
14. A sound a cat makes

DOWN

2. Illness that occurs during pregnancy involving high blood pressure
3. Dangerously low body temperature from exposure to cold
5. Deadly
6. Lack of moisture
9. A condition affecting joints, causing pain, swelling, and stiffness
10. Sterilising an animal to prevent pregnancy
12. Poison



Preventing winter ailments

People can find they suffer from chills, colds, and the flu during the winter season. Did you know winter illnesses can also affect your pets?

RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES

While there are differences in the types of viruses that infect humans, the symptoms are similar: sneezing, coughing, runny or stuffy nose, watery eyes.

So how can you help your pet?

You can care for them in the same way you would yourself – with warmth and fluids. You may even like to give them some low-salt beef or chicken broth as a treat. However, if you notice that your pet is coughing or not getting better, separate them from your healthy pets and consult your vet. They may require medication.

HYPOTHERMIA

If you're feeling the cold, it's likely your pet probably will be too, depending on their breed. Their ears, paws, tail and nose are all sensitive to the cold.

When an animal's body temperature drops below normal from prolonged exposure to the cold, they can suffer from hypothermia. Shivering and lethargy may follow and in extreme cases, coma and heart failure. Older or young pets as well as those with low body fat are at more risk. If you suspect hypothermia, seek immediate veterinary care.

BURNS

In colder areas of Australia pet owners not only have to keep themselves warm but their pets as well. Cats and dogs love snuggling up close to a warm heater or fire, so burns can be common. If they lick their wounds to ease the pain seek veterinary advice, as sometimes this can lead to infection. Prevent burns by blocking off heater access and using fireguards.

ARTHRITIS

When older pets start to slow down, arthritis may play a part. While wintery weather doesn't cause arthritis, it might aggravate it. You may notice that your dog has reduced mobility, a limp, and trouble rising from the ground. They may also be more cautious when jumping out of vehicles or navigating staircases.

Cats can also suffer from arthritis, but the signs may be more subtle, they may be less eager to jump off or on furniture.

There's no cure for arthritis, but there are ways to ease your pet's suffering, such as by using heated beds and vet-prescribed food and medication. Ask our staff for advice and treatment options.

Hydrating the hounds: identifying safe drinking water

Most dogs don't detect if water sources are safe or unsafe. They'll drink from any source, and in most instances there are no bad health effects. However, some water types can put them at risk of illness.

POOL WATER

A dog can view a swimming pool as one giant water bowl. As most pools contain chlorine, train your dog not to drink from it. The additives can cause additional thirst, which may lead to excessive urination and dehydration.

If you're struggling to stop them from drinking from the pool, place their water bowl near it. Encourage them to drink from it and reward them when they do. They may then associate drinking from their bowl as something that results in treats.

PUDDLES

It's difficult to stop your dog drinking out of random puddles and you don't know what could be lurking in that water. Bacteria, viruses, animal faeces, and parasites may all be present. If your dog does drink from puddles, watch for signs of illness, such as vomiting, diarrhoea, and dehydration. If you notice any, consult your vet.

TOILET WATER

Dogs don't see any difference between their water bowl and the toilet bowl. While toilet cleaners are often diluted enough to avoid fatal issues, some toxins may still cause illness. Combat this problem by putting the toilet lid down and ensuring your pets have access to fresh water at all times.

STAGNANT LAKES AND PONDS

Fungi, algae, bacteria, and viruses can all be present in still water, due to a lack of circulation. These may cause various health problems in dogs, such as organ damage.

Even swimming in still water may cause issues, with skin rashes associated with algae-contaminated ponds and lakes. If they come into contact with such water, wash them immediately and watch for signs of illness.

HOW MUCH WATER SHOULD MY DOG BE DRINKING?

If your dog drinks from unconventional sources, or is a messy drinker, it can be hard to know just how much water they get daily. The amount they need depends on their size, activity level, diet, age, and even the weather.

A healthy dog generally should drink around 1-2mL per kg of body weight per hour, or up to 50mL/kg per day.

Water is critical to your dog's health – keep water bowls filled up with a supply of fresh, clean water daily. While you may not be able to stop your dog from drinking elsewhere, you can certainly reduce how often it happens. If you're worried your dog is drinking too much, or too little, mention it to your vet.



What do I feed my bird?

A varied diet is best for a bird's health and wellbeing, but deciding what to feed your pet bird can be complicated. The sheer amount of information available may be confusing so it's best to seek advice specific to your bird.

One of the most important things to remember about a bird's diet is that it should mimic their feeding habits in the wild. While some birds will eat throughout the day, some will consume a large meal up to twice per day.

You can feed your bird a combination of quality commercial food like seed and nectar mixes from a reputable supplier, as well as natural food. Native flowers, seeding grasses, fruit and vegetables can all be suitable options.

Some food can be toxic to birds so make sure you check what is suitable. Some of these are coffee, chocolate, salt avocado, onions and garlic. Junk food is also unsuitable, and high fat foods should be limited.

Alongside the best food, proper food storage is important for your bird's health. Make sure all food is fresh, clean, and stored in appropriate containers.

Adding a cuttlebone* to your bird's cage can ensure they get all the trace minerals they need, as they contain both calcium and mixed grit. It's also essential to provide a constant supply of water, changed daily for freshness.

Feeding a variety of foods can keep your bird healthy, happy and mentally stimulated. If you're not sure whether you're meeting your bird's requirements, don't hesitate to ask our staff for advice.

** Cuttlebone is the hard flat oval internal skeleton of the cuttlefish, which contains calcium.*

Would a guinea pig make a good pet?



Guinea pigs are smart and can learn to do tricks if you're patient and reward them with food!

Guinea pets are cute, curious, and social creatures that make lovely family pets. Given the amount of care they require, planning for their arrival is important.

HOUSING

Their living environment should consist of a large enclosure with soft grass or hay and a small warm house with dust free bedding. Include tunnels and plenty of hiding spots and make sure they're safe from predators.

SOCIALISATION

Like us, guinea pigs require mental stimulation, exercise, and enrichment. They get this through interaction with other guinea pigs, exploring, tunnelling, running, and foraging. Daily gentle handling from a young age may also build their confidence with humans.

Guinea pigs can get lonely, so consider two or more guinea pigs of the same gender, or desexing if you plan on having both genders.

GROOMING

Long-haired guinea pigs require daily grooming to keep their coat in excellent condition. Short-haired guinea pigs can benefit from occasional grooming to remove tangles, dead hair, leaves, and twigs.

DIET

Guinea pigs are herbivores that need plenty of roughage, a constant supply of grass, and sources of vitamin C – such as leafy green vegetables and the occasional kiwi fruit or citrus treat.

You can also purchase guinea pig pellets, but these should not make up the majority of their diet. Always provide a clean source of drinking water.

LIFESPAN

The average life span of a guinea pig is 5-6 years, but they can live as long as 8-10 years. One year for a guinea pig is the equivalent to ten years for a human.

Cats really do love us

If you compare your cat's behaviour to your dog's, you may conclude that your dog loves you more. Have you considered though, that your cat has a different way of showing it?

Dogs show their love through soft eye contact, tail wagging, licks, happy greetings, and enjoying cuddles. It's easy to see how much they appreciate you. With cats, the signs can be less obvious, but you may already have experienced their subtle communication.

BELLY EXPOSURE

Does your cat ever flop down at your feet and roll onto its back? It's easy to think that your cat is looking for a belly rub. That's rarely the case, and their natural protection reflex may result in a sudden flurry of claws and teeth. Presenting the most vulnerable part of their body just means your cat feels comfortable and trusting around you.

HEAD BUNTING

Many cat owners think their cats are bunting their heads against them to show affection, but there's more to it. They use the areas of their heads which contains scent glands.

These allow them to leave their scent on anything they love – your cat wants to make sure you smell like them!

HUMAN GROOMING

As much as we might not like the idea of cats licking us, they may be showing their love. When there's more than one cat in a household, there's often one that becomes the designated groomer. This cat is responsible for grooming the others, and may be trying to include you as part of their community.

PURRING

When a cat purrs, it can be a way for them to control pain, calm down, or even to guide their kittens. However, it can also mean your cat is content – if they're sitting on your lap purring while you pat them, that's a good sign your cat is happy in your company.

Not all cats will shower their owners with affection, or even show all that much interest in you. However, look out for the subtle signs and you might just see they do love you after all.



GOOD LUCK ANNIE

Our lovely vet Annie Geard finished up this week to start maternity leave. This is Annie's third baby, we wish her all the best in the upcoming labour and send lots of love towards herself and her newest family member.

RAT BAIT POISONING

The current mouse plague has, unfortunately, seen a rise in the number of rat bait toxicities in pets. The most common rat baits work by stopping the blood from coagulating, thus causing fatal haemorrhages. This bleeding is often internal, meaning the only indication that your pet has eaten rat bait could be pale gums and lethargy. Signs of rat bait poisoning are also delayed, and pets seem perfectly normal for days after ingesting baits. If you have witnessed your pet consuming rat bait, bring them straight into the clinic and we can induce vomiting and hopefully avoid any ill effects.

THANKYOU to all our BLOOD DONORS

We are very fortunate we have a wonderful supporting greyhound community at our clinic. The greyhound owners of Wagga always help us when needed, dropping whatever they are doing to bring in one of their friendly dogs to save a life!

We are blessed to have your support! If any of our clients want to make one of their family members a blood donor to help save lives during this mouse plague please contact the clinic.

OUR WEBSITE

Have you visited our website recently? www.moorongveterinaryclinic.com.au You can make an appointment via our online booking page 24/7. If your animal is on regular prescription medications, you can now fill out the 'Prescription Medication Requests' page. We strive to process these requests within 24 hours but may take up to 48 hours. When your request has been approved, we'll send you a text message to notify you your prescription is ready to be picked up.

Please note: as part of the Prescribing Laws veterinarians are governed by, we must have examined your pet within the last 12 months to be able to approve the continued supply of the medications being requested.

You can also have a sneak peak at who our current staff are and what they like to do when they're not busy saving our patient's lives!

SMS REMINDERS

We have an sms reminder system to assist with our appointment schedule. Please ask our friendly reception team to double check your contact details when visiting next so we can be assured that the correct people are receiving the reminders, and to assist you in the future for all your appointment needs.

QR SCANNER

There are currently three COVID QR scanning options, one outside on the front table with our provided hand sanitiser, and two in reception on both sides of the desk. We ask all clients to please use these scanners when visiting our clinic, whether it is an outdoor consult or just picking up prescriptions.

Thankyou for working together with us!

APPOINTMENT REMINDER

Ask our receptionist to record details of your next visit. Take this newsletter home and keep it somewhere handy as a reminder. Help us to help you keep your pets happy and healthy.

PET NAME	DATE	TIME

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annual check up | <input type="checkbox"/> Vaccination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Follow up examination | <input type="checkbox"/> Worming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flea/tick treatment | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

DOWN: 2. ECLAMPSIA 3. HYPOTHERMIA 5. FATAL 6. DEHYDRATION 9. ARTHRITIS 10. DESEXING 12. TOXIN

ACROSS: 1. LETHARGY 4. LITTER 7. COMA 8. MAMMARY 11. HERBIVORE 13. MOBILITY 14. PURRING

Disclaimer: The information provided in this newsletter is for educational purposes only, and is not intended as a substitute for sound health care advice. We are not liable for any adverse effects or consequences resulting from the use of any information, suggestions, or procedures presented. Always consult a qualified professional in all matters pertaining to your pet health.

Our newsletter is free! Take a copy with you.