



Cats & Urination

Urination is part of the cat's communication. They use it to mark their territory. Cats that have been house trained for a long time can start to urinate in the house if they get stressed for whatever reason. Be it a new bossy cat in the neighbourhood, the arrival of a new kitten in the household, change in household routines because of the arrival of a baby, or sometimes just a rearrangement of the furniture. The smell of cat urine can be difficult to get rid of and an air freshener is often introduced to try and neutralise it. However the new smell can often make matters worse as the smell will be new to the cat and hence the cat feels the need to express more marking behaviour to mask the smell and make it cat territory again. There are several products on the market that are designed to break down the smell of urine without adding a new smell. Ask at the pet shop or come in for advice from your vet.

Inappropriate urination may also be a sign that something is wrong. It may be as simple as a bladder infection but can be a symptom of systemic illness. Overweight cats are prone to diabetes and this can be treated with insulin injections. Some cats only need insulin for a while as a change of diet might be sufficient to keep them diabetes free long term, where as other cats need injection for the rest of their life. In older cats, frequent urination, often seen together with increased water intake can be a symptom of liver or kidney failure. Alteration of food can be of help and there are specific diets tailored for cats with renal failure or liver failure. It may also become necessary to start your cat on long term medication in order to slow down the process of degeneration and improve the symptoms so that your cat feels more comfortable.

Lack of urination can also be a problem, especially in male cats. The urine pH has implications for the bladder health. If too high or too low, it can cause formation of crystals and sometimes bladder stones. Small crystals can be passed along with the urine but once small stones start to form they can get lodged in the urethra and cause a blockage. This is an emergency and if left untreated often leads to death. Early treatment is essential in order to clear the blockage and get the bladder working again. Following successful treatment your cat will usually have to stay on a specific diet and sometimes medication in order to reduce the risk of it happening again.



Going away for Christmas?



Pets are not always able to come along whenever the family is off on a holiday. Some are lucky to have good neighbours or family members that are willing to either look after your pets at their home or come in and look after them in your house. But occasionally it becomes necessary to book your pet in to a kennel or a cattery. If the latter option is required, make sure you book early as catteries and kennels do have a limited number of spaces and often get busy over the summer, particularly around Christmas and The New Year.

When considering kennel/cattery placement while you are away, do check that vaccinations are up to date. It would be a shame if you get stuck on the day of departure, having to stay at home because the kennel or cattery refuses to take your pet due to an overdue vaccination. Cat and dog vaccine has been proven to last more than one year, but in case of regular boarding at a kennel or cattery, it is still recommended to have it done yearly. This is due to risk and exposure. A dog that hardly ever meets other dogs are less at risk of catching a disease such as Parvo or Canine Cough (Previously known as Kennel cough) than a dog that mixes frequently with other dogs. In cats the case is the same with regards to catching cat flu.

Should you choose to stretch the vaccination to once every 2 years, then it would be wise to still bring your pet in for an annual health check at the vets. A lot can happen in 2 years and mild symptoms can go unnoticed by an owner, but identified by your vet so that treatment can be started to ensure you have a happy cat or dog for as long as possible.



Case of the Month—Casey

Casey is a 6 year old female working huntaway. She has had several litters of pups and her owners decided it was time for her to be speyed. Casey was a happy healthy dog when she arrived and very smoothy. She had her pre-anaesthetic physical and it was normal, so she was anaesthetized and surgery began.

Although speying is a very common surgery in small animal practice it is important to remember that for the animal this is major surgery. In a human, the same surgery will leave a woman at home for a minimum of 6 weeks! Dogs and cats bounce back much quicker than us but will still need time to recover.

Casey's surgery was quite routine, until we reached her left ovary. It was much larger than normal (about the size of a large lemon vs. a normal ovary the size of an almond), and had more blood vessels supplying it. This was an ovarian tumour.

Ovarian tumours are not common but one of the side effects they can have is to suppress the animal's bone marrow, which can cause a lack of the clotting factors and make the animal more prone to bleeding. On the bright side removing the ovary is generally curative if the tumour has not spread.

Unfortunately Casey's bone marrow was affected and 5 hours after surgery she started bleeding from her incision. We immediately treated her with frozen canine plasma to give her the clotting factors she was missing. We also got out our intrepid blood donor dog Parker, in case she needed a transfusion. Luckily she stopped bleeding and we were able to send her home without a transfusion a few days later. She will need about 6 weeks to make the extra red blood cells and clotting factors she needs, so she will have to take a little holiday from work.

Throughout, Casey was a model patient but she is a good reminder that 'routine' surgeries are not always routine and vets and owners need to remember that animals can always surprise us!

Welcome Liv

Liv J Gåsland started in Kennington as a full time small animal vet mid October this year. Before joining Vetco Limited, Liv worked in Gore at Combined Animal Services for nearly 2 years. She has also worked in Greymouth for 15 months and as a locum in Dunedin, Waikouaiti, Oamaru, Timaru and Temuka.

She qualified at University of Bristol in 2001 and has got 12 year experience treating small animals in England, Wales and more recently in New Zealand. She arrived in New Zealand in August 2009 with her husband Seamus who is soon to start in Winton as a GP.

In her spare time Liv enjoys boating with her husband or relaxing at home with gardening, house renovation or taking their 2 border collies, Suzi and Rudi for a walk. Suzi came over with them from England and Rudi was acquired as a rescue in May this year.



All about Dogs...

- > A dogs first sense to develop is touch
- > The only sweat glands a dog has are between the paw pads
- > A dog's third eyelid is a protective lid called a 'haw' which keeps moisture in its eyes
- > Grapes & Raisins even in small amounts can cause kidney failure in dogs 
- > Dogs have two times the amount of muscles in their ears than humans
- > Spiked dog collars were used in ancient Greece to protect dogs throats from wolf attacks 
- > A typical dog has the same brain aptitude level as a toddler. Dogs can comprehend about 25 words and count up to 5
- > Dalmatians are often deaf doggies. Thirty percent of them cannot hear in either one or two ears
- > Greyhounds can run as fast as 45mph and are the fastest canines on the planet

