



THE NEWSLETTER FROM THE SMALL ANIMAL TEAM - ISSUE # 26

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Rat Bait

Rat bait is the most common poisoning we see in dogs. Rat bait is tasty and is very likely to be eaten by dogs if they can access it. Even if the bait is hidden away rats can drag it out into the open enabling pets to get hold of it. Therefore any rat bait on your property is a risk for poisoning dogs.

The bait works by interfering with the body's ability to clot blood resulting in internal haemorrhage and death. It usually takes about 3 days after eating rat bait before you start to see signs of poisoning. Because the bleeding is internal usually the only signs of bleeding you may notice is blood in the urine or faeces or sometimes blood being coughed up. Often dogs poisoned by rat bait become very lethargic and their gums become very pale. From 3 days after poisoning onwards a blood test can be done to check to see if the dog has been affected by rat bait.

Fortunately rat bait is one of the few poisons that has an antidote. As long as we see the dog early enough, before too much bleeding has occurred we can treat with vitamin K to help restore the blood clotting pathway and prevent further blood loss. Vitamin K must be continued for several weeks until the effects of the rat bait have worn off. If there has been significant blood loss a blood transfusion is required as well as vitamin K therapy.

Rat bait poisoning is expensive and time consuming to treat and can have a fatal outcome for your pet. Be very cautious with any rat bait you may have on your property.



Puppy Preschool

Did you know the time you put into your puppy early in life has the greatest impact on its behaviour long term. The socialisation period of dogs occurs primarily from 8-16 weeks of age and it is critical that your pup gets lots of social interaction and training during this period.

Give your puppy the best start in becoming a good canine citizen by enrolling in our puppy preschool. Classes are suitable for puppies 8-14 weeks of age who have had at least one vaccination. These are held on Thursday evenings at the Kennington clinic with Andrew and run for 4 weeks. This is a great way to socialise your pup and start some basic training. Contact us to find out more.

Metabolic Diet

One of the most common diseases in our pets is obesity. Being overweight makes life uncomfortable. The extra fat causes stress on the joints, heart and organs making it more difficult for your pet to move and breathe. The primary reasons for obesity in pets are over eating and lack of physical exercise.

There has been research done which shows being overweight causes an increase in the genes responsible for laying more fat down and a decrease in the genes responsible for burning fat off. This intensifies the problem.

There is now a new pet food, Hills metabolic, which helps to reverse this situation to increase the expression of the healthy genes and decrease the expression of the unhealthy genes. Hills metabolic is clinically proven to work with each pet's unique metabolic response by activating the body's natural ability to burn excess body fat and regulate appetite.

This diet is based on the Mediterranean diet in humans which has strong evidence to support its benefits. 88% of pets are reported to have lost weight within 2 months of going on to Hills metabolic.

We provide a free Podgy Pets service. Ring up and book your pet in for a free weigh in with one of our friendly vet nurses. We are keen to help your pet reach and maintain its healthy body weight and there are a number of ways to achieve this, including Hills metabolic diet.



Introducing Holly...

We would like you to meet Holly, the newest addition to our team at Kennington. She works alongside Byron as a veterinary nurse. Holly is enthusiastic about all aspects of vet nursing and takes pride in looking after your pet.

You can make an appointment with our nurses for nail clipping, worming and flea treatments, sutures out, drain removals, repeat injections and weigh-ins.

Case of the Month – Zak

Zak is a placid 7 year old Neopolitan Mastiff. He came in recently because he was breathing heavily and off his food. When examining him we noticed he was putting a lot of effort into each breath, had a fast heart rate and groaned when touching around his tummy. We decided to sedate Zak and take some x-rays of his abdomen and chest. The x-rays of the abdomen were fairly normal but the chest x-ray showed his heart was enlarged and his lungs were very dense. These findings suggest heart failure.

In large breed dogs it is common for the heart wall to stretch as the dog gets older thus enlarging the heart. As the heart stretches the wall gets thinner and becomes weaker. This means the heart becomes less effective as it is not strong enough to pump all the blood out of its chambers. As a result the heart beats faster to compensate for pumping less blood out with each beat. With time there is a back load of blood behind the heart because the heart is not strong enough to pump enough blood out of it. This causes fluid to build up in the lungs making it difficult to breath.

We started Zak on medication to draw the fluid off his lungs to make it easier for him to breath and medication to help his heart to beat stronger and break the downward cycle of heart failure. Within a week Zak is now breathing well, has regained his appetite and is more energetic. He will need to stay on medication for the rest of his life to help maintain a healthy heart. Treating dogs with heart failure can make a huge difference to their quality of life. If your pet is showing signs of laboured breathing, coughing, lethargy, weight loss or collapsing then book it in to have a heart check.



Wounds

One of the most common presentations we see in the small animal clinic is wounds. Just like people, animals injure themselves in a wide variety of ways and treatment can be very different for a small clean recent wound than for a large, infected, road rash wound.

If your animal gets a wound of any sort please ring the clinic straightaway. Occasionally wounds are not serious and can be treated by the owner at home with a salt water or disinfectant flush and careful observation. However some wounds such as cat bite wounds, even if they seem small will inevitably get infected so antibiotics are nearly always indicated. Speaking to a nurse or vet at the clinic will give you an indication of whether small wounds need seen.

Some wounds obviously need seen. Any wound that is larger than 2 cm, gaping, actively bleeding, or oozing pus will need seen as soon as possible. For large wounds or wounds that are continually bleeding, suturing will be necessary.

In some cases immediate closure is the best course of action. This means your animal will stay in the clinic, be sedated and the wound will be sutured. Sometimes a drain will be installed to prevent fluid from accumulating in the wound bed.

Some wounds will be best with a delayed closure, meaning the wound is cleaned and bandaged for a few days then closed with sutures at a later date. This is often due to gross contamination of the wound, where infection is a major concern, or where the viability of all the damaged tissue is uncertain. This allows time for the antibiotics to work and for a good bed of healing tissue to be formed, meaning the closure of the wound is most likely to be successful. In general the animal will stay in the clinic for this period.

In very bad wounds or where a large amount of skin is missing or devitalized, grafting skin or using incisions to release skin tension may be necessary. The animal in this case will have multiple suture lines where other tissue has been moved to make closure of the primary wound site easier.

If your animal has a wound, please ring the clinic as soon as possible and we will help you decide the best course of action.

Did you know...

- > Lionesses are better hunters than males and do most of the hunting for the pride
- > The average housefly only lives for 2 or 3 weeks 
- > Although a giraffe's neck is 1.5 – 1.8 metres, it contains the same number of vertebrae as a human neck
- > Unlike humans, sheep have four stomachs, each one helps them digest the food they eat
- > Sharks have outstanding hearing. They can hear a fish thrashing in the water from as far as 500 metres

