



Hilton Veterinary Hospital

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In March, I left Hilton for the World Small Animal Veterinary Association congress in Auckland with great expectations and looking forward to meeting up with my fellow committee members on the WSAVA nutrition committee. Although it is a nutrition committee it is made up of cardiologists, feline and canine medicine specialists, general practitioners from all over the world and of course specialist nutritionists. The committee has been very busy developing tools for vets and pet owners to help them make their own choices about their pet's nutrition. Now I may be over simplifying things but I do apply some basic rules to what I do in life. One of those rules is if it is not working, change it. Doctors say this in a fancier way. They say "make your treatment goal orientated." This means when you start a treatment you should have an envisaged outcome or expectation for that treatment in the form of resolving symptoms over a specific time frame. That goal must be assessed and new goals set if the treatment meets expectations. Perhaps the treatment should be changed if it does not meet expectations. They call it insanity if you continue to do the same thing and expect different results.

I am told that what people read on the internet has a major influence on people's decisions. I think that is a good thing. As a vet who likes to follow a logical progression of steps to an accurate diagnosis I find it very helpful if people come in educated about the possible diseases causing their animal's symptoms. Surprisingly many times when a diagnosis is accurate fewer drugs are used for the animal's treatment than when the diagnosis is guessed or unsure.

Very often in fact the treatment ends up being a dietary change. There is a Chinese proverb that says "the way to true health is through the stomach."

Now back to my committee members. To my absolute surprise the most clever of all the committee members, a specialist nutritionist stood up and gave a lecture on the use of treats and supplements together with premium dog and cat foods. When questioned about this his reply was that feeding for pet owners is an emotional act. People feel that they are letting their pet down if they do not get treats. "So" said Dr Nick Cave, "the pet owners are going to do it anyway. I might as well show them how to do it properly". At that moment all the strict teaching that I had received from University Professors and food companies imploded. As a multiple pet owner myself I realised that he was absolutely right. So in the next few months we will run articles in our newsletter that feature some of the tools that the WSAVA nutrition committee have developed. The first is an article on the internet and canine nutrition. In this article it highlights some of the claims to be careful of as well as some more respected sites including good homemade food recipe sites. I hope this contributes to making your show of love in what you feed your dogs a healthy one. Next month I will discuss the cats. I bet Ginger cannot wait.

Enjoy the newsletter. Thank you for your support over the last 3 years.

If your contact details have changed please remember to inform us.

Regards

Martin de Scally

Dedicated to the health of your pets.

After Hours

Emergencies:

Please phone
(033) 343 4602

Contact Details:

If your contact details have changed then please inform us.

This month's

theme:

Nutrition for dogs

The Nurse's Clinic: Blood Transfusions by Sr Cheryl Marr

At Hilton Veterinary Hospital it is not uncommon for a staff member to dash home and fetch an unsuspecting dog to donate fresh blood for a patient. A blood transfusion can be a life saving procedure when a patient has become severely anaemic, where blood loss through injury or illness has become a life threatening situation. This includes biliary, snake bites, rat poison ingestion and parvovirus. Recently, during a spate of malicious poisonings we treated dogs that had been baited with rodenticides eg. warfarin, and difethialone and blood transfusions helped these dogs on the road to recovery.

Sometimes an animal's immune system can attack its own red blood cells (immune mediated haemolytic anaemia) and in this case a transfusion would be essential. Often in the case of prolonged surgery when diseased organs are removed eg splenectomy, a transfusion would be advised.

Blood can be used freshly donated or having been refrigerated for a limited period. Dogs also have blood groups and ideally donor and recipient should be type matched, but in most cases blood loss is an emergency and side effects of unmatched blood are rare, especially if it is a first transfusion.

An animal in good health can donate blood every 2 to 3 months. 15 to 20% of your dog's blood volume can be safely donated. Blood is collected mostly from sedated dogs or cats. The blood is drawn into a 450 ml bag containing anti coagulant from a large vein in the neck or less commonly from the cephalic vein in the foreleg. Blood is collected in special containers. We use human blood collection packs. During donation the blood flows into the bag using gravity and vacuum assistance. Blood can be stored for up to 5 weeks. Bagged blood can also be purchased from certain clinics or Onderstepoort.

After your dog has donated blood it is advised to restrict exercise for a few days and make sure he/she is eating good quality food.

Cats can also receive and donate blood and would receive the relative amount of blood for their bodyweight.

Donor dogs should:

- 🐾 Be clinically normal
- 🐾 Be adequately vaccinated
- 🐾 Be regularly dewormed and have flea and tick control
- 🐾 Not pregnant
- 🐾 Have a calm relaxed temperament
- 🐾 Weigh 28kg or more
- 🐾 Be free of all parasites, ie external and internal
- 🐾 Not be on chronic medication
- 🐾 Not have received a blood transfusion
- 🐾 Not have had puppies

Hilton Vet Hospital will give the owner R50 towards treats for the dog donating blood.



Me Too Mattresses

Me Too mattresses are used throughout Hilton Vet Hospital in the animal's domicile. So they have been tried and tested for over two and half years with fantastic results. They are foam mattresses sealed in vinyl plastic and come with summer and winter material covers. We carry standard stock but they can be ordered to your specification. Please speak to Lana, Jackson or Rebecca for your requirements.



WSAVA
Global Nutrition
Committee



The Savvy Dog Owner's Guide: Nutrition on the Internet

More than 75% of all American homes have computers and this is both a blessing and a curse. For dog owners, the internet provides vast amounts of information on many subjects. The information, however, is virtually unregulated and its quality ranges from excellent to pure quackery. Deciding which websites are trustworthy can be difficult!

Canine nutrition is a popular topic. There are literally thousands of websites, promoting everything from recipes for raw food and vegetarian diets; advertisements for supplements and holistic foods; recommendations for diets that allegedly prevent or cure disease; 'get-rich quick' pyramid-selling schemes for nutritional supplements and consultation services operated by 'nutritionists.' Many home-made diets are promoted - some which are almost nutritionally balanced; some that are mildly unbalanced and some that are downright dangerous!

All in all, many nutritional myths are perpetuated, many half-truths reinforced and many incorrect facts conveyed. There is, of course, some excellent information - but not nearly as much of it!

Surfing Tips

So how can you decide what to believe? Here are some recommendations to help you when evaluating the content of websites:

Discuss information with your veterinarian. What you read online should enhance what your vet tells you, not replace it. If in doubt, ask him or her to help you evaluate it.

Research the credentials of the site's author. Is it a pet owner; a company; a veterinarian; a PhD in animal nutrition or a board-certified veterinary nutritionist? Be careful when a person marketing his or her services claims to be a 'pet nutritionist' or a 'certified nutritionist,' as there is no standardization in training for this. The exception is a veterinary nutritionist who is board-certified by the American College of Veterinary Nutrition (ACVN) or the European College of Veterinary Comparative Nutrition (ECVCN). These are veterinarians who have undergone several years of rigorous post-graduate nutrition training in approved residency programs and who have passed the ACVN or ECVCN's certifying examination.

Read the website address. Sites with an address ending in .com are commercial. Those ending in .edu are educational and those ending in .org are nonprofit organizations. Large pet food companies often have high-quality websites with good general nutrition information that is separate from their product information.

Check the source of the information. Do the authors simply state that a product 'prevents cancer' or is there a reference to a scientifically-conducted research study? It is easy - though illegal - to make unproven claims for nutritional products but it is much harder to back them up scientifically. If there is a reference, where is it from? Is it from the author's own article or promotional literature or is it from a peer-reviewed veterinary journal? Most products on the internet do not cite studies to back up their claims. Those that do often cite studies on humans or rats which may not be pertinent to dogs.

Check the timeliness of the information. Things change quickly in veterinary medicine and especially in the field of nutrition. Many websites are out of date. What was recommended two years ago may not be accepted practice today. A good website will be updated frequently.

Be wary of anecdotal information. Descriptions of one person's experience (e.g. 'When my dog was diagnosed with kidney disease I gave him 'GETBETTER' nutritional supplement and now he's cured') can be misleading. While it can be useful to hear about other people's experiences, their positive evaluations do not mean that the actual product or treatment is really beneficial. Always discuss what you've heard with your veterinarian.

Watch out for rating websites. Most websites that rank dog foods do so either on opinion or on criteria that do not necessarily ensure a good quality food (e.g. price, ingredients, size of the company). It's important to use more objective criteria (science, quality control) in judging a dog food.

Be skeptical of grand claims or easy answers to difficult problems. Remember the old adage: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

If you are a critical web surfer and work with your veterinarian to analyze the information you find, you will reap the benefits of the computer age without experiencing its problems.



Below are the web addresses of some useful, accurate sources of information on nutrition:

Nutrition Guidelines

- World Small Animal Veterinary Association Nutritional Assessment Guidelines <http://www.wsava.org/educational/global-nutrition-committee>
- American Animal Hospital Association Nutritional Assessment Guidelines <https://www.aahanet.org/Library/NutritionalAsmt.aspx>

Tools for the Veterinary Healthcare Team

- World Small Animal Veterinary Association Global Nutrition Committee Nutrition Toolkit <http://wsava.org/nutrition-toolkit>
- Pet Nutrition Alliance – information and tools to increase awareness of the importance of optimal pet nutrition <http://www.petnutritionalliance.org>

Pet Nutrition – General Information for Pet Owners

- National Research Council downloadable booklet: Your Dog's Nutritional Needs <http://dels-old.nas.edu/banr/petdoor.html>

Pet Food

- Association of American Feed Control Officials: Information on regulations, labeling and other important facts about pet food <http://petfood.aafco.org/>
- FAQs about pet foods www.tufts.edu/vet/nutrition/faq/general_pet_nutrition.html
- Federal Drug Administration (FDA) Pet Food site: Information, links, food safety issues, recalls, pet food labels, reporting portal <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/Products/AnimalFoodFeeds/PetFood/default.htm>
- Pet Food Institute: Information on ingredient definitions, labeling regulations <http://www.petfoodinstitute.org/Index.cfm?Page=Consumers>
- Pet Food Report: Consumer's Guide to Pet Food www.petfoodreport.com

Nutrition Consultations

- American College of Veterinary Nutrition: Listing of board-certified veterinary nutritionists who will conduct nutritional consultations for veterinarians and/or pet owners www.acvn.org
- European College of Veterinary and Comparative Nutrition: Board-certified veterinary nutritionists in Europe www.esvcn.com

Home-cooked Diets

- American College of Veterinary Nutrition: Listing of board-certified veterinary nutritionists who will formulate nutritionally balanced homemade diet recipes for veterinarians and/or pet owners www.acvn.org
- BalanceIT: Commercial website which offers semi-customized balanced home-cooked diet recipes for pet owners with healthy pets. Veterinarians can customize pre-formulated recipes for animals with medical conditions www.balanceit.com
- European College of Veterinary and Comparative Nutrition: Board-certified veterinary nutritionists in Europe www.esvcn.com

Obesity

- Pet Obesity Prevention: Useful information on assessing pets' body weight, calorie needs, and weight loss tools www.petobesityprevention.com

Dietary Supplements

- Consumerlab: Site (with a small subscription fee for use) that independently evaluates dietary supplements (primarily for human supplements but some pet supplements are included) www.consumerlab.com
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA): Regulatory and safety issues of dietary supplements, adverse event reporting <http://www.fda.gov/food/DietarySupplements/default.htm>
- Mayo Clinic drugs and supplements information: Fact sheets on human supplements and herbs <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/drug-information/DrugHerbIndex>
- National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Dietary Supplements: Evaluating supplements, fact sheets, safety notices, internet health info <http://ods.od.nih.gov>
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Information Center: General supplement and nutrition information, links to a variety of dietary supplement websites http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=4&tax_level=1&tax_subject=274
- United States Pharmacopeia Dietary Supplement Verification Program: Independent testing of dietary supplements (human supplements only) <http://www.usp.org/usp-verification-services/usp-verified-dietary-supplements>

Raw meat diets

- Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine raw diet fact sheet http://www.tufts.edu/vet/nutrition/resources/raw_meat_diets.pdf
- FDA guidance document on safe handling and raw foods <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/AnimalVeterinary/GuidanceComplianceEnforcement/GuidanceforIndustry/UCM052662.pdf>

Other

- Ohio State Indoor Pet Initiative: Nutrition and other tips for optimizing the indoor pet's environment <http://indoorpet.osu.edu/>
- USDA Nutrient Database: Full nutrient profiles on thousands of human foods <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/search>



Staff Profile

Brian Kushaya

Brian joined our team in January 2013. He is one of our very dedicated and capable kennel hands who assists in looking after your precious animals.

Brian is married to Precious and they have 1 daughter, Alicia

Brian enjoys assisting in the operating theatre and observing the operations.

In his spare time, Brian enjoys listening to music and watching soccer.



Health Tips

Smelly Cat

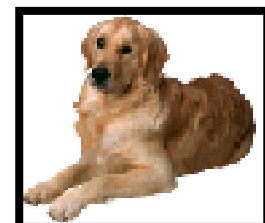
A cat who urinates in the house can be a frustrating and worrying problem. The thing to remember is that your cat is unhappy about the situation too, he's trying to tell you that something is wrong.

There are many *reasons* and *solutions* to your cat's litter box problem so ask us about it as early intervention is best.



Body condition

You need to become familiar with performing regular body condition scores on your dog. When you run your hands over your dog, you should be able to feel and (depending on breed/coat length) sometimes see their ribs relatively easily, with only a slight covering of fat. There should be a well-defined hourglass waist when viewed from above and the belly should slope upwards from the chest towards the hind legs. Performing regular body condition score checks on your dog, will enable you to notice any changes that may occur over time and alert you to possible weight loss or gain, which can sometimes indicate underlying health problems and should always be checked by your vet. This will be discussed in more depth in a future newsletter.



To make you smile

Why own a dog?

Why own a dog? There's a danger you know,
You can't own just one, for the craving will grow.
There's no doubt they're addictive, wherein lies the
danger.
While living with lots, you'll grow poorer and stranger.

One dog is no trouble, and two are so funny.
The third one is easy, the fourth one's a honey.
The fifth one's delightful, the sixth one's a breeze,
You find you can live with a houseful of ease.

So how 'bout another? Would you really dare?
They're really quite easy but, oh, dear the hair!
With dogs on the sofa and dogs on the bed,
And crates in the kitchen, it's no bother, you've said.

They're really no trouble, their manners are great.
What's one more dog and just one more crate?
The sofa is hairy, the windows are crusty,
The floor is all footprints, the furniture dusty.

The housekeeping suffers, but what do you care?
Who minds a few nose prints and a little more hair?
So let's keep a puppy, you can always find room,
And a little more time for the dust cloth and broom.

There's hardly a limit to the dogs you can add,
The thought of a cutback sure makes you sad.
Each one is so special, so useful, so funny.
The vet and food bills grows larger, you owe BIG
money.

Your folks never visit, few friends come to stay,
Except other "dog folks" who live the same way.
Your lawn has now died, and your shrubs are dead too,
But your weekends are busy, you're off with your
crew.

There's dog food and vitamins, training and shots.
And entries and travel and motels which cost lots.
Is it worth it you wonder? Are you caught in a trap?
Then that favourite one comes and climbs in your lap.

His look says you're special and you know that you will
Keep all of the critters in spite of the bill.
Some just for showing and some just to breed.
And some just for loving, they all fill a need.

Gosh, winter's a hassle, the dogs hate it too.
But they must have their walks though they're numb
and your blue.

Late evening is awful, you scream and you shout
At the dogs on the sofa who refuse to go out.

The dogs and the dog shows, the travel, the thrills,
The work and the worry, the pressure, the bills.
The whole thing seems worth it, the dogs are your
life.

They're charming and funny and offset the strife.

Your life-style has changed. Things won't be the
same.

Yes, those dogs are addictive and so is the dog game.

Author Unknown



If you have a story about your pet that you would like to share with us, then please e-mail it to lauren@hiltonvethospital.co.za

In next month's issue: Nutrition for Cats