



# Hilton Veterinary Hospital

Website: [www.hiltonvethospital.co.za](http://www.hiltonvethospital.co.za)

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## Inside this issue:

July 2013 has been the busiest month so far at Hilton Vet Hospital. This is very unusual for a winter month. Usually we are less busy in winter because dogs and cats do not really get flu, like humans do because the vaccines in dogs and cats against the respiratory viruses like distemper, adenovirus II, calici virus and herpes virus are highly effective. The reason is not that they are better at making vaccines for dogs and cats but that the human flu viruses are spread much easier due to increased contact and because the human flu viruses mutate so rapidly that vaccine production cannot keep up. Also there are many more viruses affecting the human respiratory system than cats and dogs.

Another disease that we commonly do not see in winter is babesia (tick bite fever). This year however, we have seen a few cases even in midwinter. We had one cat referred for a blood transfusion as a result of complicated tick bite fever. This is very rare in cats and some of you will have read the article in the Witness regarding blood transfusions in animals.

The cases that have kept us busy have been mostly out of the ordinary cases. Together with St Heliers Vet Hospital we corrected an abnormal blood vessel leaving the heart and shunting blood into the lung. The long term complication of this increased pressure in the lung is eventual failure of the lung as an organ. This little dog did very well but developed an immune reaction to one of the drugs used. It occurs in every 100000 cases and is called myasthenia gravis. The disease can affect the nerve endings in the throat and oesophagus (feeding tube) causing difficulty swallowing and regurgitation.

Antibodies (proteins) bind to receptors called acetyl choline receptors preventing the throat/oesophagus from functioning. Never the less this little pup has responded to a medication to activate the receptors. Other cases keeping us busy have included a referred case of Guillain-Barre' syndrome in a dog causing a temporary paralysis. Two cases of a rare tick born disease causing platelet abnormalities called anaplasmosis. Another rare case of necrotising fasciitis caused by a dual infection of Streptococci and Actinomyces bacteria.

We had to say goodbye to one of our favourite patients, a dog who had survived heart failure caused by tick bite fever 5 years ago, died from a septic peritonitis caused by a prostatic abscess rupture and complicated by a resistant hookworm infection. This soldier had been treated for the hookworm for 7 days in a row when his intestinal blood supply clotted as a result of the inflammation in and around his intestine. These cases keep us humble and striving for better ways to treat our patients.

On a staff note, nurse Debbie also known to many as "super nurse" has left us to become a full time mom to her children. We wish Debbie all the best and thank her for her input into our patient's lives. "Super nurse" has been replaced by Lauren Dommett whom many of you have already met. Lauren was one of the nurses at Onderstepoort. She has fitted in very well with her gentle nature and diligence. We hope she has a rewarding time treating animals at HVH.

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

Regards

Martin de Scally

Dedicated to the health of your pets.

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### Website:

Our website has been hacked and is now under construction and a new look is being worked on.

### After Hours

#### Emergencies:

Please phone  
(033) 343 4602

### Contact Details:

If your contact details have changed then please inform us.

### This month's

#### theme:

Dental Care

## Nurse's Clinic: Tick and flea control in Winter Sr Jane Lindeque

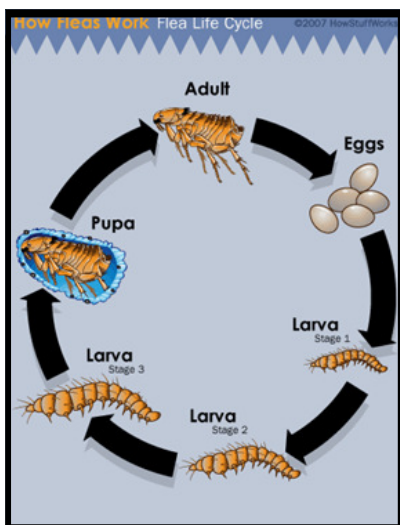
During these cold and frosty winter months the last thing that most of us think about is tick and flea treatment for our dogs and cats. Surely these horrid little creatures are frozen. However this is often one of our biggest mistakes.

While the ticks and fleas might lie dormant for a couple of weeks all they need is a slight rise in the temperature to hatch and become very active again. This leads to our animals getting biliary and numerous other diseases when we least expect them.

If you have more than one animal in your household please make sure you treat ALL of them with a tick and flea treatment. The best products to use are ones that have active ingredient in them that repels and kills the ticks, especially if you take your dogs walking in plantations, in the veld or where there are other dogs.

Should you notice the following symptoms in one of your animals please get them to a vet as soon as possible:

- 🐾 Fever
- 🐾 Anaemic ( pale white gums)
- 🐾 Not eating
- 🐾 Vomiting
- 🐾 Red urine

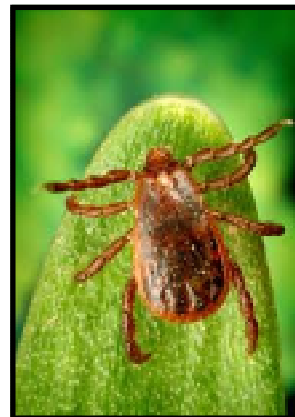


Biliary is a relatively easy disease to treat if it is caught early but if left it can be fatal and very costly.

Flea eggs will lie dormant for a long time until conditions are right for them to hatch. As we all know having an outbreak of fleas in your house is not a very nice experience. Not only will these horrid little creatures cause your pets to be very itchy and unhappy they will also cause your entire household much discomfort. Fleas are also part of the life cycle of the tapeworm so not only will your animals have a flea infestation they will also have a internal parasite infestation.

Should you want any further information on tick, flea and internal parasite control please feel free to contact one of the nurses at the clinic and we will be more than happy to give you advice.

Please do not stop tick and flea control treatments during winter. If untreated your animal's health can be affected and treatment could be costly to you.



Tick



Flea

## Dental Care: As it should be done: by Dr Martin de Scally

Driven by the fundamental fact that up to 70% of dental pathology in dogs and cats occurs below the gum, Hilton Vet Hospital has purchased a dental x-ray unit (Figure 1). We believe that dentistry is important as dental pathology leads to long term and acute pain and affects the whole body and health of our pets. Good basic dentistry involves 3 steps.

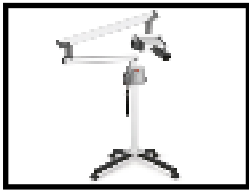


Figure 1

### Step 1: Planning:

A thorough clinical examination is always necessary and in some cases blood work is also necessary to make sure that the animal will safely cope with the dental procedures. Once it is established that it is safe to do so, the next step is careful planning of the dental procedure. The actual dental exam is best done with the animals sedated to reduce stress and increase the accuracy of the evaluation. This planning includes assessment of the pockets that may develop along the periodontal membrane between the tooth enamel and the gum. If these pockets are too deep and the periodontal ligament is in a state of disrepair no amount of scaling and polishing will keep the tooth healthy any more. The tooth will develop tartar (hard smelly brown crusts) soon after the cleaning procedure again.

Another part of planning is to take dental radiographs. Figure 2 is an example of severe periodontal disease that has led to alveolar bone re-absorption around one of the roots. That tooth needed to be removed.



Figure 2

Figure 3 shows a tooth which may look normal on the surface but has an obvious periapical abscess at the end of one of the tooth roots. Again this tooth needs removal.

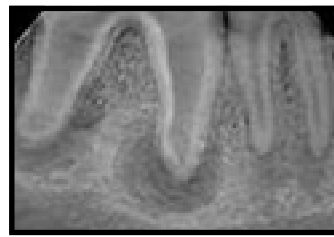


Figure 3

### Step 2: Treatment

Once the dental pathology is fully assessed, the animal is started on antibiotics and pain control, and the treatment plan is explained to the animal parent. Sometimes the truth does hurt but it is better to know that your animal is suffering and needs appropriate attention than to just pretend nothing is wrong. Most people only realise how much their animals are suffering after they see their animal's improved behaviour, after the dental procedure has been completed and the mouth has healed.

Sometimes these procedures can be long so the use of modern safe anaesthetics, anaesthetic monitors, modern dental equipment (Figure 4, IM3 air driven dental unit) and fluids to maintain blood pressure and protect the kidneys are necessary.

Figure 4



The radiographs and assessment will be done at a standard cost which can be discussed with one of our receptionists veterinarians or nurses. Any blood work necessary will be explained and the cost discussed. After the radiographs and assessment everything related to doing the dental can be discussed.

### Step 3: Prevention of a relapse

Of course there is no point in doing dental work without some form of prophylaxis. In fact it would be better to prevent dental disease in the first place. This is done by the use of safe foods and treats that help clean the teeth and by daily dental brushing. Most animals do allow this and the technique used is simply. Brush under the lip using a finger brush and pet tooth paste. Our nurse's clinic can help show you how to do this. We do not perform fillings in dogs or cats but if you wish you can be referred for them. Here is to healthy mouths and healthy pets!

## Teaching our Pets: by Dr Trish Mills

Following on from last month where we discussed how animals learn, we now need to look at how we can best teach our pets using the training methods available to us. Traditionally we have *punished* our pets to decrease the likelihood of an unwanted behaviour from recurring - for example smacking a puppy when it wees on the carpet. Consequences that *decrease* a behaviour from happening are classed as *punishment*, whereas consequences that *increase* the probability that a behaviour will occur are labeled as *reinforcement*. We can further identify punishment as negative or positive and reinforcement as negative or positive. Positive implying something is added: Positive Reinforcement is when we add something **pleasant** (e.g. giving a dog a treat when it sits in response to a command) whereas Positive Punishment involves adding some-

Skinner's Operant Conditioning Quadrants		
	Decrease Behavior	Increase Behavior
Add	Positive Punishment	Positive Reinforcement
Remove	Negative Punishment	Negative Reinforcement

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thing **unpleasant** (e.g. smacking the dog that weed in the house). Negative implies something is taken away: Negative Reinforcement is when something **unpleasant** is removed (e.g. releasing pressure on a choke chain when a dog walks nicely on a leash) and Negative Punishment is when we remove something **pleasant** (e.g. ignoring a dog that is jumping on you). Figure 2

We are moving away from using unpleasant consequences to teach our pets. It has been found that **reward training** is a more effective way of teaching and it is certainly a more enjoyable way to train, for our pets as well as for ourselves.



Figure 1

One can simply compare the pictures of the owner reprimanding the Boxer (figure 1) where the dog is showing a dejected facial expression to the pictures below of the happy Beagle waiting for a treat and the well-mannered pup who will sit even for a child (figures 2 and 3).

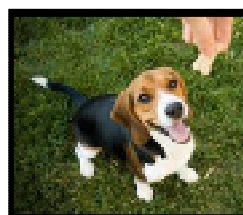
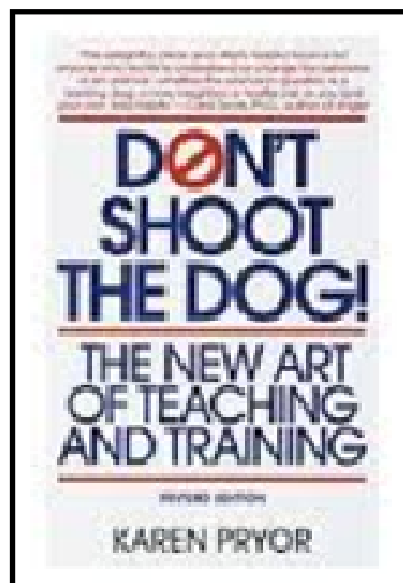


Figure 2



Figure 3

So focus on rewarding the behaviours that you want to occur. At the same time remember not to reward unwanted behaviour. Even a negative reaction to your pets behaviour may be seen by your pet as attention and therefore as rewarding. For example shouting at a barking dog to stop or pushing a jumping dog down may, in fact, be enough attention to make your pet repeat the behaviour. Next month we will learn how to get the reward or punishment correct to get the best result.





## Staff Profile

### Lauren Dommett

Lauren has just started working at Hilton Vet Hospital. She has been working at Onderstepoort since she graduated. She is one of our very caring, energetic and knowledgeable nurses.

Lauren enjoys patient care and emergency cases as well as wound management.

Lauren is a farm girl from Underberg so she really enjoys the outdoors. Lauren's Dad is a vet and she has gained a lot of experience and knowledge from him. Lauren's boyfriend, Leonard is also a vet. Lauren has 2 dogs, Benji and Tiffany.

In her spare time Lauren enjoys running, cycling, being a part of outreaches, sewing and the outdoor life.



## To make you smile

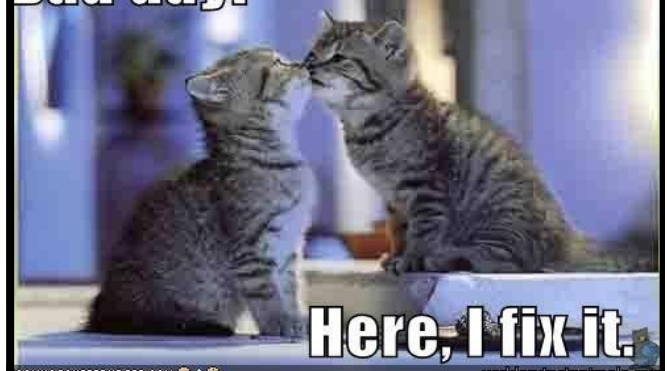
### If We Can Teach Wild Animals

WITHOUT FORCE or PUNISHMENT



We can also train our **BEST FRIENDS** without force or punishment.

Bad day?



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](mailto:lauren@hiltonvethospital.co.za)