



Hilton Veterinary Hospital

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Inside this issue:

Opening Letter	1
Nurse's Clinic: Senior Cats	2
High Blood Pressure in Cats	3
Staff Profile	4
To make you smile	4

Hi to all our valued clients. Richard has fitted right back in to the Hilton Vet Hospital team. He has qualified with his masters and will soon be writing his European Board exams. This will make him one of the most qualified vets in South Africa. He has enabled us to once again raise the bar in our clinic regarding patient care and is helping us to open the first small animal ICU in KZN. Together we are working tirelessly to improve all our systems to the benefit of your animals.

As there is a large need in small animal veterinary specialists, Richard or I will be consulting in Durban on a Thursday. We have also restarted our continuing education programme open to all the local veterinarians. I am personally so grateful to have Richard back. His support in the hospital is invaluable.

The building is reaching a much easier phase. The structure is up. Congratulations to Kim Phillips for keeping us fully functional throughout. Our patients are going to benefit from upgraded facilities once all is done.

Thank you for your support throughout the process.

Please keep vigilant regarding accidental and malicious pet poisonings. We are still seeing poisoned animals almost on a weekly basis. To this end the emergency clinic is saving the lives of hundreds of patient's every month by providing high quality immediate emergency care.

Perhaps you have a story to share with us, if so please send it on to my wife Lauren at lauren@hiltonvethospital.co.za.

Thank you again for your support. Our motto is to take every problem possible to resolution and to keep improving. Your support enables us to do that.

Thank you to all the staff and clients who contributed to this newsletter.

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:

High Blood Pressure in Cats

Nurse's Clinic: Monthly Senior Cat Health Check Part 3: Sr Jan Gould

Creature comforts

While many cats age gracefully and do not need special treatment, most will appreciate extra considerations for their comfort. Elderly cats should have a warm, comfortable bed in a draught-free area where they can sleep safely and not be disturbed. Older cats often like to stretch out on bean bags and hammock beds on radiators are very popular. The cat may need help to jump on to chairs using cushions or stools as 'steps'. Electric heated pads can also be used to create a warm bed for those elderly cats that really feel the cold.

Some older cats may need help using their cat flap; for example, tying the flap open or having a step up to it. It is sensible to put a collar (ensuring you choose a **safety collar**) with your name and address on in case your elderly cat gets lost, and worthwhile alerting your neighbors if you think this is a possibility.

Particular attention should be paid to the older cat's nails. These are less able to retract and therefore more likely to get trapped in the carpet, or if overgrown, actually to stick painfully into the pad. Your veterinary surgeon will be able to advise you on how and when to clip claws safely. With increasing age, cats are less able to groom themselves effectively and may need to be groomed by you. This will also allow you to check for any lumps or parasites such as fleas which you might otherwise not notice. It may be necessary gently to wipe away any discharge around the eyes, nose or anus using cotton wool moistened in warm water.

Elderly cats usually like to rest quietly away from the hustle and bustle of the busy household. They should be given somewhere to get away from children, dogs and other cats. They may not enjoy the attentions of a new cat or kitten in the house and any new introductions should be made carefully.

It may be helpful to provide litter trays indoors as some control of bladder and bowel movements can be lost with age, and reduced mobility may result in a reluctance to have to walk too far to toilet. Use big, shallow trays with shallow sides for easy access. A soft litter (e.g., sand, fuller's earth) will be more comfortable to stand on than litters like wood pellets.

Handle your cat carefully and gently as it may be arthritic and sore.

Common health problems Kidney failure

is one of the most frequently diagnosed conditions of the elderly cat. Other important geriatric diseases include hormonal problems like **hyperthyroidism** (an overactive thyroid gland) and **diabetes mellitus** (sugar diabetes), **hypertension** (high blood pressure), **cancer**, **periodontal disease** (disease of the teeth and gums), arthritis and infections such as **feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV)**.

Older cats often have more than one problem at a time which may complicate diagnosis and treatment. Early recognition of disease and prompt treatment is especially important in the older cat so that a good quality of life can be maintained for as long as possible.



High Blood Pressure in Cats: Dr Richard Burchell

Most pet owners keep a fairly close eye on their pets, and are quick to pick up on reduced appetite or changes in the physical attributes of their pets. We try to provide good nutrition, flea control, deworming, a full range of toys and even the latest in bedding to give our pets the best life we can. But what about health threats that aren't visible? Something that cannot be perceived through closely monitoring our furry friends. Hypertension or high blood pressure is one such thing in cats. Hypertension, if left unchecked can slowly destroy the heart and kidneys, and can even lead to blindness. Hypertension is fairly common in older cats, and is often associated with hormonal and kidney disease. Hormonal disease associated with hypertension include: hyperthyroidism, diabetes mellitus, acromegaly and hyperaldosteronism. These diseases can be associated with other complications as well and therefore they need to be managed appropriately. Hypertension is damaging to organ systems such as the kidney, heart, brain and eye. Hypertension untreated in cats, can lead to congestive heart failure especially if the cat has an underlying heart condition. Damage to the heart and blood vessels can also increase the risk of strokes. In severe cases hypertension can lead to nasal bleeds and even seizures due to injury to the brain. Perhaps the most deleterious effect of unchecked hypertension is the systematic destruction of the kidneys, ultimately leading to kidney failure if it is not treated promptly. Unfortunately we are usually unaware of hypertension in our cats, until it causes severe symptoms, and then often the damage cannot be reversed. At Hilton Vet Hospital preventative medicine is a great passion of ours, because we recognise the value of detecting problems before they become a serious health risk, or irreversible. We would like to encourage our cat

owners to bring have their cat's blood pressure checked annually after the age of 7. This is especially important in cats that are overweight, or who lead inactive life-styles, especially if they are consuming a lot of water. Please call Hilton Vet Hospital to arrange to see one of our nurses or doctors for a blood pressure check. We are trying to create awareness about hypertension in cats so please speak to your friends who are cat lovers, and tell them to have their older cat's blood pressure checked. At Hilton Vet Hospital we are proud to be one of the few vet practices that owns a high definition oscillometric (HDO) blood pressure device that has been shown to be one of the most accurate non-invasive blood pressure devices in veterinary medicine. The HDO device has greatly improved blood pressure management in veterinary practice, and allows us to fine tune the management of blood pressure in our patients in way we were unable to previously. In the next issue we will cover the special care of the geriatric pet, so keep an eye out for the next newsletter.



Dr Richard Burchell:

Richard has previously worked at Hilton Veterinary Hospital where he spent two years of his specialist training under the guidance of Dr de Scally, before joining the Faculty of Veterinary Science in Pretoria as a lecturer in Small Animal Medicine to undergraduate students. He also enrolled with the European College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ECVIM). He successfully completed the first exam for ECVIM, and is currently preparing for the final exam, which will allow him to become a member of ECVIM which is an international group of veterinary small animal specialists. Dr Burchell was a popular clinician and was awarded the "clinician of the year" award in both of the years he was eligible to stand for the award.

Richard is married to Lauren and they have 3 children.

James is 6, Benji is 4 and Rebecca is 2 years old.

Richard has 4 dogs, Marley, Jess, Jo and Del, 2 cats Abbey and Macavity and Emily their pet goat.

Richard has a particular interest in working with patients that have hormonal diseases like diabetes and those that have heart and cancer problems. Richard also has a particular passion in working with cats.

In his spare time Richard enjoys cycling, horse riding and the general outdoors.



To make you smile:

