



Hilton Veterinary Hospital

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A very big thank you to all of you who gave such positive feedback on the launch of the first newsletter.

Also thank you for all the suggestions and contributions towards the December newsletter.

We are near the end of the year and we would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your pets a very happy festive season.

Please note that Hilton Veterinary Hospital will be open every day over the festive season. Public holiday hours will apply where appropriate. These are 9:00-10:00 am. Outside of these hours please phone (033) 343-4602 for the veterinarian on call.

Please take time to read the toxicology article in this newsletter. We have only addressed the plants here but will be addressing other pet toxins in future newsletters. Of special importance is the fact that chocolates and raisins are toxic to dogs and cats. So please do not give them chocolates or Christmas cake as treats.



We also see an increase in foreign object ingestion as a result of toys and pancreatitis as a result of rich foods being fed to dogs. The safe way to give dogs "treats" is to use digestible high quality dog treats.

On a sad note Dr Richard Burchell will be leaving us to pursue his academic interest full time at Onderstepoort. He may still be around to help with some weekends and locuming when I am away. We would like to thank Richard for helping to make Hilton Veterinary Hospital the high quality pet care facility that it has become and wish him all the best with his future.

We also have to say good bye to Lana Payne who is following her husband to George. We are very sad to lose her and I am sure she will be an asset to the George veterinarians.

Good luck Richard and Lana!

Regards

Martin de Scally

Dedicated to the health of animals

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After Hours

Emergencies

Please phone
(033) 343 4602

Contact Details

If your contact details have changed then please inform us .

Christmas and Me Too Mattresses

If I were a dog I would ask for a Me Too Mattress for Christmas. These foam mattresses are sealed in vinyl plastic and can be ordered in any colour or size. Speak to Lana or Jane.



The Nurse's Clinic

The Nurse's Clinic has been active in helping with nail clippings, weight loss programmes and difficult to give treatments.

We also have a ultraviolet torch emitting light at wave length 405nm. This light causes bacteria contained in plaque to fluoresce. In the presence of tartar it is necessary for the animal's teeth to be cleaned before prophylactic measures such as teeth brushing are explained and are put into practice. The first picture on the right is a typical example of an animal with heavy tartar accumulation on their teeth, leading to halitosis (smelly breath). The second picture demonstrates the bacterial fluorescing on the teeth. The bottom picture was taken post dental. Remember a dental check-up with our nurses is free of charge to you, but promises to be beneficial to your pet.



Veterinary Fees

A common complaint at most veterinary clinics and hospitals is the fees that are charged. When an animal is sick the caring owner always wants the veterinarian to have facilities, staff, equipment and medicines available. They also want the vet to be caring and skilled and give their pet adequate attention to ensure they are given the best chance of recovery. Unfortunately providing quality animal care does come at a price,

this is made obvious by the costs that meet the veterinary practice at the end of each month including drug costs, bank costs, building costs, staff salaries, rates and taxes, interest fees, equipment repair and maintenance etc, etc, etc. The South African Veterinary Council (www.savc.org.za) supplies all veterinarians with a pricing guide which is published every year.

Most veterinarians follow these guidelines either at the upper or lower end of the scale depending on the levels of their facilities and their own skills. One way around being able to afford high quality veterinary care is to take out a medical aid for your pet. This enables veterinary care to be tailored according to the animals needs and not according to affordability.



Cancer in Dogs

By Dr Richard Burchell

A client recently asked me why more and more dogs and cats are being diagnosed with cancer, and she was convinced that it was the "stuff" they put into modern dog foods. Surprisingly, this is the opinion held by many pet owners. I find it hard to comprehend why a food company would produce a product that reduces the number of clients that use it, and would think that it is in the food company's best interest to keep its users alive. So why are more pets being diagnosed with cancer? This question is not easy to answer since the cause of most cancers is still not completely understood, but there are a few definite reasons as to why cancer is more common. The first is that Veterinary practices have access to sophisticated equipment that was rare 10-15 years ago. X-ray machines, ultrasound machines and CT/MRI are quite routinely used in Veterinary practice and as a consequence more cancer is diagnosed that would have been missed in the past. Many a German Shepherd Dog that died "of old age" in the bottom of the garden, probably died of splenic cancer (to which they are predisposed), which was undiagnosed because ultrasound was a rarity in practice. Interestingly, diseases tend to become more common after they are diagnosed a few times because the physician begins to suspect them and look for them and this is certainly true in veterinary oncology. Another reason for an increasing incidence in pet cancers is the fact that dogs and cats are living longer than they used to on average. Cancer incidence increases as we age, since damage to the cells' machinery accumulates over the cells life-span.

Improved nutrition, vaccination and modern medicines have dramatically lengthened the longevity of our pets who would have died of communicable diseases or poor nutrition in the past. Genetics have also been implicated in cancer, and this is evident in veterinary medicine where certain breeds are more predisposed to cancer than others for example Boxers are predisposed to Mast Cell Tumours. Because pure breeds are more prone to cancer the incidence of cancer increases as people take on pure bred pets where they may have just adopted a good old mongrel in the past!

The good news Vets are becoming more successful at managing cancer in the pet population. The key in managing cancer successfully is early diagnosis. Many Vet practices are equipped with hi-tech x-ray and ultrasound machines. All Senior pets (pets over 7) should be screened for cancer (chest x-rays and abdominal ultrasound). This should be done yearly because when your pet turns 8 he/she is about 7 years older than the previous year. Most clients are *not* doing this for many reasons including: reluctance to have cancer diagnosed/treated, poor awareness and cost implications. At HVH we are equipped with a full set of diagnostic equipment and novel drugs to treat and manage pet cancer - and our goal is to provide quality of life. Many owners who have experienced cancer and chemo are reluctant to have their pets treated due to their own experiences. In veterinary medicine the goal of cancer care is to keep animals free of pain and nausea, and we seldom encounter the side effects seen routinely in human medicine.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any queries about pet cancers, or would like to see us regarding this or any other problem in your pet.



Coco Joe



Coco Joe

I would like to introduce you to our precious 10 year old Toy French Poodle - Coco Joe. He has been the best loyal companion that one could ever wish for. A year ago he became very ill and after a battery of tests we were still unable to discover what the problem was. All we knew was he had extremely high calcium readings. We met a wonderful lady vet who recommended that we see one of her colleagues a Westville vet by the name of Dr Steve Wimberley. Dr Wimberley took a blood test immediately and after a half an hour, called us into his surgery and told us he knew what the problem was with Coco. He had an extremely rare condition called hypoparathyroidism, which caused the calcium to be totally out of balance, which can cause dreadful side effects. Coco was immediately put onto steroids and he

started to improve over night but unfortunately, it did not last. He started to get weaker and weaker, eventually was unable to climb a few steps into the garden. Dr Wimberley, told us there was only one vet he would recommend who would be prepared to deal with this condition. His name was Dr Martin de Scally from Hilton. Dr Martin turned out to be Coco's saviour. Coco had to go through two scanning procedures before a tumour was discovered on one of his Para thyroid glands which lie behind the main thyroid gland, this was the cause of Coco's calcium problem. As it was so close to the artery in his neck, he could not be operated on. We were devastated, but Dr Martin told us of a new technique he was prepared to do for us, where they are able to go in and blast the tumour with ethanol. This procedure was carried

out on a Monday morning and by the time we were able to take Coco home, his calcium had already started to drop, but then it dropped so low that Coco had to spend time in hospital to get the calcium balanced. He now leads a normal life but continues to take medication to keep his calcium in balance until if and when the other three Para thyroid glands click in, but if they continue to sleep, well we as a family are completely committed to administer his medication so that we may still have our beloved friend with us for a good many years to come. Our sincere thanks go to Dr Martin and his dedicated staff who gave us so much love and support at our time of need. Our thanks forever Coco Joe and the McDonald family

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

Companion Animal Toxicities

By Dr Martin de Scally

Toxic Plants

The first year is a potentially perilous one for puppies and kittens. They experiment with placing anything they can reach into their mouths. In a study headed by Melanie Morgan 122 cats were filmed and 36% of them were seen to eat household plants when they were left unattended. Symptoms such as seizures, coma, diarrhoea, vomiting, hypersalivation, severe tissue swelling, symptoms of liver failure and heart failure are common. Some plants are so toxic that the Inca Indians used to use them on the tips of their arrows to paralyse prey. So what are the common offenders? Well there are many, the common raisin for example, innocuous to humans, is toxic to dogs. Excessive drinking may be the first sign seen as a result of raisin toxicity; this is usually as a result of ricin induced kidney failure. The top ten most common toxicities in dogs are .

- Human Medications
- Insecticides

- People Food
- Rodenticides
- Veterinary Medications
- Plants
- Chemical Hazards
- Household Cleaners
- Heavy Metals
- Fertilizer

This is the first of a series of educational articles on pet toxins and will deal with just the household plants that are toxic to pets.

Toxic plants can be grouped according to where they have an effect on the body.

Plants that cause tissue damage include Schefflera, Epipremnum, Brassia, Caladium, Asparagus (ferns) and Dieffenbachia.



Toxic plants causing gastro intestinal signs include Cyclamen, Hydrangea, Colchicum, Hedera and Clivia



Toxic plants that cause gastro-intestinal signs that progress to neurological signs include Brunfelsia pauciflora, Cannabis, Tulips, Narcissus, Ricinus, Compositae, Amaryllis, Aloe, Taxus and Macadamia.



Toxic plants that cause kidney failure include Lilium, grapes, and raisins.



Toxic plants that affect the lungs include apples, apricots, plums and cherries. It is the leaves and stems of

that are toxic because they contain prussic acid and hydro-cyanide.

Toxic plants that affect the heart include Digitalis, Nerium, Atropa, Lycopersicon, Azalea, Rhododendron, Persea and Kalanchoe



Toxic plants that cause liver failure include Senecio, Croton, Cycas, Melia azedarach, Blue green algae, Citrus oils including tea tree oil and Gyromitrin, Amanite and Phalloidin mushrooms.

Most plant toxicities are



diagnosed according to clinical signs and a history of contact with the offending plant. There are no available antidotes and therefore treatment is decontamination and symptomatic. Some plant toxicities, such as Cycad seed toxicity, may induce irreversible damage to organs, in this case liver failure, months after ingestion. The best treatment is avoidance.

Please refer to our website for more photos of toxic plants.

Food savings

We have introduced an order by **e-mail** concept that allows you to place an order for food and preventative care consumables such as Frontline, via e-mail. By doing a pre-collection EFT payment we are able to give you a 5% **saving** on your purchase. If you are interested in this concept please speak to Lana or Jane .

lana@hiltonvethospital.co.za
jane@hiltonvethospital.co.za



Eukanuba
Extraordinary Nutrition

Merry Christmas

Wishing all our clients a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Thank you for all your support this year.

Looking forward to seeing you and your beloved pets in the New Year.

The Hilton Vet Hospital Team



Animal Behaviour

By Dr Trish Mills



With Summer in full swing we all worry about our pets and the storms that seem able to turn the most mild-mannered dogs and cats into panic-stricken strangers.

There are many different solutions for this behaviour. Some animals may need emergency treatment in the short-term. This comes in the form of **tranquilisers/sedatives and calming products**, both pharmaceutical and/or natural products.

But long-term management will require your dedication. This could include teaching relaxation techniques to your animal or using specialised CD's to desensitise your pet.

Please come in and ask us about solutions for your pet.



Going away?



Make sure your pets are also ready for the **holiday season** by checking with us if their **vaccinations** are up to date.

If your dogs are going into kennels ask us about **Kennel cough vaccines**

Further ensure their health by giving regular **deworming** and applying **tick and flea treatment** monthly.

Another holiday must is to get your pets **microchipped** - this enables any vet or welfare organisation to re-unite you with your pet/s if they should go astray.

