



# Hilton Veterinary Hospital

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

72 Hilton Avenue Hilton 3245

Tel (033) 343-4602

Free Small Animal Veterinary Advice e-mail: [martin@hiltonvethospital.co.za](mailto:martin@hiltonvethospital.co.za)

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### After Hours Emergencies:

Please phone  
(033) 343 4602

### Contact Details:

If your contact details have changed then please inform us .

This month's theme:  
**Feline Focus**

On a sad note "Nurse Nicky" is leaving the practice for health reasons. Nicky has nursed with Martin for the last 4 years and will be sorely missed. Thank you Nicky for all your hard work and dedication.

This month we focus on our feline friends. Cats are independent, proud, capable, competent, cute, cuddly and sophisticated, but deep down they remain wild. This furry creature is often the subject of controversy when it comes to birds and other small animals. Some see it as their job to keep the Darwinist principle of the survival of the fittest in place. Others are not so good at being wild and try to survive our concrete jungles by turning to man for help using a spine chilling meow. However we feel about them they will impose themselves upon you. They will wear you down if you try to resist their charms with just the right amount of attention and flirting and dependency until they have become, yes, irresistible. It is always clear when a cat is sick. The reason for this is that they believe in hiding their illness from you until they cannot any more. By the time a cat shows symptoms of an ailment it is important to take it seriously. When they are sick it is important that attention is paid to their intricate needs in order to improve survival. If they are not eating enough, force feeding is not recommended, rather tube feeding is implemented to meet their nutritional requirements. Cats also do suffer pain but are easily poisoned by common human pain killers. It is the veterinarian's duty to ensure adequate, safe pain control for their patients.

Enjoy reading the newsletter.

Martin de Scally

Dedicated to the health of your pet

## Rabies Outbreak

As I am sure you have seen in the papers, there has been a recent human case or rabies in the KZN midlands. I would like to take to opportunity to emphasize what an extremely serious problem rabies is. In 2011 there were 184 cases of **confirmed** animal rabies in KZN alone. 55 000 people worldwide contact rabies annually. Rabies can be carried by all warm blooded mammals, and the affected animal generally exhibits strange behaviour such as agitation, excessive salivation and an inability to swallow amongst other signs. You do not need to be bitten by a rabid animal to contract rabies; it can be transmitted by the deposition of saliva into an open wound or eye. If you are exposed to a potentially rabid animal and are not sure of its vaccination status I suggest you contact your Doctor as soon as possible.

We all need to ensure that all your pets are vaccinated annually, even if you live in suburbia. Contact your veterinarian. You can also give the rabies vaccine on its own (without the 5 in 1) to make it more affordable.

Vaccination of our pets is the most successful way of controlling rabies and the only way of preventing its spread. By not vaccinating your pets you are unnecessarily putting your family, friends, pets and veterinary staff at risk to a life threatening and appalling disease

If you have any questions please contact us or visit: <http://www.nda.agric.za/docs/GenPub/rabiesB5.pdf>

It is our responsibility to control rabies, let's take it seriously.

Dr Derek Clover

## The Nurse's Clinic: Happy Kitty



Allowing your cat the freedom to roam outdoors will help satisfy their need and instinct for hunting and climbing in a natural environment. Unfortunately this can often put them in harms way. Allowing them this freedom is not a bad thing at all but if you'd prefer to keep kitty safe at home there are ways to keep them entertained and stimulated. Thus ensuring your indoor cat is a happy cat.

Toys are a great way to keep your cat stimulated. Remember though that not all cats will enjoy the same toys. There are many available today so you can have fun experimenting and seeing what it is your kitty enjoys. As well as the wide variety available in pet stores and vet shops homemade toys can be just as enjoyed. Simple things from scrunched up paper or dangling a spoon or other such item from some string or yarn and letting kitty chase it. Have fun getting creative with your pets toys but remember that some items are unsafe for your cat and should not be used such as rubber bands, plastic bags or other such small items as beads or buttons as they may cause strangulation, choking or suffocation. Ribbons, string, paper bags and such toys should be used with caution as can be hazardous if left alone with the cat.

A good thing to keep in mind with your cats toys is to keep rotating them. That way old toys will seem like new toys and kitty is less likely to become bored with his/her toys. A variety to choose from is also an ideal option. One of the benefits of toys, especially with there being a variety for your cat to choose from, is that this can keep them entertained whilst you are away at work or elsewhere. However, it is still important that you put aside time every day to spend with your cat/s. Whether it is play time or snuggle cuddle time, it will definitely make for a happier cat. So they're going to be prowling around the house, stalking and pouncing upon their special toys, what else do they need?

How about some space? They need more than one room to roam, so if they had access to your whole house, or at least most of it, they would better be able to fulfil their hunting chasing hiding instincts

and would be happier to stay indoors. This would especially be true for a household of 2 or more cats as not all cats share their space well. When we think space we usually think laterally. But with cats we need to learn to think up as well. Cats like to be high, so try creating levels for your cat, also a nice area to have options and variety, especially in a multi-cat household.

Some cats prefer to be the 'only child' and enjoy not having to share their space, food or your attention, whereas other cats may thrive on having a friend in the house, a playmate and companion. You would have to judge your own cats' character to see whether it would be a good idea or not to bring in a friend or not. One thing to keep in mind when doing this is how much space you have available to your cat/s if they are to remain indoors.

Cats love finding that perfect sunny spot in which to sprawl out and enjoy the afternoon. Being an indoor cat doesn't mean they have to miss out on this leisurely pastime. Making perches by your windows, even if it is something simple such as placing a table end by your window (So long as you don't mind kitty on your table of course), allows for a lovely spot to watch the birds and enjoy the sunshine. More options are a screened-in porch or buying/making an outside enclosure for your cat. This way they can enjoy the rays and maybe the grass between their toes without you worrying about their wanderings. Please ensure that if you are placing them in an outside enclosure the area is big enough for your cat, that there is sufficient water and that part of the enclosure is in shade. If the enclosure is not a very big one your cat should preferably not be left there for long periods of time.

One thing a large number of cat owners often complain about is scratched furniture. For a cat that does spend a large portion of it's time outside this can be managed and sometimes the cat can be trained to scratch on trees only, although they can be fussy over their choice of tree at times. For indoor cats, their natural "scratch post" is no longer available. Scratching is not vindictive behaviour showing that your cat is out to get you and

## The Nurse's Clinic: Happy Kitty (continued)

really does detest that vintage couch you just spent a fortune on. Yes they sharpen their claws when they scratch, but it is also primarily believed to be a form of communication. Scent glands in their paws release an odour onto the item being scratched. We do not yet fully know the kind of communication happening, whether territorial warning or just "alls well here". Either way, the best way to tackle this situation is by substituting the item being scratched with one you are happy to have shredded, whether this is a scratching post or an old piece of furniture. This is especially pertinent to indoor cats as they will not have access to the normal trees, and your carpets and couches or dining table will be an obvious choice to them.

So maybe introduce scratching posts, these days you can get lovely ones that are part of whole kitty jungle gyms, or give them their very own couch tucked away in the corner, or maybe both!

Most cats do not enjoy having their food bowls right by their litter trays, so try create two different areas for these and remember to keep their water and litter fresh.

These things are not only aimed at people with indoor cats. Cats that spend most or some of their time outdoors will also enjoy toys and also need the human interaction, love and affection. Some of them may even prefer a scratching post inside to your trees and bushes. Each cat is a unique and special individual and should be loved and treated as such.

So remember to make your home a cat friendly zone so that your kitty can live happily with you. Ensure there is lots to keep them stimulated, as a bored kitty might mean a ruined house. And most importantly, love them. There's something quite special about a cat cuddling up against you purring like a ten ton truck.



## Feline Disease Focus By Dr Martin de Scally

As a veterinarian there are areas that we have identified as high risk problems for cats. The first is their affinity to some rather nasty viruses such as mutated feline corona virus, feline immunodeficiency virus, feline leukaemia virus, feline herpes virus, feline calicivirus, panleukopaemia virus, makolo virus and rabies. Fortunately veterinarians have vaccines against five of these viruses, three of these are core vaccines, given routinely and two are non-core, given in individual circumstances.

Cats are also at high risk of heart disease and clotting defects. Usually they are in a hypercoagulable state which means they have a propensity towards clotting. Sudden lameness in the cat, in the absence of bite wounds, should immediately ring warning bells of a potential clot in that limb's artery, especially if a pulse cannot be felt in the affected limb and if the limb is painful, swollen or cold. The usual cause of these clots is an abnormal heart, usually a thickened heart. Fortunately treatment is possible if administered in time. If ever a heart murmur is heard in a cat it is considered important. It is vital that every cat has its heart regularly listened to by a veterinarian to exclude what we call a gallop rhythm. A gallop rhythm is often the first sign of heart disease in the cat.

Then there is blood pressure. Cats often suffer from essential hypertension. This is a silent killer that damages hearts, kidneys, brains and eyes. It is recommended that all cats have their blood pressure checked every 6 months. If it is high, blood pressure control will increase their disease free life span.

Cats are also highly prone to potassium deficiencies. This particularly evident in cats that are placed on non potassium supplemented drips. Without potassium, cats cannot concentrate their urine, they cannot contract their muscles properly, they feel nauseous and weak and they cannot maintain their blood pressure. It is essential during illnesses like hepatic lipidosis, diabetes mellitus or any time when cats need to be placed on drips; that potassium levels are measured, monitored and supplemented.

Finally cats are prone to diabetes, especially those on hormonal or cortisone treatments. The typical signs of diabetes include drinking excessively, eating excessively and losing weight. A simple urine and blood test can diagnose this disease early before complications.

## Pet Medical Aids

With the current tough economic times and as well as the advances in what is now possible in veterinary science we thought that it would be useful to give you some insight into pet insurance (or pet medical aid).

Pet insurance does not cover routine procedures such as neutering and vaccinations but does cover your pet for illness and emergencies. It works much the same as other insurance in that there are excess payable, discounted premiums for more pets and maximum claim amounts.

At Hilton Vet, we always strive to give our patients

the best possible standard of care and unfortunately this can come at a cost.

For example a fractured leg that needs surgery could cost anywhere from R4000 upwards to correct. By having your pet covered with pet insurance you are ensuring that he or she will be able to receive the best care when they need it. It also decreases the amount of stress and worry which we all inevitably experience when our beloved pets get ill or have an emergency.

For more detail please visit: [http://www.health24.com/medical/Focus\\_centres/777-2268-2552-2587,62326.asp](http://www.health24.com/medical/Focus_centres/777-2268-2552-2587,62326.asp)

## "Rules" for Cats to live by:

### **BATHROOMS:**

Always accompany guests to the bathroom. It is not necessary to do anything. Just sit and stare.

### **DOORS:**

Do not allow any closed doors in any room. To get door open, stand on hind legs and hammer with forepaws. Once door is opened, it is not necessary to use it. After you have ordered an "outside" door opened, stand halfway in and out and think about several things. This is particularly important during very cold weather, rain, snow, or mosquito season.

### **CHAIRS AND RUGS:**

If you have to throw up, get to a chair or bed quickly. If you cannot manage in time, get to an Oriental rug. If there is no Oriental rug, any quality carpeting is good. When throwing up on the carpet, make sure you back up so it is as long as a human's bare foot.

### **WALKING:**

As often as possible, dart quickly and as close as possible in front of the human, especially on stairs,

when they have something in their arms, in the dark, and when they first get up in the morning. This will help their coordination skills.

### **BEDTIME:**

Always sleep on the human at night so he/she doesn't move around too much

### **LITTER BOX:**

When using the litter box, be sure to kick as much litter out of the box as possible. Humans love the feel of kitty litter between their toes.

### **HIDING:**

Every now and then, hide in a place where the humans cannot find you. Do not come out for three to four hours under any circumstances. This will cause the humans to panic (which they love) thinking that you have run away or are lost. Once you do come out, the humans will cover you with love and kisses and you will probably get a treat.

## Competition: Calling all children

Very few entries have come in for the competition so we are running it for another month. We would love you to write a poem about your pet animal. Please send it to Lauren at: [lauren@hiltonvethospital.co.za](mailto:lauren@hiltonvethospital.co.za).

The winner's poem will be published in the next newsletter and the winner will receive a R100.00 CNA voucher.

Good luck!



### 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 a year and a half, 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 Jane for your requirements.

## Staff Profile

### Dr Trish Mills

Trish joined the practice in April 2011

Trish is married to Ian and they have 2 dogs. Hansa is a cross breed Labrador and Lea is a cross breed Jack Russell. They also have 1 cat, Savanna.

Trish is passionate about treating and preventing behaviour problems. She also enjoys educating pet owners and promoting preventative health care.

In her spare time Trish enjoys hiking, reading, walking her dogs and travelling.



## What cats do for us

1. Warm our laps.
2. Give us someone to talk to.
3. Help reduce high blood pressure.
4. Bring the winter air inside, nestled in their coats.
5. Create a kindred feeling with other "cat people."
6. Turn common household objects like bottle caps into toys.
7. Make us more aware of birds.
8. Donate their services as alarm clocks
9. Display daring acrobatic feats right in front of our eyes
10. Contribute to living a longer life.
11. Make a window sill more beautiful.
12. Keep mice on the run.
13. Make us smile.
14. Inspire poets and playwrights.
15. Teach us how to land on our feet.
16. Let us indulge our desires to really spoil someone.
17. Make our homes warmer.
18. Remind us that life is mysterious.
19. Share with us the all-is-well experience of purring
20. Instruct us, in the luxurious art of stretching.
21. Show us how to lick our wounds and go on.
22. Give us cool cartoon characters.
23. Make even an old worn couch look beautiful.
24. Open our hearts



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)