

Another Drink Anyone? Continued from Page 1

Dr Janine says that many owners can't recall finding their cat at the water bowl. 'But if an owner does start to notice their cat drinking, especially on a regular basis and/or for extended periods of time, it could mean that something is amiss. Admittedly, this may be more difficult to spot in cats that spend a lot of time outside rather than indoors, given that they're quite resourceful at finding alternative sources of water.'

If there's any suspicion that there has been a change in your cat's water consumption, make sure you get him/her checked out, she continues. 'At the very least, it will offer you some peace of mind if there is a plausible explanation for the high water consumption. We need to allow for situations where the weather is hot, heating has been turned on, the animal is more active or its diet has changed to include more dry food.'

Cats are very resourceful at finding alternative sources of water

Seeing older, thirsty cats is commonplace in veterinary practices, she says. 'There are four conditions that we diagnose on a regular basis – chronic kidney failure, diabetes mellitus, hyperthyroidism and urinary tract infections. They may not be the only causes of increased thirst, but they're a pretty good place to start. If your pet is displaying any other symptoms, this may help guide your veterinarian's thinking, although often the signs are nonspecific like a change in appetite or behaviour, vomiting, diarrhoea or lethargy. In general, drinking more water is associated with more frequent urination, although in the end stages of kidney failure, urine output declines.'

'A comprehensive blood test, including thyroid check, and analysis of a urine sample should always be performed when cats are suspected to be drinking more than usual. Collecting a urine sample may sound crazy, but if your cat uses a litter tray, it's easier than you might otherwise expect. Alternatively, your vet should be able to collect a sample either by expressing the bladder or cystocentesis (using a needle place directly into the bladder). The results will help to narrow down the diagnosis, but further tests may still be required. All of these are serious conditions that can be managed to differing extents. The sooner the condition is diagnosed, often the better outcome for your cat.'

Common causes of increased thirst in older cats

Chronic kidney failure	Hypothyroidism
Diabetes mellitus	Urinary Tract Infection

Meet The Vet – Dr Sally Upham

I started working at North Geelong Vet Clinic when I was on work experience as a Vet Student in 2001.

My most memorable experience as a Vet was performing a caesarian on a cow in a muddy paddock, in the rain, in the dark with only the car headlights to see. The cow (and calf) survived!

If I were an animal, I would be a dolphin swimming in the warm waters in northern Australia.

I own a gorgeous Burmese cat called Ralph who is the most toddler-friendly cat I have ever met!

The most misunderstood breed of dog is the Labrador. Often people assume they don't need training as they are good natured dogs but in reality, ALL dogs need training – including Labradors.

The pet I would recommend for a young family is a dog breed called Cavoodle (a cross between a Cavalier and a Poodle).

Something you don't know about me is I am going to be having my second (human) child in December.

I love my job because I can help to make sure that your pets live the best lives possible.

I recently learned that unlike dogs, cats DO NOT have a sweet tooth due to a mutation in a key taste receptor.

Did you know the oldest dog on record was an Australian Cattle Dog called Bluey who lived to 29 years and 5 months of age.

My most challenging case was a cat that had a very rare immune disease. Luckily she was insured so her owners could get all the tests and treatments done that she required.

I once treated a staffy that had swallowed a whole mango seed. It is now a very happy dog after I surgically removed the seed from its small intestine!

The secret to a happy pet is having owners that respect it and love it in the way that it wants to be loved – some pets don't really like hugs and kisses...



5278 5400

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WINTER PAWS 2014



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Giving animals a general anaesthetic is an "every day" part of a veterinarian's job. However, there are risks involved with this that must be considered. If your pet is about to have an operation, do you know what tops the pre-anaesthetic checklist?

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Another Drink Anyone?

It's the middle of winter and Mr Whiskers just can't seem to get enough water to drink. What could possibly be causing his sudden increase in thirst?....



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North Geelong Veterinary Clinic Opening Hours:
Monday to Friday 8am – 7pm Saturday 8am – 3pm

Lameness Series – Part 1

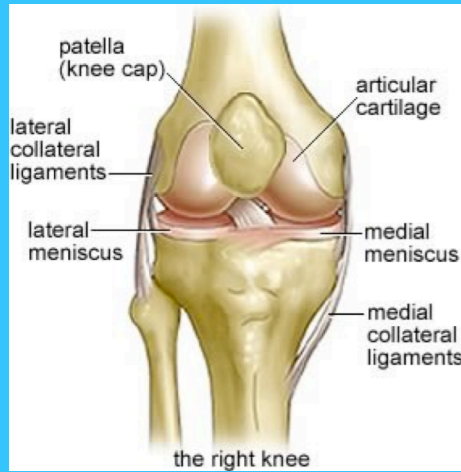
If you've noticed your dog hopping around on 3 legs, they're not the only one, says Dr Sally. 'It may look cute or funny, but it's actually not a good thing as it indicates that there is a structural problem with the knee. It can also be quite sore for your pet. What's happening is that the kneecap, or patella, is not functioning properly – it's slipping out of the patella groove when it should be sitting firmly in it. This is due to a developmental problem and can involve a number of issues, including a shallow groove and patella ligament misalignment due to the femur and tibia not lining up properly.'

leg locks and he/she starts to skip or just hold the leg up. After a few steps, the dog can usually pop the kneecap back in and starts walking normally again. This is a chronic, deteriorating condition – as the kneecap continues to pop in and out, it further wears down the ridge that is supposed to hold it within the groove. Eventually, it may sit out of the groove most or all of the time. A long-term result of this condition is the progression to arthritic changes within the knee joint. Some dogs can end up severely disabled with arthritis and unable to use the leg.'

'A long-term result of this condition is the progression to arthritic changes within the knee joint'

Dogs respond very well to surgical correction of the knee and, as with so many other conditions, early treatment offers better outcomes, Dr Sally continues. 'The surgery we perform is designed to deepen the patella groove and correct the alignment of the patella ligament. If this is performed before any sign of osteoarthritis, the outlook is very promising and many dogs will have a return to normal function. If arthritic changes have already occurred, the surgery will slow down the future progression of arthritis significantly.'

In the coming editions of this newsletter, we will explore other causes of lameness, such as cruciate ligament tears, hip and elbow dysplasia and spinal conditions. Remember to never give any human pain relief to your pet (e.g. Panadol, Nurofen, Voltaren) as these can be toxic. Always seek advice from your veterinarian first.



Luxating Patella, to give it its proper name, is a problem that we see mostly in smaller dogs although occasionally larger breeds will have this problem. Symptoms are often noticed at an early age.

'When the kneecap pops out of the groove, the dog's

AUGUST IS PET DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Call the clinic today on 5278 5400 to book your pet in for a FREE dental health check

with one of our Veterinarians for the month of August.

Dental disease is the most common disease among dogs and cats. More than 80% of dogs and 70% of cats will show signs of tooth and gum disease by 3 years of age.

Left untreated dental disease can lead to more severe health issues such as bacteremia (bacteria from the gums entering the blood stream and causing blood poisoning), kidney disease, heart disease and liver disease. In combination or alone these diseases are linked to a shorter life expectancy. **UNHEALTHY MOUTH = UNHEALTHY BODY**



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Dog Training Courses at North Geelong Vet Clinic

"Paw-fect Puppies"

Age: 8-16 weeks old

Wednesday

7pm – 8pm

Start on first

Wednesday of the month.

Course duration: 4 weeks.

Cost: \$60

"Terr-ific Toddlers"

Age: 4-7 months old

Thursday

7pm – 8pm

Start on first Thursday of the month.

Course duration: 4 weeks.

Cost: \$80

The courses are run by an Instructor with more than 25 years of experience training dogs. A vet also gives an informative talk each week.

Anaesthesia – Be Prepared

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It's highly likely that at some stage your pet will have an anaesthetic, explains veterinarian Dr Chloe. 'That could be for a number of reasons, anything from the routine – desexings and dentals – to the more extreme, such as exploratory abdominal surgery, orthopaedic repairs or complex lump removals. It doesn't necessarily have to involve surgery either – during spring and summer, we're often called to give an animal an anaesthetic or heavy sedation to allow us to search for pesky grass seeds or to perform an ear flush if a bad infection has developed.'

While it's true that anaesthetics are commonly performed in domestic animals, the specific protocol used is at the discretion of the attending veterinarian, she says. 'It's important for owners to ensure that their vet is using only quality products, which includes human-grade gaseous anaesthetics if the animal is required to be fully unconscious – this is also known as a general anaesthetic or GA. Comprehensive and continuous monitoring of the patient should also take place – we have a dedicated surgery nurse who works closely with the vet before, during and after the anaesthetic. And the recovery phase is just as important as the actual period that the pet is anaesthetised.' However, preparation begins well before the scheduled procedure actually takes place, Dr Chloe continues. 'We always perform a thorough physical examination and strongly recommend pre-anaesthetic blood testing for all patients. In certain cases, particularly where the animal is systemically ill or elderly, blood tests are a mandatory part of our clinic's policy. The results give us a much better understanding of how well your pet's organs are functioning – if there are any concerns, we may delay the procedure or use a different anaesthetic protocol to mitigate any risks.'

A pre-anaesthetic blood test allows a much better understanding of how well your pet's organs are functioning

'It is also very possible that we may pick up other conditions before they become serious and be able to get treatment started early or discuss other options with the owner. This is something that I have seen happen a number of times during my years of practice. Knowledge is power and it's always better to be prepared than caught off-guard. While the overwhelming majority of anaesthetics are uneventful, a pre-anaesthetic blood test could be the difference between one that goes smoothly and one that goes pear-shaped, possibly with dire consequences.'

