



# PET NEWS

## WINTER



## A JOINT PROBLEM

**ARTHRITIS IS ONE OF THE MOST COMMON CONDITIONS SEEN IN MIDDLE TO OLDER-AGE PETS. HOW DO YOU RECOGNISE IT AND WHAT CAN BE DONE?**

Even younger dogs and cats can be affected due to inherited conditions. Just like in people, arthritis can cause painful changes within affected joints.

Here are seven signs associated with arthritis in pets:

**LIMPING:** may be more noticeable in the morning when the pet first rises but can improve as the day goes on.

**DIFFICULTY MOVING AROUND:** your pet becomes more reluctant to do things that were previously easy, such as jumping in and out of the car and going up and down stairs.

**TIREDFNESS:** your pet becomes tired more easily and walks become shorter and shorter. They may also spend more time sleeping than they used to.

**SPINAL ISSUES:** you may see a sore neck, a strange posture such as a hunched back, or dragging of the toes in one or both hind legs.

**MUSCLE LOSS:** Pets begin to show muscle loss, most visibly in thighs, due to decreased activity.

**IRRITABILITY:** pets can be wary and snap or bite when picked up or patted in painful areas.

**LICKING, CHEWING AND BITING:** In some cases pets may even begin to bite and chew at the painful joints. This can often lead to skin infections if the pet continues to cause trauma.



### TREATMENTS

Although arthritis cannot be cured, there are various treatments that can help ease pain and slow the process:

**NON-STEROIDAL ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES (NSAIDS):** NSAIDs reduce pain and inflammation quickly, effectively and safely. Some medications can be given short term, but if required may be given for the rest of your pet's life. It is important that you do not give human arthritis medications to your dog as they become seriously ill from them.

**CARTROPHEN:** one of the most effective products, it inhibits the process that causes arthritis. It works on the cartilage and fluid in the joint itself, helping reduce friction and pain. These injections are given under the skin like a vaccine and are relatively inexpensive.

**MILD TO MODERATE EXERCISE:** helps maintain joint function, tone up muscles and lose weight.

**WEIGHT LOSS:** vital if your pet is overweight. A diet plan may be developed using specially formulated premium food. Strict adherence will see your dog become active once again. Remember that it will take 6-12 months to slim your dog.

**SPECIAL JOINT DIETS:** Diets containing omega-3 fatty acids are available. These prescription diets improve the health of arthritic joints in up to 80% of dogs.

**GLUCOSAMINE AND CHONDROITIN:** widely used supplements derived from beef or shark cartilage that provide the building blocks for cartilage repair.

**ACUPUNCTURE:** widely used by homeopathic veterinarians with good results. It is often given in conjunction with NSAIDs, diet and exercise.



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## CASE STUDY AN UNUSUAL LUMP

THIS EDITION'S CASE REVOLVES AROUND A WONDERFUL OLDER MASTIFF CALLED TRAUER (PRONOUNCED 'TREYOO').

**T**rauer was seen by Dr Nev Hooper for a second opinion on a mass that had come up quite suddenly on the Mastiff's back right leg, and was now causing significant discomfort. Previous attempts to retrieve cells out of the mass and gain a diagnosis for the owner had, unfortunately, been unsuccessful.

Dr Hooper performed an ultrasound on the mass and discovered that it consisted mostly of soft tissue but also fluid. She advised Trauer's owner that the best way to achieve a diagnosis was to perform a biopsy.

Trauer came in one month later, by which time the mass had doubled in size. Trauer was unable to bear weight on this leg. Dr Hooper anaesthetised and proceeded to take samples of the lump, a procedure that was more difficult than she anticipated as there was an extraordinary amount of blood involved! Trauer went home the same day with his leg well bandaged while the North Geelong Vet team eagerly awaited the pathology results.

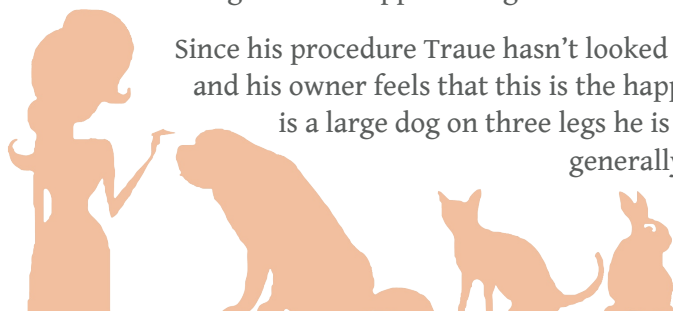
### TRAUER'S LUMP SOON STARTED TO RETURN

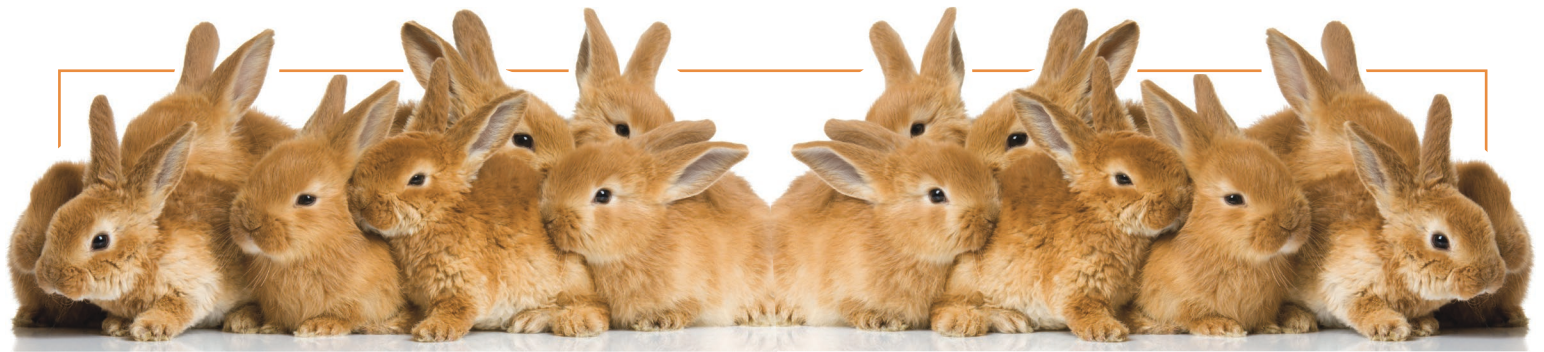
Five days later their wait was over: Trauer's mass was due to a problem with blood vessels (*vasculitis* and *arteriovenous anastomosis*), rather than an obvious cancer. Dr Hooper discussed this unusual diagnosis with both the pathologist at Idexx laboratories, as well as with Dr Sam Snelling of Advanced VetCare, and two options were offered to the owner: trial anti-inflammatory medications, or surgery to either tie off blood vessels or amputate the leg.

In order to save Trauer's leg, his owner decided to try anti-inflammatory medication first. Initially there was an excellent response: the swelling reduced and Trauer was walking on all four legs again! Unfortunately the effect didn't last long. Trauer's lump soon started to return - this time with a vengeance. It grew so large that it kept splitting the skin. His owner was forever changing bandages as he kept bleeding through them. The swelling started to progress up his leg and he was in so much pain he couldn't use the leg. In addition to this, the open wounds had started to smell of dying tissue. The time had come - amputation was the only option.

Trauer presented for his amputation. Two surgeons scrubbed in for the procedure: Dr Julia Larsson performed the bulk of the surgery and Dr Bryan Benshoof assisted. The dog was kept in hospital overnight on intravenous pain relief in order to help him recover. By the following morning he was mobile, and by Tuesday afternoon was walking without support. He greeted his owner with a big smile and a wagging tail on Tuesday evening.

Since his procedure Trauer hasn't looked back. His stitches have been taken out, his fur is growing back and his owner feels that this is the happiest she has seen him in the past eight months. Although he is a large dog on three legs he is still able to go for walks, climb stairs, jump into the car and generally enjoy everything that life has to offer him. We hope this 'tri-pawd' and his wonderful owner continue to enjoy each other's company for many years to come!





# WHY SHOULD I DESEX MY RABBIT?

## RABBITS, WELL... THEY BREED LIKE RABBITS!

A doe (female bunny) produces, on average, six kits (baby bunnies) per litter and if housed with a buck (male bunny) can have a litter every month. This means she could produce a staggering 72 babies per year. And that's not even starting on the babies of the babies. Imagine having to find homes for all those little bunnies!

Even if you have only one rabbit, have rabbits of one gender, or have your rabbits housed in separate Fort Knox type enclosures, desexing is important for the health of your bunny and your relationship with them.

The hormones produced as rabbits reach puberty typically transform your sweet cuddly bundle into a moody, aggressive, disobedient teenager. Females are just as aggressive as males if not more so. They will fight with each other but will also bite and scratch you. Some refuse to use a litter tray, instead marking their territory relentlessly with urine. If your male bunny really loves you he may spray you as a sign of endearment.

Female rabbits may have phantom pregnancies and will pull out their fur to make a nest. This can lead to potentially life threatening fur blockages of the intestines.

Most concerning is the extremely high incidence of uterine (womb) cancer in entire female rabbits. An alarming 70 to 80% of entire females will succumb to uterine cancer by 4 to 6 years of age.

## SO A SIMPLE DESEXING SURGERY CAN EXTEND THE LIFE OF YOUR RABBIT BY YEARS!

So for happy, healthy rabbits book them in for desexing. Male bunnies can be castrated as early as 3 to 4 months – as soon as their testicles can be felt in the scrotum. Females are best spayed a little bigger at 6 months of age.

## SPECIALS



JULY IS  
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MONTH  
**FREE**  
**FREE**



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PUPPY



SCHOOL GRADUATION



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR 'STUDENT' DOGS (AND THEIR OWNERS) FOR GRADUATING FROM PUPPY SCHOOL!



QUEENIE



POPPY



TEDDY



ZIGGY



BUBBLES



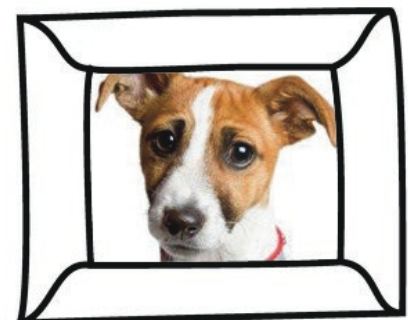
PERCY



LOBO



CRYSTAL



KENNY

GIVE YOUR DOG THE SMARTS SIGN THEM UP TO PUPPY SCHOOL TODAY!



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