

# BUSSELTON VETERINARY HOSPITAL

60 Bussell Highway

(PO Box 124)

Busselton, WA 6280

P: 9752 1433

E: bsnvet@bsnvet.net.au

W: www.bsnvet.net.au



**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

WINTER 2023

with compliments

In this edition we talk about...



**YOUR MEDICINE,  
NOT YOUR PET'S**



**DOES SMOKING  
AFFECT PETS?**



**THE REAR END:  
ANAL GLANDS**



**CONTAINED,  
CONTENT CATS**

## Are your kids ready for pets?

Children can form lasting bonds with companion animals like cats and dogs, but harmonious relationships often take time and planning.

It's important to prepare your children for your new pet by teaching them how to behave around animals, care for them, and keep themselves safe.

### Choosing a pet for your family

One of the most important decisions you'll make is what type of pet to choose. Consider your financial position, time constraints, lifestyle, living situation and your children's ages.

Some people can only commit to a goldfish, while others have time for a dog's training and care requirements.



If you plan to adopt from a pet shelter, bring your children along to help find a suitable companion. Shelter staff may be able to assist with this.

### Setting family rules

Once your pet is home, make some family rules regarding care and safety. These include not touching animals while they're eating and sleeping, and how to handle pets gently and kindly.

Ensure your pet has a safe space to call their own, away from family members.

You can also teach your children how to feed and exercise their pet and recognise signs of happiness, stress, or fear, such as wagging tail, yawning, and hissing.

Inviting a new pet into the family home can be exciting, but planning is crucial to ensure it goes off without a hitch. Try out some of these tips to help set your family up for success.

## Tips for introducing a dog or puppy

There are more than six million dog owners in Australia, meaning millions of families have successfully welcomed dogs into their homes. Follow these tips for a stress-free introduction:

1. Ask children to sit quietly and calmly.
2. Let the dog investigate their new family members.
3. Instruct your children to speak softly.
4. Teach your children to stroke the dog gently on the shoulder rather than the head or tail.
5. Provide a treat for the dog when they remain calm.
6. Remove the focus from the dog to allow them to settle into their new environment.



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

## Keeping cats contained and contented

Keeping cats indoors or in a contained area is now being considered safer and healthier than letting them roam free, but how easy is it to contain your cat, and can they really be content?

According to wildlife research analysis, each roaming pet cat in Australia kills an average of 186 mammals, birds, and reptiles each year, 60% of which are native. Now, cat owners are being asked to keep their cats inside or contained outdoors.

For cat owners, it's a big ask, but education may be the key to a contented cat and a thriving native wildlife population.

### Why contain cats?

While some pet owners do keep their cats contained to help save our native wildlife, there are plenty of other reasons to restrict their roaming – and it might even mean your cat lives longer!

Confining cats to their home and yard is becoming more popular to prevent the spread of disease, reduce unwanted pregnancies, and protect them from injury and death. Cats that roam outdoors generally die sooner because they're exposed to more harmful situations and environments than contained cats.

Diseases, parasites, snake bites, poisons, traffic accidents, and fights and attacks can all spell premature death for our free-roaming felines. In particular, dog attacks and being hit by cars are common ways roaming cats can die.

### But isn't it cruel to keep cats confined?

No, although many cats like being outside for exercise, play, and stimulation; there's no reason why these needs can't be met in a contained environment. Cats require a designated toileting area, space to climb and feel safe, entertainment, and exciting food options. The more these needs are met in their contained environment, the happier they'll be.



### How to keep your contained cat happy

Restricting your cat's living area can be a daunting prospect, especially if you've only ever left your cat to its own devices. Starting when they're young is easier, but if they are older, it's not too late. Here are some ideas to keep your cat content indoors:

- break up large spaces into interesting areas
- provide plenty of safe places to play and hide
- create high play and climbing areas
- offer window views
- give them a cat 'gym' and toys (or another cat!)
- take care of their toileting needs – like several clean litter trays
- offer a variety of quality food types.

In summary, indoor cats can be just as content and free to explore as they are outside. If you're thinking about creating an indoor or contained outdoor area for your cat, talk to our friendly clinic team about the best steps to take first.



**FIND  
12  
DIFFERENCES**

**SOLUTION**



Keeping cats indoors, or in a contained yard, could mean they'll live longer than cats who roam around the neighbourhood!





## Smoking: is it harmful to our pets?

We know that smoking cigarettes presents health risks for us, but what about our pets?

Being exposed to second-hand smoke from cigarettes can have serious health effects on animals, including cancer, skin, eye and respiratory diseases. Tobacco smoke contains over 7,000 chemicals such as nicotine and carcinogens (cancer-causing agents). Vape aerosol also contains a number of these harmful substances.

Third-hand smoke can also be harmful as many of the chemicals can collect on clothes and surfaces in homes and cars. This poses a particular risk to indoor pets as they spend most of their time on the floor or furniture, where they're exposed to higher concentrations of these harmful residues.

### Dogs

Dogs with high-level exposure to tobacco smoke have an increased risk of atopic dermatitis, breathing or lung issues, and cancer. For dogs already living with such illnesses, second-hand smoke can make their symptoms worse.

The length of a dog's nose may also determine how tobacco smoke affects them. Long noses trap more particles so the exposure is greater and the risk of nasal cancer is higher. On the other hand, short- and medium-nosed breeds have a higher risk of lung cancer because fewer tobacco smoke particles get filtered out by their nose and more go directly into their lungs.



Keep your cars smoke-free! Smoking in cars with pets also causes risks to their health as they can't escape from the smoke.

## Should I call the vet?

Knowing when you should contact your vet is not easy if your pet isn't experiencing any obvious symptoms of illness, but some of the more subtle signs can indicate that it's the right thing to do.

You might be worried that your concerns are too minor or vague and you don't want to waste your vet's time, but you know your pet better than anyone else. Your vet can reassure you and help your pet receive the care they need.

### They're acting out of character

You know your pet's quirks and behaviour. Animals can't tell you what's wrong, but they can display different behaviour from normal when they're uncomfortable, in pain, or feeling unwell.

The signs may be noticeable, like breathing problems or difficulty balancing. However it may simply be that they are shaking their head, or they've lost their appetite or aren't as active or playful as they usually are.

### Cats

Like dogs, cats can also inhale smoke in a room occupied by a smoker. This can increase their risk of developing lymphoma, a serious cancer of the immune system.

Cats are fastidious groomers and can spend many hours taking care of their coats. Their grooming habits may cause them to ingest smoke particles from their fur, leading to an increased risk of mouth cancer.

### Birds

Birds exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke may be at risk of illnesses such as: lung cancer, heart problems, pneumonia, allergies, feather plucking, and fertility problems. Birds are also susceptible to third-hand smoke from particles that have coated their feathers, and from exposure to their owner's hands and clothing.

### Fish

Tobacco smoke also impacts the vital organs of aquarium fish and is a common cause of disease.

Nicotine from smoke is easily dissolved in water and can end up in fish tank water. Once exposed to toxic nicotine levels, fish are at risk of muscle spasms, colour loss, rigid fins, and death.

If you suspect your pets are suffering ill-effects from tobacco exposure, make an appointment with your vet as soon as you can.

## Getting to the bottom of it: anal glands in dogs

All dogs have anal glands, but what are they for, and why do some dogs have trouble with theirs?

Anal glands are small sacs sitting inside your dog's anus containing a liquid which they use to mark their territory. Healthy anal glands empty naturally when a dog poos, but can fill and block when that doesn't happen.

### What are anal glands for?

Anal glands are essentially the dog's version of a mobile phone. Dogs communicate with other dogs by adding their own unique scent to their droppings. This can explain why some dogs always poo when they go on a walk, and why they love stopping to smell other dog poos. They're messaging their neighbourhood friends!

### Common anal gland problems

Anal glands typically require solid stools to apply the necessary pressure to empty. Most dogs have no problems emptying their anal glands, but it's a common problem for overweight dogs with weak bottom muscles, those born with narrow anal gland openings, and dogs with frequent diarrhoea.

These signs can sometimes indicate blocked anal glands: scooting their bottom along the ground, straining to poo, excessively licking or scratching their rear, or blood or pus near or on their stool.

### Treating anal gland blockages

When your dog can't empty their glands naturally, your vet might recommend manual expressing, which involves gently squeezing the gland. This is a quick and straightforward treatment that should be left in the capable hands of your vet team.

If your dog is still distressed after manual treatment, they might have an infection. In this instance, further investigation by your vet team could be required.

Blocked anal glands can be uncomfortable for dogs and upsetting for owners. If you suspect your dog is experiencing a blockage, make an appointment to resolve it quickly before more serious problems occur.

### Check-ups and vaccinations

Keeping up-to-date with your pet's check-ups and vaccinations can also alleviate concerns about many aspects of their health. Vaccinations can protect pets from many serious diseases; and regular check-ups will help them to maintain good health and ensure that any future problems are identified and taken care of.

Whether your pet is due for a checkup, or simply acting out of character, contact us to make an appointment. It's best not to take any chances with your pet's health, and we will always take your concerns seriously.



# Your medicine could be poisonous for your pet

There's a reason human medicine carries warning labels. Some common medicines for humans can be dangerous for animals, even in small doses.

Our pets don't know that our medication isn't meant for them. They see you eating something and think they might like it too. Poisoning from medicines is very common.

### Paracetamol

Paracetamol is an analgesic we use for pain and fever. While often effective for our ailments, it's dangerous for dogs and cats. Cats don't have the necessary enzymes to metabolise the drug, sometimes resulting in liver and kidney damage. Without treatment, it can be fatal.

Dogs are also sensitive to paracetamol and can experience symptoms like vomiting, diarrhoea, jaundice, and abdominal pain. They can also experience liver damage leading to liver failure.

### Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)

We use NSAIDs, like ibuprofen, to alleviate pain, inflammation and fever. Some NSAIDs are toxic for dogs and cats, causing life-threatening issues such as stomach ulcers, kidney and liver damage and other serious

complications, even at low doses. If your pet is experiencing pain, don't be tempted to share your medicine, see your veterinarian for the most suitable treatment.

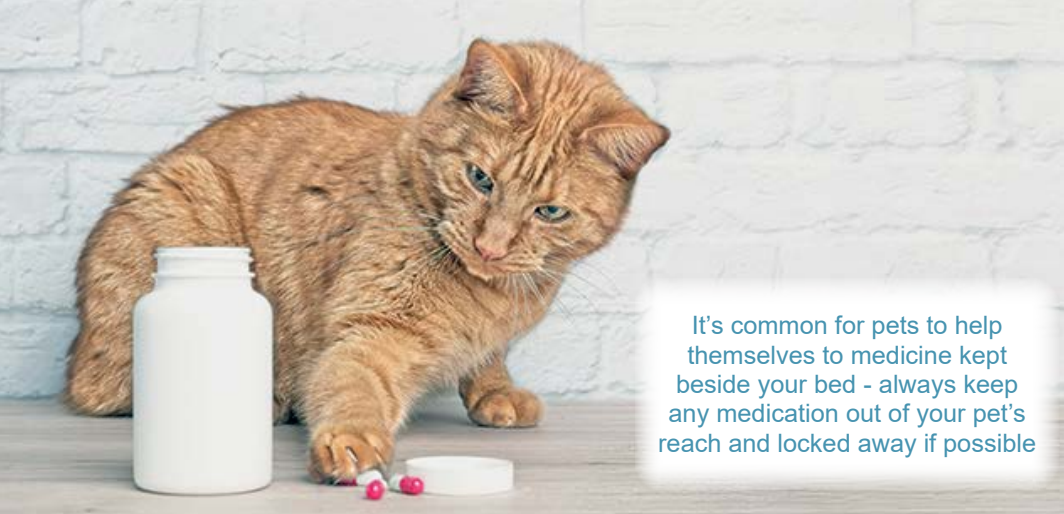
### Antidepressants

Antidepressants may be beneficial for both humans and animals, but not all are suitable or safe for animals. You should only give your pet antidepressants that are recommended by your vet, and always follow dosages carefully. Overdosing can be dangerous for your pet and can lead to neurological problems and stimulant effects. Your pet may experience heart rate problems, increased blood pressure, and abnormal body temperature.

### Sleep Aids

It's easy to assume that your sleep aid will also help your pet sleep, but that isn't the case. Sleep aids can make many animals agitated rather than sedated. They may also experience lethargy, slowed breathing, and lack of coordination.

The common medications that alleviate your ailments may be toxic for your pets. Contact your vet immediately if you think your pet has accidentally ingested your medicine.



It's common for pets to help themselves to medicine kept beside your bed - always keep any medication out of your pet's reach and locked away if possible

## 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

- Annual check up
- Follow up examination
- Flea/tick treatment
- Vaccination
- Worming
- 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

Now that we have a full complement of dedicated and experienced Vets, Richard is taking the opportunity to take some long service leave. He will be away May and June as he and Caroline explore some of Europe and the Arctic circle, before swinging down to Spain for some sunshine before heading back to winter. He promises to try and take some photos and might even be able to work out how to load some onto Facebook if anyone is interested.

While away, Kylie will still be keeping everyone in order and Kerri, Nigel, Narelle and Lauren will be here to look after you and your lovely pets.

### DENTAL REFINEMENT

Just recently we have done some modifications inside the hospital to extend our dental area to allow for 2 dental suites to be available in the same area. This is a really exciting development as it means we will be able to help more of our patients get their teeth cleaned and dental problems sorted out even quicker.

Did you know that by 3 years of age 85% of dogs already have some degree of dental disease? If this is not treated, even if only cleaning the teeth, then deeper periodontitis occurs and then teeth are in danger of becoming so infected that they need to be pulled out. It isn't uncommon for us to find a patient who needs 10-20 teeth removed!! Get in before this happens and save your pet pain and loss of their teeth, and save yourself from having to smell bad breath and also save your dollars! Cleaning teeth is MUCH cheaper than oral surgery needed to remove teeth.

Lets' work together to ensure that our pets all have lovely pearly white teeth throughout their lives.



What luxury... sun, grass and clean teeth!

### DAD JOKES (courtesy of Richard)

What do you call a rabbit that has fleas?

*Bugs bunny*

Why couldn't the leopard play hide and seek?

*Because he was always spotted!*

You know what the loudest pet you can get is?

*A trum-pet*

### IN MEMORY

- "Bella" Blair
- "Chino" Brown
- "Harley" Browner
- "Derby" Gregory
- "Alfie" Gunning
- "Jazz" Johnson
- "Connor" Jones
- "Millie" Rutty
- "Ollie" Sheridan
- "Chelsea" Stone
- "Tia" Waddington
- "Katelyn" Williams

Our newsletter is free! Take a copy with you.