



Business at the back end

Constipation in dogs can be a serious issue if left unattended. It arises when there is infrequent or irregular defecation as a result of problems occurring in the bowels. One isolated episode of constipation is not a worry, but if this continues or occurs frequently, your veterinarian needs to be contacted. Things to look out for are general lethargy, straining when trying to toilet (either urination or defecation), soreness in the belly and unwillingness to eat or drink.



Why do dogs get constipated?

This list includes a few causes that can be monitored by you at home;

Excessive grooming, especially if they are itchy dogs, can lead to an increase of hair in the poo leading to difficulties as hair is very dry. We have several products that help the digestion of hair in the gut to aid its passage through.

Some dogs like to eat unusual objects such as sticks, stones or bones. These can lead to a vast number of problems throughout the gut and can also be very painful on expulsion! Try to give your dogs an alternative to these objects to chew on, such as a pigs ear or robust chew toy.

For older male dogs that still have their testicles, the prostate gland can enlarge and begin to cause an obstruction of the colon, thus inhibiting toileting. It is good to get your dog's prostate checked as he gets older to prevent this problem from occurring.

As dogs get older the body doesn't work like it used to! Arthritis creeps in and makes things just that much more difficult. This means that squatting down to go to the toilet can hurt sometimes and some dogs may start to go less regularly. Because of this, faeces build up and can often result in impactions. If you find your dog is getting stiffer, especially in the hind end, talk to your veterinarian to discuss potential options for pain management.

Constipation is a serious issue and can escalate quite quickly. If you have any concerns, either give your veterinarian a call or book an appointment for your dog to be seen.

It's kitten season!!

As spring tracks along and summer draws closer we have been getting cats in to be spayed which are pregnant, much to their owner's surprise! Female cats can have their first heat as early as 5-6 months and it is possible for them to get pregnant from this. Tom cats will roam many kilometres from home and so whether you live in town or rural your females aren't safe. The oestrus cycle tends to repeat every 2-3 weeks with the cat being on heat for 1-7 days. While on heat she will try and escape the house to mate, may have changes in behaviour becoming very smoochy and you may hear her yowling a lot more than normal. This cycle may continue until she is mated, spayed or the daylight hours become sufficiently short. Although August through April is the most likely time for your cat to fall pregnant they can be mated year round depending on the climate/ temperatures.



There is a common misconception that animals need to have a litter in order to "settle down". This is not true. In today's day and age it is far more responsible to get your animal spayed before it gets pregnant. Having kittens is a big responsibility and pretty hard on your cat. There is often a huge supply of kittens with not enough demand. As a result we tend to see many kittens abandoned and not cared for. To put it in perspective: The average number of litters a cat can produce in one year is 2.5. The average number of kittens in a litter is 5. In two years, one female cat and her female offspring can theoretically produce 340 cats.



The raw truth of the matter

As veterinarians it is our responsibility that the welfare needs of cats and dogs are adequately met. All too often we have owners telling us they are feeding their pets a sole raw meat diet. This can be very adverse for your pets health.



The feeding of bone pieces can have a number of detrimental effects. As discussed on page one feeding bones can lead to constipation. Another problem which we see far more commonly than we would like is oesophageal or gut obstruction where the bone gets lodged in the tract preventing food and water to pass. Animals with obstructions deteriorate very quickly and unless taken to surgery fast can have their gut rupture or intestine damaged so badly that large parts need to be removed.

Sole raw meat diets do not meet the basic nutritional requirements of your pets. This is particularly important in young growing animals. When fed diets consisting largely or entirely of meat they may develop bones which are poorly mineralised and easily broken. The reason behind this is because raw meat has low calcium and relatively high phosphorus which results in even lower calcium. Affected animals become depressed and develop sudden lameness.

Not only is there a risk to your pets when feeding raw food but also to yourself. Raw meat can contain many different infectious organisms which can make both you and your pet sick. Salmonella, E. coli and Campylobacter are bacteria which cause severe vomiting and diarrhoea. Many of these bugs can be killed by cooking or freezing meat. As long as meat is correctly processed and fed in combination with other complete feed it can be a tasty added treat in your pets diet.

One of the common arguments for raw meat diets is that it is what cats and dogs used to do when in the wild. Firstly the domesticated pet is far from the distant ancestors who used to freely roam the land. Secondly it must be remembered that cats and dogs in the wild don't eat just the meat; rather the whole carcass including bones, the intestines (including the vegetable matter contents) and other offal. It must also be noted that the lifespan of our precious pets far exceeds that of any wild relative.



Funnies

A team of little animals and a team of big animals decided to play soccer. During the first half of the game, the big animals were winning. But during the second half, a centipede scored so many goals that the little animals won the game. When the game was over, the chipmunk asked the centipede, "Where were you during the first half?" He replied "Putting on my shoes!"



A duck, a skunk and a deer went out for dinner at a restaurant one night. When it came time to pay, the skunk didn't have a scent, the deer didn't have a buck so they put the meal on the duck's bill.

There were two cows in a field. The first cow said "moo" and the second cow said "baaaa." The first cow asked the second cow, "why did you say baaaa?" The second cow said, "I'm learning a foreign language."



Imaginary cross breed dogs

Collie + Lhasa Apso: collapse, a dog that folds up for easy transport

Pointer + Setter: Poinsetter, the traditional Christmas pet

Pekingese + Lhasa Apso: Peekasso, an abstract dog

Irish Water Spaniel + English Springer Spaniel: Irish springer, a dog fresh and clean as mountain air

Terrier + Bulldog: Terribull, not a good dog

Blood Hound + Labrador: Blabador, a dog that barks incessantly

Malamute + Pointer: Moot point, owned by... oh, well, it doesn't matter anyway

Collie + Malamute: Commute, a dog that travels to work

Deerhound + Terrier: Derriere, a dog that's true to the end

