



Hilton Veterinary Hospital

Website: www.hiltonvethospital.co.za

72 Hilton Avenue Hilton 3245

Tel (033) 343-4602

Free Small Animal Veterinary Advice e-mail: martin@hiltonvethospital.co.za

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As the festive season approaches it is time to reflect on the important things in life. I believe the relationships we have is what defines us. I stand so proud of my team at Hilton Vet for their efforts spent in the past year to reduce suffering and heal animals. I know that every patient got 100% of our effort. I know that in the new year we will continue in the same vain.

Please remember in this time of plenty that all that is good for humans may be lethal to dogs and cats. This includes high fat and carbohydrate food, Christmas cake (raisins are toxic to animals), onions, Panado and macadamia nuts. Please take time to read the article on "Festive food".

Please also do not give in to the Labrador trying to convince you that they have not been fed already. Nutrition has now been added to the five essential things that a vet must address at every consultation. The others are temperature, heart function, lung function and pain assessment. These are the things easily assessed by a good clinical exam. The reason for this is that nutrition can

be the path to good or bad health and should always be properly assessed before grabbing for the bottle of medicine.

Theresa Paymans has only just started with us and has made a positive impact from the start. Unfortunately she is leaving for Gauteng to help with a family situation. We wish her well and hope she can come back one day.

One final bit of advice is that there are people out there wanting what you have. The best place for your dogs to be, is inside your house. They are still able to protect you but they are protected from being poisoned or mace sprayed. As most of you know by now, poisonings are happening and are devastating both emotionally and financially. If your pets are poisoned, the minimum effort to save them will often cost them their lives. Most of our vets are available throughout the festive season, even when most people are on holiday. My advice is, always insist on the best treatment. Once the initial treatment fails it is very difficult to rescue a poisoned patient. So please be diligent and careful and have a fantastic time with family and friends.



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:

Parvovirus and Christmas treats

The Nurse's Clinic: Is your cat messing in the house?

A cat who pees in the house can be a frustrating and worrying problem. It is one of the main reasons that cats are relinquished to shelters or brought in to a vet clinic be put down. The thing to remember is that your cat is unhappy about the situation too, he or she is trying to tell you that something is wrong.

There are many **reasons** and **solutions** to your cat's inappropriate elimination. It can be difficult but finding out the motivation for the behaviour is the first and most important step in managing this problem.

Simply stopping your cat from performing his/her infuriating habit of urinating inside by restricting his/her access to the area/s or covering the area/s with undesirable material (such as bubble wrap) will merely increase the level of anxiety and direct his/her attention to a new area. So what can you do about the problem while you try and resolve it? Cleaning the affected area/s is very important but must be done correctly - ask your vet for more details - and then protect the target area/s. When you first notice this problem get your cat (making sure you have the right cat if you have more than one cat in the house!) to the vet for a check up. The vet can then look for medical reasons for your cats behaviour.

Medical reasons can include a urinary tract infection, a kidney problem, diabetes, etc. Even old age could be a factor (old age dementia may mean he or she loses their toilet training, or possibly arthritis makes it too difficult to get out the window or into the litter box). If medical reasons are ruled out then we look for other motivations i.e. a behavioural problem or litter box problems. We must also keep in mind that often a combination of problems result in your cat messing where he or she shouldn't. Most commonly a urinary tract infection (medical problem) causes pain when urinating which your cat then associates with the litter box (behaviour/litter box problem). So then he or she doesn't want to use the litter box and will try to find somewhere to urinate that isn't associated with pain.

Behavioural reasons could be that your cat is nervous and/or stressed - possibly by one of your other pets, by a neighbourhood bully cat, or by someone or something happening (like redecorating) in the house.

Litter box reasons could be many things - where the litter box is placed, the type of litter box (open or closed), how many litter boxes are available, how clean the litter box is, whether there is a liner, the type of litter and so on.

There can be many possible **solutions** and these will vary depending on what is found to be at the root of the problem. It is never advisable to use punishment to try stop this behaviour - never shout or use physical force, this will probably only result in your cat feeling more anxious and make him/her afraid of you. Unfortunately, as mentioned before, it is possible that even once the original initiating cause has been identified and managed your cat may once in a while have a setback which results in more puddles around the house. The good news is you will have the knowledge and tools to deal with the situation.

So if you have a smelly cat ask us about it as early intervention is best.



Parvovirus By Dr Martin de Scally

Canine Parvovirus is a potentially fatal disease in puppies. It is a very stable virus meaning that it can survive in the environment for long periods of time. Appropriate vaccination is the only effective method of reducing the disease.

When a puppy suckles colostrums from the mother, a level of immunity is established which helps protect the puppy from the virus. If the mother is either well vaccinated or has survived the disease the transfer of immunity will be strong. This sounds like a good thing. The only problem is that the half life of the immunity is about 10 days. This means that every 10 days, the puppy's chance of fighting off a challenge is reduced by 50%. The other problem is that the same immunity will also nullify the vaccination. So as the immunity drops, so the need for vaccine protection rises. If you vaccinate too early the vaccine will not work. If you vaccinate too late the puppy will be susceptible to the disease. This the reason why in high risk situation the vaccine protocol is started as early as 4 weeks. In low risk at 8 weeks. It is also why multiple boosters are given.

Puppies with signs of parvovirus should have a viral test done to confirm the disease. They should also be tested for concomitant disease such as hook worm, giardia or coccidian as this makes matters worse. They should then be placed on fluid with drip pumps to ensure they get the required amounts to adequately rehydrate them. Parvovirus dramatically suppresses the immune system and also destroys the intestinal lining. This leads to septicaemia, malnutrition, hypoglycaemia (low blood glucose) and death. Intravenous antibiotics, anti-nausea treatment, pain control, tube feeding, esophagus protection for stomach acid, vomiting, protein control, temperature control and cleanliness are all essential parts of successfully treating a parvovirus case. I personally would never leave a parvovirus puppy without 24 hour supervision and someone to help them stay clean, dry, fed, ensure they receive their fluids and medications and feel loved and not abandoned until the next morning.

The survival rate of properly treated parvovirus puppies approaches 90%. That survival rate cannot be achieved unless attention is paid to every detail such as electrolyte levels (glucose, potassium, chloride, sodium). Therefore those veterinary hospitals with all night staff and in house laboratories have a distinct advantage in successfully treating these cases as they would with many other diseases. Should a puppy survive parvovirus they usually recover fully. They are also usually immune life long.

One of the complications seen with parvovirus is infection of the spine from bacteria that have invaded there during the immune suppressed period. These animals have characteristic signs of bone damage on x-rays and have fevers and pain. Although this is treatable, if the vertebra collapse the animal may become paralysed and will be in severe pain. Be careful because this can happen from many other causes of gastroenteritis and even bladder infections.

So in summary one should always check with your vet that your animals are adequately protected from this disease. If the your puppy does get parvovirus there is a distinct advantage to aggressive early treatment. They should be tube fed even whilst they are still vomiting. They should be thoroughly checked for other concurrent diseases. Attention must be paid to details in all aspects of their treatment. They need 24 hour care. They need to be carefully disinfected when going home. Appropriate treatment has a 90% success rate. The younger the pups the worse the success rate. The later treatment is started the poorer the success rate. Always take home 7-10 days of antibiotics to try and prevent the complication of post parvovirus spinal infection.

Martin recently gave a nation wide lecture on parvovirus treatment to the other vets in South Africa

Festive Food for thought By Dr Lillian Hirzel

We all associate the Christmas season with wonderful feasts of festive food. Large joyous meals and rolling around with full groaning tummies. Mince pies, turkeys, chocolate and other decadent treats. Many of us want to spoil our pets too and add special treats to their bowls. Herein lies the problem though and all too often an over enthusiastic well meaning owner ends up at the vet with a rather unhappy pet. What should you be careful of?

Pets are not small humans and unfortunately many of the things we consider treats can be harmful to your cat or dog. Never feed your pet anything very rich such as turkey skin, marinated meats or cream. Feeding your pet large amounts of anything (even lean meat) can lead to digestive discomfort.

Onions, Garlic and Chives should never be fed to animals as it causes the break down of red blood cells and can make your pet severely ill. **Alcohol** is dangerous as pets are influenced by a much smaller amount than we are and can be made to feel very uncomfortable. **Raw eggs** can cause salmonella infections which can in turn affect the entire family. **Fat** can lead to pancreatitis and **bones** can break teeth, obstruct or even tear the intestines.

What about sweet treats? As with us, excessive calories lead to obesity and its resulting problems. Once again, what may seem like a small amount to us has a much larger effect on your pet. A small biscuit is equivalent to a hamburger. Now imagine eating a hamburger every day on top of your normal meals! Cats and dogs are unable to digest **grapes** and **raisins** and eating these may lead to kidney failure. Remember not to feed your beloved animal **Christmas Cake**.



Chocolate can make your pet fat, but the theobromine in it can also lead to serious consequences such as heart murmurs, tremors, seizures and death. Dark and cooking chocolate is the most dangerous, but all chocolate should be avoided. **Caffeine** may also lead to seizures and hypersensitivities. Never feed your pet **raw dough**. The dough will expand in the cat or dog's stomach and cause extreme discomfort. **Xylitol** is an artificial sweetener found in diet foods, some kinds of candy and

toothpaste. In animals this product can lead to liver failure and seizures.

These are but a few of the things we may eat commonly that may affect your pet. Don't feed foods that were not designed with pets in mind. Read the labels closely and always feed, even dog or cat food, in moderation.

Last Christmas most of our emergencies were food related (old leftovers, turkey bones, too much fat). There are several healthy treats available for pets. If you want to include your dog or cat in the celebrations feed it a safe and healthy treat and make your holiday a happy, stress free time.



Seasons greetings!

Staff Profile

Precious Mauna

Precious joined the practice in 2010 . Precious is responsible for making sure that our hospital is kept clean at all times. Precious also assists in helping to pack our shelves with the prescription diets and all the accessories and drugs that we purchase. Precious always has a smile on her face and is so willing to help put wherever she is needed.

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

Precious enjoys seeing the result of her hard work when the hospital looks "sparkly and clean". Precious is interested in checking expiry dates on the prescription diets.

In her spare time, Precious enjoys going to church, listening to Gospel music and cooking.



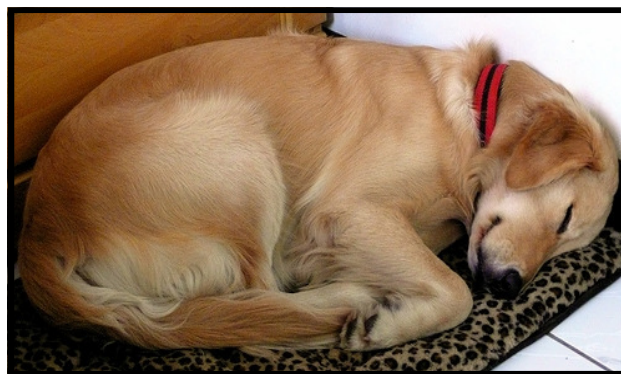
To make you smile

An older, tired looking dog wandered into my yard. I could tell from is collar and well-fed belly that he had a home and was well taken care of. He calmly came over to me. I gave him a few pats on his head and then he followed me into my house. Slowly walking down the hall, he curled up in the corner and fell asleep.

An hour later, he went to the door and I let him out...

The next day he was back, greeted me in the yard, walked inside and resumed his spot in the hall and again slept for about an hour. this continued on and off for several weeks.

Curious, I pinned a note to his collar:"I would like to find out who the owner of this wonderful sweet dog is and ask if you are aware that almost very afternoon your dog comes to my house for a nap."



The next day he arrived for his nap with a different note pinned to his collar, "He lives in a home with 6 children, 2 under the age of 3. He is trying to catch up on his sleep. Can I come with him tomorrow?"

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