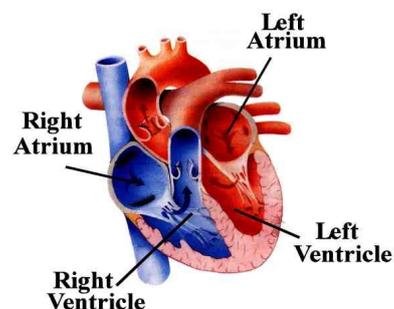


## HEART FAILURE IN DOGS

Heart disease is seen typically in older dogs. The heart is a strong muscle and receives oxygenated blood from the lungs then pumps it around the body to keep our organs functioning. It has 4 chambers and valves to keep the blood flowing in the right direction. The main types of heart disease in dogs are due to faulty heart valves (endocardiosis) and thin weak heart muscle (dilated cardiomyopathy). Endocardiosis usually affects small breed dogs where as dilated cardiomyopathy typically affects large breed dogs. When the heart stops pumping effectively fluid builds up behind the heart (in the liver and lungs) and not enough blood is pumped to the vital organs (brain and kidneys).

The signs you will notice at home if your dog has heart failure includes;

- \* Coughing (especially at night)
- \* Reduced ability to exercise
- \* Lack of energy
- \* Trouble breathing
- \* Weight loss
- \* Fainting



There is medication available to help reduce the back load of fluid in the lungs and to help the heart pump better. Sometimes we will take an x ray of the chest to help us decide what type of medication your pet needs and to help monitor the heart and lungs. Although there is no cure for heart failure, medication will help to make the heart work more efficiently and improves your dogs quality of life.

## TAILS ARE COOL

Tail docking is amputation of the tail. It is performed by the choice of some breeders who believe it enhances the dogs appearance. It is not ethical for veterinarians to perform surgical procedures on animals purely for cosmetic reasons. The tail is an important part of the dog by helping with balance when changing direction when running and playing. In days of old it was wrongly thought that this "violent" spinning and waving of the tail was restricting the dogs agility but this movement is happening to improve the dogs agility. The posturing and motion of the tail are also visual communication cues. It is of no benefit to the dog to remove its tail and the procedure is associated with pain and potential complications. Tail docking is performed because of the breeders or owners beliefs and serves the dog no useful purpose.

The Veterinary Council of New Zealand (VCNZ) is the governing body of veterinary standards in New Zealand. The VCNZ considers that amputation of all or part of a dog's tail without having a justifiable medical reason or because the dog is a particular breed, type or conformation is unacceptable and deem the vet to be behaving in an unethical manner if they do.

You should think carefully before purchasing a dog with a docked tail as it is the people who demand for tails to be docked that keep this unnecessary practice going.



### RABBIT CALICIVIRUS WARNING

We have a number of clients who recently have had bunnies which have suddenly died. This is most likely due to Rabbit calicivirus disease (RCD). This virus was illegally introduced into New Zealand about 15 years ago in efforts to reduce the wild rabbit population. RCD is very contagious and causes death in almost 100% of bunnies who catch it. Often no clinical signs are seen and the rabbit is found dead. In other cases depression, anorexia, trouble breathing, shaking and bleeding is seen followed by death a few days later. There is no effective treatment for RCD.

Bunnies less than 8 weeks of age seem to be resistant to catching RCD. The virus is spread by infected bunnies and can also be carried on objects (including insects) which have been in contact with the affected rabbit.

Vaccination helps to prevent RCD in your pet bunny. We can start vaccination from 6 weeks of age. If your rabbit is less than 12 weeks of age when it receives its first vaccination it will need a booster vaccine 4 weeks later. An annual booster is recommended.



### ADVANCES IN TREATMENT OF HYPERTHYROIDISM IN CATS

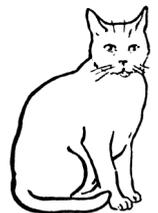
Hyperthyroid is a common disease of older cats. They are generally presented to the clinic with weight loss, despite ravenous appetites due to an increased metabolism. A blood test is required to diagnose this disease and many of our clients are currently medicating their cats for it. Treatment options include daily medicating, surgery and radioactive iodine. Up until recently the only available medicine has been a human thyroid drug called neo-mercazole, requiring administration of a pill twice a day. By the end of next month we should have THREE newly launched veterinary registered hyperthyroid medicines available.

Vidalta – is a ONCE a day pilling regime.

Methimazole Spot One – a convenient topical ointment that gets applied to the cat's ear.

Hills y/d cat food – a prescription diet that has been specially formulated that replaces the need for other medication.

If you are interested about finding out more about these new options, feel free to contact one of our small animal vets at our clinics.



### Animal Trivia.....did you know?

- Honeybees have hair on their eyes to help them collect pollen
- Camels have three eyelids to protect themselves from blowing sand
- Butterflies taste with their hind feet
- Penguins can jump as high as 6ft in the air
- Mosquitoes are attracted to the colour blue twice as much as to any other colour
- Many hamsters blink only one eye at a time
- New Zealand Kiwis lay the largest eggs with respect to their body size of any bird
- The only continent without reptiles or snakes is Antarctica
- The average canary has about 2200 feathers

