



ARTHRITIS

Arthritis (or degenerative joint disease) is a common problem in cats and dogs. Arthritis occurs when the cartilage lining the joint surfaces becomes damaged. There are a few different ways this can happen. In older animals there is gradual weakening of the joints over time. In some younger animals hereditary conditions such as hip dysplasia can accelerate the onset of arthritis due to poor conformation of the joint. In any aged animal significant injury to a joint can later result in arthritis.



Signs you might notice at home that indicate your dog has arthritis include difficulty getting up in the mornings, lameness after exercise, unwilling to go out for walks and difficulty getting up stairs or into the car. Cats can be tricky to assess as many owners assume they are just getting old and grumpy. Cats with arthritis sleep more often, have trouble jumping up onto chairs, beds and window sills and may be grumpy when handled. The signs of arthritis are often more pronounced during the colder winter months.

Although arthritis is not a condition which can be reversed completely, there are many different treatment options available to help repair damaged joints and reduce pain. These include:

- **Controlled Exercise**—a couple of short walks each day on flat terrain is much more comfortable for your arthritic dog than one very long walk each day
- **Soft Bedding**—this reduces the stress on joints over night and also helps to prevent pressure sores from forming
- **Weight Control**—any excess weight your pet is carrying around directly increases the amount of stress on the joints. Arthritic pets are prone to weight gain as they become less active. By altering the diet we can usually progress back to a healthy body condition.
- **Diet**—besides weight loss diets, a specially formulated joint diet (Hills j/d) can also help with signs of arthritis.
- **Supplements**—shark cartilage, deer velvet, green lipped mussel extract and other goodies help to repair damaged cartilage to some extent and provide some pain relief.
- **Pentosan Injections**—a series of Pentosan injections help to reduce ongoing damage to joints and provides some pain relief.
- **Anti-inflammatory Drugs**—these are usually highly effective at reducing the pain associated with arthritis.

If you suspect your cat or dog has arthritis then please make an appointment to visit for a consultation. Your pet is individual in terms of the type of treatment it may need. Treating arthritis can greatly increase the quality of your pet's life.

Welcome Yvonne

New to the Kennington branch is our mixed animal veterinarian—Yvonne Winn BVSc. Yvonne worked in Oamaru as a mixed animal vet after completing her degree in 2005; from where she moved to Omarama to take on a sole charge position at a newly established branch clinic.

Last year she travelled to South America, UK and Europe where she spent a few months working in a mixed practice in Scotland.

Yvonne enjoys all aspects of mixed practice but is particularly interested in surgery. In her spare time she enjoys exploring the outdoors and the occasional multi-sport event.

Worming

All cats and dogs should be wormed every 3 months once they are 6 months of age or older and if they venture outside at all. Cats and dogs can be wormed from 2 weeks of age.

From 2—12 weeks, Worm every 2 weeks

From 3—6 months, Worm once a month

It is necessary to use a broad spectrum wormer to kill all intestinal and lung worms.

Please ensure you use a licensed product for your species of animal as they are not interchangeable and can cause serious harm.



CASE OF THE MONTH—MILLIE

Millie is a 7 year old female Fox Terrier. While out hunting for rabbits Millie unluckily got caught up in a bonfire. Her owner gave her some paracetamol tablets then took her to the vets the next day.

On examination Millie had burns to her face and front legs. There were two problems to deal with here – Millie's burns and possible paracetamol toxicity. Because Millie had ingested the paracetamol the day before it was too late to get it out of her system. Instead Millie was started on some medication to help counteract the toxic effects of paracetamol and her burn wounds were treated.

Blood tests were taken to look for any organ damage the paracetamol may have caused. Fortunately the results were normal.

Millie continued on antibiotic and pain relief medication for her burns as well as zinc cream. However the extent of the damage the bonfire had caused became more obvious over the next few days as the affected areas became dead and sloughed off. At this stage Millie was hospitalised so that we could removed the dead tissue and provide daily bandage changes.

Over the following four weeks Millie's wounds healed remarkably. Her case is a good reminder not to give human medication to animals unless prescribed by a vet. Dogs and people are not the same! It also shows the body's amazing capacity to heal given care and time.

PREGNANCY TERMINATION

Lately we have had quite a few requests for abortion injections in dogs. Abortion injections are sometimes an option to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. They are not however without their risks. Some of the potential side effects include pyometra (infection of the uterus), anorexia, injection site reactions and treatment failure.

Preventing unwanted pregnancies are of course a much better approach than aborting them. There are a few different ways to prevent an unplanned pregnancy in your dog.

- **Desexing:** by far the best option if you are not intending to breed from your dog. This can be performed from 6 months of age.
- **Strict confinement when on heat:** an entire female dog will be on heat for 3 weeks. At first you will notice a swollen vulva and red vaginal discharge. This discharge then changes to a straw colour later on in the heat. Heats occur every 4-12 months. A fenced yard or a kennel is not always adequate confinement as entire males will jump fences and can sometimes mate through wire netting.
- **Contraception:** medication is available to prevent a dog coming on heat or to suppress a heat which has just started. This too however is not without the potential for side effects.



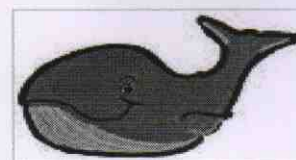
ANIMAL FACTS!!

- A hippopotamus can run faster than a man
- Did you know fishes cannot live in the dead sea because the water has too much salt in it

- A crocodile cannot stick its tongue out



- Dolphins sleep with one eye open
- The blue whale is the largest animal on earth. The heart of a blue whale is as big as a car, and its tongue is as long as an elephant



- A rat can last longer without water than a camel can
- A woodpecker can peck twenty times a second

KENNINGTON CLINIC

11 CLAPHAM ROAD
03 230 4689
MON—FRI
8.00AM—5.00PM
THUR—LATE NIGHT
8.00AM—8.00PM

EDENDALE CLINIC

14 SWEENEY STREET
03 206 6170
MON—FRI
8.00AM—5.00PM