

ZOONOSES – diseases you can catch from your pet

NZ is free from many of the serious zoonoses overseas, like Rabies, plague, hydatids (eradicated) and Lyme disease but there are still a few diseases you can catch from your pet that you should be aware of. Most of these diseases can be prevented by routine worming, good hygiene and prompt treatment of affected animals. The risk of contracting disease is more than offset by the benefits pets provide. As well as being great company, pets are known to reduce stress and blood pressure and play a part in improving fitness and mental health.

Roundworms – these are common worms in all puppies and kittens. Adult animals can also carry worms if not regularly dewormed. The worm eggs are shed in cat/dog faeces and can survive in the environment for years. Children are most commonly affected due to playing in affected soil. Eating unwashed vegetables grown in infected soil is also a risk factor. When a human eats a roundworm egg the egg can hatch then migrate anywhere in the body. Organs commonly affected include the eye, brain, liver and lungs. The migrating worms can cause serious harm. Therefore regularly worming your pet and picking up faeces is important.

Toxoplasmosis – this is a tiny parasite spread by kittens and sometimes sick cats in the faeces. Cats become infected by eating infected prey or other raw meat. Most cats infected with toxoplasmosis do not show any symptoms. Infected cats only shed toxoplasmosis in their faeces for about 10 days before they recover. The faeces can remain infectious for years. Human infection is most damaging in pregnant women as it can cause damage to the developing baby. The greatest risk factors for infection are gardening, unwashed fruit & veges and undercooked meat, however pregnant women should not handle cat faeces or litter trays. You can help to prevent toxoplasmosis infection in your cat by not feeding raw meat and by restricting your cat's ability to hunt (difficult!).

Fleas – humans do not host cat and dog fleas but fleas can bite humans. Regular treatment of pets and the environment helps to prevent infection.

HOT TIPS FOR SUMMER

Sunburn – pink noses, ears and those dogs with pink bellies that like to sunbathe need to be wearing sunscreen. Filtabac is a suitable product to protect your pet's skin and can be purchased over the counter from our clinics.

Bee stings – curious puppies are very prone to being stung on the face at this time of the year. You will notice sudden swelling of the affected area. Prompt veterinary attention is required.

Heat stroke – dogs locked in the car with the windows up can rapidly overheat on a hot day.

Barley grass – watch out for barley grass over summer as it causes a big problem when it gets stuck under the skin, in the ears and eyes of dogs that explore through open grass lands.

Kitten season – if your cat is over 5-6 months and not already spayed then give us a ring to book her in before you are faced with unwanted kittens.

Seasonal allergies - spring and summer is a common time for seasonal allergies to appear. Signs include sneezing, runny eyes, gagging and itchy red skin. Please make an appointment if your pet is showing these signs.

Vaccinations - cats and dogs going to kennels/catteries over summer must be up to date with vaccinations. Dogs going into kennels require a kennel cough vaccine as well as the core vaccination. The kennel cough vaccine (intranasal) needs to be given at least 3 days prior to going into kennels. Avoid the Christmas rush and book them in now if they are not already up to date.

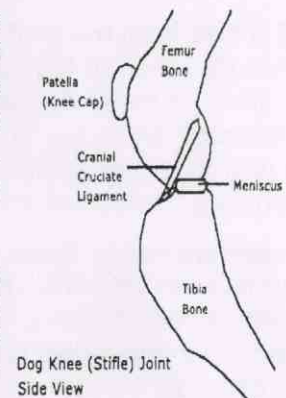


CASE OF THE MONTH—NARLEY

Narley is a 3.5 year old female Staffy. She came to us because she was lame on her right hind leg. She had been lame on this leg before but usually it resolved by itself with rest. This time she had been lame for 2 days without improvement. On clinical exam Narley was partially weight bearing but then would become non weight bearing after a short walk. She was very tense and would not allow full examination. We started some conservative treatment with anti-inflammatories and rest with instructions to revisit for sedation and x-rays if Narley did not improve within a week. Narley improved a little over the week but quickly became worse again with exercise. She revisited and a tear to her right cruciate ligament could be felt under sedation.

The cruciate ligaments make up part of the knee joint. They help to hold the femur (leg bone) steady on top of the tibia (shin bone). Just as rugby players can injure their cruciate ligaments on the field, active dogs are also prone to injury. Some dogs are more likely to develop cruciate tears due to poor hindlimb conformation. Obesity is also a strong contributing factor in cruciate rupture. When the cruciate ligament is damaged the knee joint becomes unstable. This results in lameness, pain, swelling and arthritis.

Narley's unstable right knee joint was repaired surgically. This involved making a replacement ligament to restabilise the joint. Over the following 6 weeks Narley was strictly rested then very gradually returned to exercise so that the knee joint had a good chance to heal. She is now weight bearing well on her right hind and her owners are very happy with her progress.



Fun Animal Facts

- All penguins have white underbellies. This aids in avoiding detection by their predators
- Fingerprints of koala bears and humans are virtually indistinguishable
- Mosquitoes are attracted to people who have recently eaten bananas.
- A typical hen lays 19 dozen eggs a year
- In ancient Egypt, killing a cat was a crime punishable by death
- Out of 20,000 species of bees, only 4 make honey
- At birth, a panda is smaller than a mouse and weighs about four ounces
- A goats eyes have got rectangular pupils
- Sea snakes are the most poisonous snakes in the world
- Whether an alligator is a male or a female is determined by the temperature of the nest where the egg is hatched—90-93 degrees will make it a male, 82-86 degrees will turn it in to a female

Client Christmas BBQ



The Vetco annual Christmas BBQ is to be held at the Edendale Clinic on Friday the 17th of December, starting at 4.30pm. The best prime cuts of steak, top quality sausages and healthy salads will be served along with refreshments. All of Vetco's clients are welcome to attend as an acknowledgement of your support over the past 12 months.

PET INSURANCE—The benefit of pet insurance is that unexpected veterinary costs are paid for if your pet becomes ill or is injured in an accident. Some policies will also pay out when the pet dies, or if it's lost or stolen. Sweden and Britain have the highest level of pet insurance in the world. In New Zealand pet insurance for cats and dogs is still fairly uncommon. There are a number of companies that provide pet insurance in NZ. It is something worth looking in to, especially if you are adopting a kitten or puppy.

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