



When your pet suffers from a broken heart

How do we know if one of the most important organs in our pets body isn't working as it should?

There are a few tell tale signs of heart failure in pets:

- Coughing, especially at night. This is a result of fluid backing up in the blood vessels within the lungs and then fluid leaking out of the blood vessels as the pressure builds up
- Not wanting to exercise or becoming tired more quickly. This is because blood isn't pumping around the body as it should. Blood has an important role in carrying oxygen to ensure all your organs function as they should.
- Laboured or fast breathing. This relates to both the possible fluid build up in the lung cavity and the fact that the blood is struggling to get the oxygen it needs. By increasing the depth or the speed of breathing the body is trying to compensate.
- Fainting with strenuous exercise. A result of lack of blood and oxygen reaching the brain, this is a defence mechanism created by the body to ensure that blood is directed back to the brain.
- An enlarged abdomen. Just like fluid can build up in the lungs fluid can also build up in the abdomen which appears as a swollen stomach.
- Weight loss or poor appetite



If you suspect heart problems it is important to book your pet in to see a vet. The vet may be able to pick heart failure up by simply listening to your pets heart. Some animals with heart failure can be more difficult to diagnose. An x-ray may be needed to get an answer. The earlier treatment can be started the better your pets quality of life and we can increase their life expectancy also.

The Unsuspecting Culprit—PEANUT BUTTER

Peanut butter, a tasty treat which many owners like to spoil their dogs with. But... Did you know some peanut butter contains the artificial sweetener Xylitol. Although this tastes great and can be beneficial to humans it can make your precious pooch very sick and can even result in death. Xylitol is an artificial sweetener which can be found in gum, mints, lollies and sometimes peanut butter.

In dogs it causes a rapid increase in blood insulin which has a role in the body to store glucose away therefore dropping blood sugar levels/ glucose (hypoglycaemia). This hypoglycaemia can last for several days and is a very dangerous state for the body to be in. Signs which your dog can show include wobbliness, weakness, vomiting, diarrhoea and even seizures. Xylitol also can cause liver failure due to damage and death of liver cells.

Unfortunately Xylitol is absorbed into the body very quickly, this means the damage can already be done before the vet even sees your pet. If you see your animal ingest a Xylitol containing product contact your veterinarian immediately. Inducing vomiting is often the 1st line treatment if the animal has ingested it less than 20-30 minutes ago. However if out of this time period the Xylitol is already likely to have been absorbed and vomiting can worsen the hypoglycaemia. The vet will likely put your pet on IV fluids with dextrose added. There are multiple different drugs which can also be given to support the liver depending on level of damage.

Toxic doses: As little as 100 milligrams per kg can cause hypoglycaemia and anything more than 500 milligrams per kg can result in liver damage. 55gms of peanut butter containing Xylitol will kill a 10kg dog.



Cats can also be poisoned by Xylitol however they tend not to ingest products containing it as frequently as dogs. It may be best to avoid peanut butter as a precaution to save your pet any unnecessary ill effects.

Case of the month.....Bella

Bella is an 8 week old Labrador puppy, currently unvaccinated and fed good quality puppy food. Her owners called reporting one of her eyes was blood shot, she had a limp in her hind leg and was a lot more lethargic than normal. When brought in to the clinic she had gone further downhill, now with both eyes blood shot and lethargic to the point she wouldn't stand. On examination it was found that she had areas of bleeding into the whites of her eyes (sclera), her breathing was quickened, her abdomen appeared swollen and her gum colour was paler than normal.



Bella was admitted into the hospital and bloods were taken. In house we ran a test to see how many red blood cells she had in her blood stream, her levels were a little low so she had a mild anaemia. Chest and abdomen x-rays were taken which were both normal. At this point there were 2 main possibilities of what could be going on; rat bait ingestion or haemophilia. Bloods were sent to the laboratory in order to get a confirmed diagnosis. In the meantime Bella was put on fluids to increase her blood volume back to normal and she was given vitamin K to treat for possible rat bait toxicity. The next morning she was very bright and bouncy. The bloods came back from the lab showing a prolonged clotting time (pro thrombine), which made rat bait toxicity a lot more likely. Bella has since gone home with 4 weeks worth of vitamin K to treat for rat bait poisoning.

Most of the common rat baits are anticoagulants which seem to be delicious for dogs. They act by reducing the vitamin K dependent coagulation factors essentially thinning the blood. As a result there is internal bleeding which can present in a number of different ways; some dogs will appear lame due to bleeding into the joint, others can appear bloated due to blood in the abdomen. You may notice blood in your dog's faeces or urine or as in Bella's case unusual blood spots in the eyes or on the gums. Some animals have difficulty breathing or develop a cough due to blood in the chest cavity.

Will and the worm



Will was excited he was growing up
 He had found a new home, because he was the cutest pup
 His family had never had a dog
 So their knowledge on him was a bit of a fog
 They started to worry when his tummy got fat
 A vet trip was in order after he vomited on the mat
 The vet gave him one look up and down
 And said "Worms have gone to town"
 Being so young, Will couldn't cope
 But luckily, he could be treated and there was still hope
 Fortnightly worming up until 12 weeks old
 Could have prevented these worms, the family was told
 From then until 6 months of age
 Monthly worming will deal with the worms at this stage
 For the rest of his life every 3 months is best
 This will keep the worms at rest

Rabbit Vaccination: An update

As of May 2018 it was confirmed that New Zealand has 3 strains of the rabbit calicivirus—Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV). In response, MPI have imported Filavac which protects against RHDV2 (the variant found in Marlborough), as well as the Korean variant released in March/April 2018 and the variant released in 1997.

The need for vaccination of our pet rabbits exists due to the deadly effects of the disease. The symptoms can include fever, depression, weight loss, diarrhoea and bleeding from the nose or ears.

The recommended vaccination protocol for Filavac is for rabbits to be vaccinated from 10 weeks of age followed by an annual booster. As well as vaccination, there are simple steps to minimise spread of the disease which include:

- Keeping rabbits separated from wild rabbits
- Washing hands between handling rabbits
- Controlling insects such as flies and fleas
- Thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting cages and equipment
- Avoiding cutting grass and feeding it to pet rabbits

