

VETERINARY SURGEONS

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Newsletter – AUTUMN 2018 Issue 39

CLINIC NEWS

Since our last newsletter, we have sadly farewelled Eve who has set off on new adventures. We will miss her friendly smile and skill with all our patients.

However rest assured the same care and expertise will be offered by our other vets, and we are in the process of replacing Eve.

Choosing and introducing a new puppy

By Liz

After a year of pestering staff and clients at the clinic about different dog breeds my family and I have finally taken the plunge and welcomed a small black schnoodle called Oscar into our home.

Deciding on whether a dog is a suitable pet for your family and then what sort of dog to get is a major decision and can be very confusing with an overwhelming amount of information available. Our family live in town on a small section and this will be our first dog. I work part time and have support from family members but our puppy will have to spend some time alone. We like walking but are not runners or sporty types. Bearing all this in mind and our lifestyle we decided on a small dog that didn't shed too much. If you are thinking about getting a puppy our staff are always happy to have a chat and give advice about breed, temperament, known genetic/inherited issues and general requirements to help you make this important decision.

If you are going to buy from a breeder it is best to visit in person. Unfortunately it was not possible for us to visit our breeder in the North Island but she sent photos which showed the puppies with their mother in a clean dry bed, playing with other adult dogs outside in the sun and her grandchildren socialising with the puppies. The breeder answered all my questions in a sensible manner and so we decided to go ahead.

We then began preparing for our new family member. We secured our garden against any escape attempts. We collected up all the necessary puppy paraphernalia (crate and bedding, puppy bed, puppy pen, lead, collar, premium puppy food, bowls, treats for training, toys, puppy shampoo and grooming brush, urine stain and odour eliminator and babywipes etc). We bought a baby gate to close off the second story of our house to limit the area the puppy would have access to and give our cats a break. I also decided to try an Adaptil collar which releases a natural pheromone to help with settling in and training the new puppy. We sell these at the clinic and I had heard good things about them. Our clinic staff are happy to advise on what to purchase when expecting a new puppy.

Finally the day of arrival dawned. At the airport collection point we heard barking and joked that we hoped that wasn't our puppy. It was and we were told that Oscar had also "serenaded" the pilot for the duration of the flight to Christchurch.

Oscar was 9 weeks when he arrived and slept a lot of the time initially. At night he sleeps in a puppy crate (covered with a blanket to make it a cosy den) in our bedroom. After the first few nights he now sleeps through the night waking about 6am. During the day he sleeps where he falls, not in his plush puppy bed. Toilet training outside began in earnest immediately using positive reinforcement (treats). Puppies need to go to the toilet frequently particularly after eating and sleeping. It is also important to start general training early and we have been trying "sit", "fetch" "down" and "leave it" with some success. A well trained puppy is a happy puppy.

We have kept Oscar on the premium puppy food that the breeder was using and currently feed 3 small meals at the same time each day. He always has fresh water available. Clinic staff are well qualified to discuss puppy food and feeding schedules if you need help deciding.

We have 2 cats and so careful managed introductions have been made. The cats have given him a good sniff when he is asleep and made it plain when he is being too friendly. We have 2 Feliway diffusers (a cat pheromone product which we sell at the clinic) running upstairs and downstairs which we found helpful when moving house. I



Caring Vets, Healthy Pets

can't say it's been love at first sight but neither has it been a stressful disaster. The baby gate has also helped.

Socialisation during these first 12 weeks is very important and has been a challenge over the holiday period. Oscar cannot go out on walks or socialise with unknown dogs until 2 weeks after his final puppy vaccination. He can however socialise with fully vaccinated dog friends and visit safe locations and he loves people.

Oscar visited the clinic following his arrival and had a thorough checkup with Chantal the vet which he passed with flying colours. We are now waiting eagerly for the last puppy vaccination so that we can venture out into the wide world. We are also looking forward to puppy preschool classes. Please ask us about the classes we run at the clinic.

A helpful sheet detailing puppy care (food, flea, worm, vax, microchipping, desexing etc) is on our website (<http://www.veterinarycentre.co.nz/new-pup-info.php>) and available at the clinic. There is also information in our previous newsletters which can also be accessed on our website. If you would like to hear how Oscar is doing or chat with any of us about puppies pop in and see us at the clinic.

Free feeding or meal feeding cats?

By Anita, VN

This was a question I pondered after I adopted an energetic young cat that woke us up many times a night to eat. Previously, I have always fed my two cats their daily amount of dry biscuits in the morning, and they merrily grazed their way through this, day and night. So, after endless nights of being woken up, I did some research about how to limit a cat's night time activities.

The main points that came up was feeding regimes. If you are free feeding – meaning you have food available at all times. Having food available all the time goes against their cat nature, they are not meant to be grazers. Your cat will be in a constant state of digestion which makes their energy levels unpredictable and is a cause of many behavioural issues. It can lead to weight and health problems.

Meal feeding means you schedule the meals into 3 small meals a day to suit **your** routine, cats are built to eat smaller meals, best is 6 – 8 hourly. You can control what they eat and how much, if they are on a prescription or weight loss diet or in a multi cat household. Give them some time to eat it, then take the bowls away, even if it has not all gone. The next meal, they will be hungry. You feed their last meal around two hours before you go to sleep, so they naturally eat, groom, & sleep.

I implemented this regime immediately and have had great results. I give their first meal at 6am when I get up, a small meal at 1.30 – 2pm (if I am home, otherwise they wait until I get home at 3pm). Then their last meal at 7 – 8pm. They both took about a week to realise that the food is taken away if not eaten. My younger cat eats all

of his meal at once now, the older one not all but she doesn't eat a lot anyway. But the best bit is that they both now SLEEP ALL NIGHT, not getting up to graze and disturbing us because there is no food available, they just don't bother! It did take a few weeks so you must be prepared to IGNORE them for about 10 – 14 days if they still come to wake you in the middle of the night. Any attention, negative or positive is the payoff they need to keep up a behaviour. Be Strong!

So, if you are having issues with feline night activity, consider how you feed them, do some research or just try the schedule feeding, it just might be the answer.

PROMOTIONS

Buy any Bravecto product in the month of April for a chance to win a hamper full of yummy goodies,

Buy any Bravecto product in the month of May for a chance to win a years worth of that equivalent packet of Bravecto,

Get free Hill's Metabolic Treats/Tins with any purchase of Hill's Metabolic Biscuits cat & dog – while stock lasts.

<http://www.veterinarycentre.co.nz/pet-product-promotions.php>

DID YOU KNOW?

While it is well known that brachycephalic breeds (that is those with squashed in faces) have a lesser capacity for thermoregulation; recent research has identified that body condition had the biggest impact on core body temperature. In plain English that means the more overweight your dog is the higher their risk of heat stress. Combine that with being brachycephalic and the risks are even greater.

Best advice: ensure your dog maintains a lean body condition and avoid situations where it is at risk of heat stress (like locked in cars, even at this time of the year!).

We would love to hear your feedback on our newsletter. We thank you for your custom and we look forward to seeing you again soon.



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Caring Vets,
Healthy Pets