

BUSSELTON VETERINARY HOSPITAL

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Busselton Veterinary Hospital is committed to providing the highest possible veterinary care in a friendly and compassionate environment.

OUR VETS

Dr Richard Lucas

BVMS, MACVSc (SmAniMed)

Special interests: Internal medicine and orthopaedic surgery.

Dr Nigel Gifford

BSc BVMS

Special Interests: Dentistry and Small Animal Medicine.

Dr Kerri Jurgens

BSc BVMS

Special Interests: Surgery and Dentistry.

Dr Lauren Dowling

BSc, DVM

Special Interests: Medicine and Felines.

Dr Narelle Thompson

BSc BVMS (Hons)

Special Interests: Surgery & Seniors.

OUR NURSING STAFF

Agnes, Louise, Deanne, Erin, Megan & Lisa (LJ) are all fully qualified Veterinary Nurses.

Skye has now joined **Lisa-Maree** in Veterinary Nurse training, and we have **Lindy** and **Ash** as our Animal Attendants.

All our nurses are highly trained and well placed to help you with all sorts of animal care questions. They are absolutely essential to the high standards of pet care that we provide.

OUR CLIENT RELATIONS STAFF

Kylie, Cathie, Deanne & Jan.

These are our lovely ladies on the front desk and telephone reception.

Kylie is still keeping things running in the office as well!

CLINIC HOURS

The clinic can be contacted between 8.00am and 6.00pm weekdays and 8.00am and 1.00pm on Saturdays. Consultations by appointment please:

Weekdays: 8.30am – 5.30pm

Saturdays: 8.00am – 1.00pm

Out of office hours, phone the main number and follow the prompts to be transferred to our rostered Vet.

**EMERGENCIES TREATED
24 HOURS A DAY
Because we care.**



YOUR VET

AUTUMN 2023

with compliments

In this edition we talk about...



**PET
DIABETES**



**ARE YOU
PREPARED?**



**MEOW...
MEOW... MEOW...**



**WHY DOGS EAT
LEAVES**

FALLING FELINES AND THEIR SURVIVAL SKILLS

Do you ever wonder how falling cats can land on their feet? Their natural protective abilities when falling might get them out of some tricky situations.

Cats won't always be able to avoid getting into trouble. They can fall from trees, house roofs, and apartment buildings by being the curious critters they are. However, falling from a great height doesn't always have a tragic outcome, and it can relate to their natural reflexes.

What natural abilities help during a fall?

Cats have an instinctive ability to protect themselves from injury if they fall, called the cat righting reflex. Their flexible backbone enables them to bend and rotate their bodies in a series of moves mid-air so that they will land on their feet.

As well as this righting reflex, cats have features that help to slow them down during a fall. They are small and light with thick fur which all help to decrease their speed. They can also spread out their body after they've righted themselves – which slows them by increasing drag. Researchers also think that cats relax when they've reached their fastest speed, which helps distribute their weight when they land.

Surviving high falls

The righting reflex can help prevent injuries, but you might assume there'd be no chance of a cat surviving if they fell from multiple storeys.

One small study of 132 cats that fell from an average of five and a half storeys had surprising results. Just over a third suffered severe injuries and needed emergency treatment. A third required non-emergency treatment, and the remaining cats needed no treatment. Out of all the treated cats, ninety percent survived.

Cats have good balance so why do they fall?

Cats typically love the advantages of being up high and will climb or jump for a good vantage point, but that doesn't mean they are considering the safety risks! Cats are known to hyperfocus on things that grab their attention, such as birds and bugs. If they're distracted or startled, they can be at risk of falling.

How to keep your cat safe at height

As skilled as cats are at landing on their feet, they are still at risk of injuries and death if they fall. If you live in an apartment or multi-storey home, put protective measures in place to keep them safe. These measures could include barriers or mesh to cover open windows and balconies, and restricted access to areas presenting falling risks.

Felines have excellent survival abilities and have been known to survive falls from great heights. However, they are still at risk of serious injury if they do. If you are concerned about your cat's behaviour or environment we can help by offering professional and practical advice.

DID YOU KNOW?

High rise syndrome is the term for cats with injuries caused from very high falls, such as from high-rise buildings.



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

PREPARE YOUR PETS FOR NATURAL DISASTERS

Are you and your pets prepared for a natural disaster?

Australia experiences many natural disasters and adverse weather events, such as flooding, bushfires, heavy rain, and even cyclones. You will be better prepared for an emergency by having a plan.

Take care of logistics

It's important not to wait until a natural disaster is on your doorstep before creating a plan. Ensure you have non-perishable food, water, medication, and someone to take your pets if the evacuation centres will not allow them. If you haven't yet microchipped your pet, now's the right time to perform this essential task.

Remember identification

Pets taken out of their home environment can become overwhelmed and frightened.

Make sure they wear a name tag and have up-to-date microchip details to make them easier to identify if they go missing. Where possible, keep leashes and cages in a convenient location for easy transport should you need to leave your home.

Evacuate

Natural disasters like bushfires and flooding can often see home occupants needing to evacuate – your pets included. Consider organising a safe location before a natural disaster strikes, such as a friend or family member's home. Bring enough supplies to ensure their and your comfort.

Settle in

A new routine and environment can be overwhelming, and your pets might be unsettled. Keep them inside in a quiet area with familiar bedding for the first few days to help them adjust. You might also like to use

toys and treats to provide stimulation. If you notice any health or behavioural problems during this time, seek help from your vet.

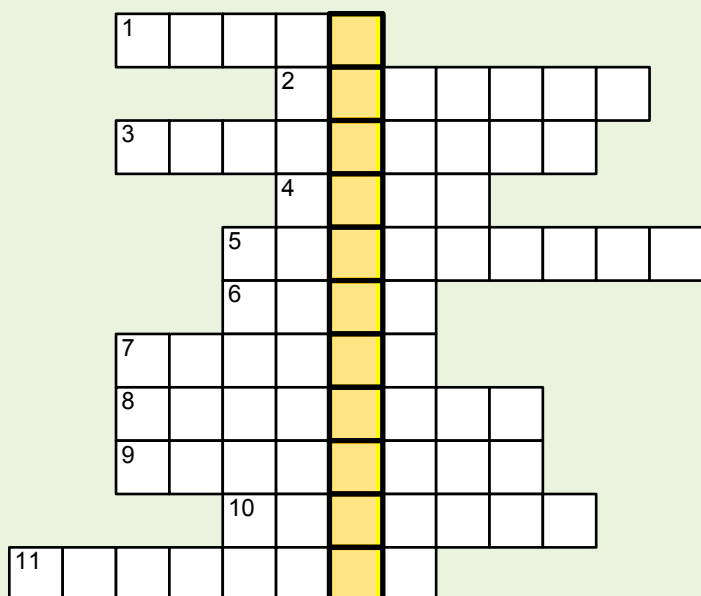
Natural disasters can affect our pets as much as us. Putting an emergency plan in place for you and your pet, might mean a less stressful evacuation.



HIDDEN WORD

Find the hidden word in the bold squares by finding the answers to the clues in the puzzle. The hidden word is on the back page.

- Plant material in food that helps with digestion.
- The substance produced and used to turn glucose into energy.
- The way an animal acts or behaves.
- A condition that causes an animal to consume non-food items.
- A condition in which you are unable to move or feel all or part of your body.
- The crying sound made by a cat.
- Of or relating to the cat family.
- Cruel or unkind to animals.
- Condition where insulin doesn't work properly and affects glucose concentration.
- Of, relating to, or involving genes.
- To remove (from a dangerous place).



TIPS FOR BUYING PETS ONLINE

Every year, tens of thousands of pets are advertised for sale online in Australia and it can be hard to ignore the cute images of kittens and puppies. But before you click 'buy', here's what you need to know.

You may believe all listings are genuine, but, unfortunately some are not. Scammers can trick you into paying for a dog or cat that doesn't exist, and thousands of pets are listed with no background information. These animals may have health and behavioural problems, or have been bred inhumanely.

If you're unsure about the authenticity of a website, contact the RSPCA for the guidelines for the online selling of pets and what warning signs you should look for. Breeder regulations vary by state – you can check these on government websites.

Be suspicious if any seller encourages you to buy without seeing the pet, or wants to deliver them. You should be able to meet your potential pet and view their living conditions in person.

Good breeders and private sellers will know the background of the animals. They will also have proof that your pet has passed a veterinary health check and has the required treatment and vaccinations before being sold.

If you're not set on a particular breed, why not check your local shelter? Thousands of animals need loving homes. Choose trustworthy establishments such as the RSPCA, shelters, rescue groups and pounds. Although the background of these animals isn't always known, they are given health checks, and the staff may be familiar with their personalities.

In summary, try to find out all you can about the pet and their owner, and the environment they've come from. Your local vet may be able to offer advice on the right type of pet for you, and the best place to search.

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING PET DIABETES

Learning that your pet has diabetes can seem like a death sentence, but with the right veterinary team and treatment, it's a manageable illness.

It's easy to assume that diabetes is just a human illness, but many cats and dogs are diagnosed with diabetes mellitus (DM) across Australia. Just like humans, they go on to receive treatment and care that allows them to live long and happy lives.

DM is a complex condition affecting the glucose concentration in your pet's blood. When your dog or cat makes too little insulin, doesn't utilise it properly, or stops producing it, their body can't convert their food to energy and health problems occur.

How do they get diabetes?

Receiving a diabetes diagnosis can be unexpected, but there are risk factors in both cats and dogs, such as:

- obesity
- disease (including dental disease)
- pregnancy
- medications
- genetics.

Early signs

Testing for glucose and ketones in urine is the most effective way to diagnose diabetes, but there are some early signs such as: excessive thirst, increased urination, unexpected weight loss, and increased appetite.

In more severe cases, you might notice loss of appetite, lack of energy, depressed behaviour, and vomiting. If left untreated, diabetes can lead to more serious health complications.

Does diet matter?

Diet matters before and after a diabetes diagnosis. Often, obesity is a contributing factor in a pet being diagnosed with diabetes. Once they receive a diagnosis, their diet can play a vital part in their future wellness.

Most vets will recommend a specific low-fat diet. In dogs, this might include high-quality protein, fibre, and complex carbohydrates to slow glucose absorption.

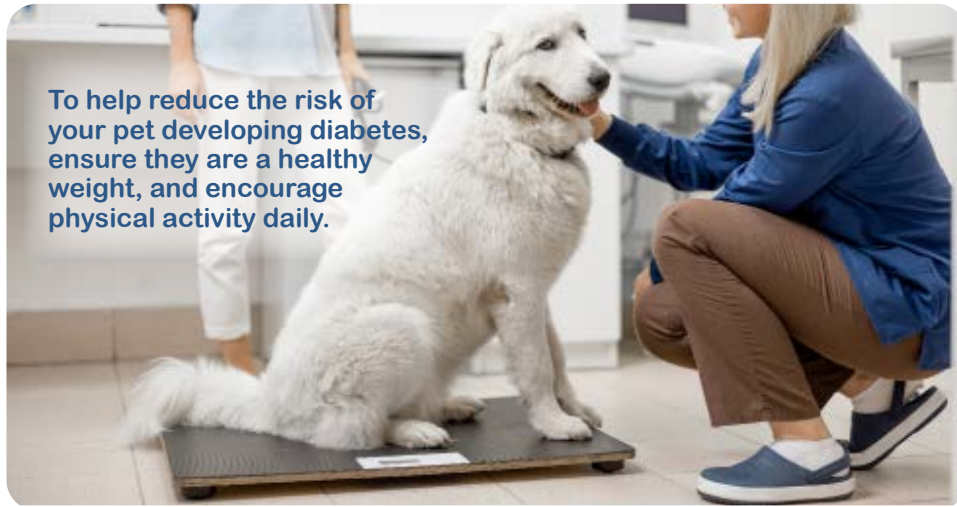
Living with diabetes

Just as humans can learn to live with their diabetes, you can learn how to help your pets with a treatment plan and the ongoing support of your vet team.

The management plan from your vet will be tailored to your pet and may include insulin medication, diet, exercise, and glucose monitoring.

Diabetes is not a condition to take lightly, and some cases can be more challenging than others, but many owners manage their pet's diabetes without complications.

If you suspect your pet has diabetes or want to check in about their health plan, contact us today. The sooner diabetes is diagnosed and treatment started, the better chance your pet has of a normal life.



To help reduce the risk of your pet developing diabetes, ensure they are a healthy weight, and encourage physical activity daily.

LEAVE THE LEAVES ALONE!

Eating leaves could spell trouble for your canine friends.

Although Australia doesn't typically experience the same volume of leaf litter in autumn as the Northern hemisphere, there's still plenty of fallen leaves around for dogs to play in or take a curious nibble. But is this a healthy habit?

Why do dogs eat leaves?

Boredom, medical issues, and unfulfilled dietary needs can all contribute to the reasoning behind a dog's desire to munch on leaves.

They might also just be curious about what the leaves taste like and explore with their mouths. Some dogs can have pica, a condition that causes them to consume non-food items and may indicate underlying health issues.

Dietary issues

There's no denying that grass and leaves contain fibre, but they lack nutritional value. The occasional leaf might not harm your pet, but continued consumption might be to fill a gap in their nutritional needs.

Checking your pet's diet with us is worthwhile to find out if they're getting all the nutrients they need. We can recommend healthier ways to ensure your dog gets the

fibre they need, such as a change in kibble, dog-safe vegetables or fibre supplements.

Can leaf-eating be dangerous?

Eating leaves occasionally can be harmless, but some plants are toxic to animals and can lead to uncomfortable and potentially deadly side effects like: gastrointestinal bleeding, paralysis, kidney and liver failure, and seizures.

Eucalyptus, Palm, Moreton Bay chestnut, and Elderberry are just a few of the common trees that can drop leaves,

seeds and berries which are poisonous to animals. There are also thousands of common garden shrubs, weeds, and indoor plants that can cause harm to your pets.

If you suspect your dog has eaten any poisonous plant material, seek veterinary treatment without delay. It can help to collect anything your pet may have chewed to help your vet determine what it is.

We can also perform a thorough health examination to rule out underlying conditions and give helpful advice to nip leaf-eating in the bud.



WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR CAT MEOWS EXCESSIVELY

Domestic cats have a broad vocal repertoire to communicate their wants, needs, and emotions. It's up to us to work out what they're trying to tell us.

It can be frustrating when our cats start meowing excessively. They can't tell us why they're meowing but can use communicative cues to get our attention. They have become quite skilled at managing humans to get what they want – usually food, shelter, and affection.

Waiting for food

Some cats will start reacting when you stray from their regular feeding routine. Even a slight delay can sometimes be enough to set off incessant meowing.

Attention

Cats don't want to be alone as much as we think. Sometimes, they meow to get our attention and engage us in petting or play.

Environment

Many cats start meowing when placed in pet carriers. It's not uncommon for cats to meow when in an unfamiliar or strange environment. They'll also let you know when they want to go out or come inside.

Illness

While attention and food are some of the leading causes of excessive meowing, illness might also be a cause that requires investigation. Overactive thyroid and kidney disease can result in symptoms like thirst, hunger, and pain, which might cause your cat to meow more than usual.

What to do about excessive meowing

Many pet owners know how to read their cat's meows and understand their wants and needs. Sometimes, giving them attention and feeding them is all it takes to ensure a satisfied cat. However, if their vocalisation is out of the ordinary, it's advisable to take your pet to your vet to rule out any serious illnesses.

Once health causes have been eliminated, you can address their behaviour. By ignoring them when they meow and giving them what they want once they stop meowing, they might learn that their needs won't be met through just meowing.

While cats meow for many different reasons, ruling out health concerns is the first step. We can then investigate other reasons your pet could be meowing so much.



HIDDEN WORD

ENVIRONMENT

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 |

Disclaimer: The information in this newsletter is not intended to be a substitute for professional advice, diagnosis or treatment. Decisions relating to your pet's health should always be made in consultation with your veterinarian.

VET NEWS

Nigel is now back with us working Mondays and Tuesdays, after his time visiting and working in Switzerland. If you want to practise your German then book a consult with Nigel!!



Now that we have Nigel back, Richard is going to have a sabbatical for a few weeks in May and June, leaving the care of your beloved pets in the very safe hands of Kerri, Lauren, Narelle and Nigel. Richard doesn't promise to send photos; he's not much good on social media!

MILLION PAWS WALK

Yes! It's back! Another sign that we are slowing getting back to normal after the Covid pandemic, we will be organising the Busselton's chapter of the RSPCA Million Paws Walk.

This is going to be held on Sunday May 28th. Planning is still underway so keep your ear to the ground for location and start time to be advertised.

This is a wonderful way to support the RSPCA and to witness a whole variety of lovely dog breeds altogether in the same place.

DAD JOKES *(Courtesy of Richard)*

What is the favourite breed of dog in Kalgoorlie?

The Golden Retriever!

What dog breed is most likely to blow up bridges?

Jack Russell Terrorists!

Which cat breed is the world champion at Origami?

The Scottish Fold!

IN MEMORY

"Rowley" Brown
"Summer" Bussell
"Timba" Discover Deadly
"Soulja" Gardner
"Ruby" Menzel
"Remy" Poole
"Google" Smith
"Chelsea" Stone
"Tessie" Taylor
"Marloo" Taylor
"George" Poole
"Toby" Sheedy
"Kev'n" Sykes & Moore
"Jo-Jo" Teal

Our newsletter is free! Take a copy with you.