



THE STRAVEN ROAD  
**VETERINARY**  
**CENTRE (LTD)**

**VETERINARY SURGEONS**

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**Newsletter – SUMMER 2010/2011 Issue 10**

**CLINIC NEWS**

After a busy year with 3 new babies to staff and an engagement leading to some staff changes, everything has now settled down and all the new staff are working well to continue giving you the exceptional service that you have come to expect from us.

Over the Festive season we will be closed on the Statutory holidays (Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> December – Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> December and Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> January - Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January inclusive). During this time, you will be able to get 24 hour emergency veterinary care from the Christchurch After Hours Veterinary Clinic in Disraeli Street. Contact details are on our website

We'd like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Enjoy a well earned break over the festive season and we look forward to seeing you all again soon.

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**FEATURE ARTICLE**  
**Rabbit Calici Virus**

**by Barbara Eddy, Veterinary Nurse**

Rabbit Calicivirus Disease is a contagious disease that is deadly to rabbits. It was released in Otago in 1997 and has now been reported in most areas of both the North and South Islands of New Zealand.

It is passed from direct contact (sick rabbit coming into contact with another rabbit) and from contaminated food, bedding, equipment (bowls, drinking bottles, cages etc).

Studies have shown that the virus can live in the environment for 105 days in 20 degree temperatures and even longer in colder environments. This means that if you use a cage/ bowl/ hay that has had a sick rabbit contaminate it, the virus could still be there for 3-4 months.

Rabbit Calici Virus Disease is very quick in onset and can kill a rabbit in as little as 24-72 hours. Most rabbits show very few or no signs at all when infected.

The best way to avoid this disease is vaccination. All rabbits should be vaccinated to protect them against this disease. Rabbits vaccinated under 12 weeks of age should have a booster every 3-4 weeks till they are 12 weeks old. Rabbits over 12 weeks of age need one vaccination. To maintain optimum protection your rabbit should have a yearly booster.

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The vaccine contains "killed" virus so it is not possible to cause your rabbit to become sick from the vaccine but like any vaccinations it takes 7- 10days after the vaccine is given to be fully protective, so getting your rabbit vaccinated before they are exposed to this disease is very important.

Read the article on our website about other common rabbit diseases: <http://www.veterinarycentre.co.nz/rabbit-diseases.php>

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**FEATURE ARTICLE**  
**Pets and safety in the Sun**

**by Dr. Francesca Matthews**

We have all heard it over and over again - "slip, slop, slap" when it comes to us humans and our families, but it is important to also be aware that our pets face similar risks from the sun.

The risk applies to all pets that spend any time in the sun. The risk is significantly greater to those pets that have areas of unpigmented (white or pink) skin that can be seen through their fur, especially those with pale hair colour.

Not only can our pets suffer the consequences of sun burn but damage to the skin from the sun's UV rays can lead to skin cancers and other skin conditions.

**What is the incidence of skin cancer in pets?**

From published data, obtained at the recent New Zealand Veterinary Association conference, 3.6 – 6.9% of skin lesions and lumps presented to vets in dogs are a type of skin cancer called Squamous Cell Carcinoma, and 4.5 – 17.4% of skin lesions in cats are also squamous cell carcinomas. This cancer type is associated with exposure to the sun.

Melanomas also occur in dogs at a rate of 5 - 6.8%. There is currently no clear association at this time of the presence of these with sun exposure, however given the association in humans, it would seem pertinent to help your pet avoid over-exposure to the sun. Especially given how common the other type of skin cancer that is associated with the sun is.

As well as these well known skin cancers that can occur following sun damage, there are a number of other tumours, skin infections and changes to the skin that can also occur following sun exposure.

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## What pets are in a high risk category?

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1. White cats
  2. Cats and dogs with pale or pink extremities (ears, nose, eyes, feet)
  3. Pets that have areas where the hair is sparse (for example, the belly)
  4. Dogs that have only a thin covering of hair so that areas of unpigmented skin shows through - some specific breeds that fit this criteria include Dalmatians, English Bull Terriers and Whippets. This list is not exclusive.
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We are able to advise you specifically on the risk for your pet, so give us a call to discuss this further.

## What can you do to minimise the risks?

You should limit your pet's sun exposure. Encourage them into the house or to shady areas between 10am and 4pm. If you are unable to supervise them, provide access only to shaded areas while you are out, especially if your pet is a known 'sunbather'.

Provide enticing shady areas for your pets, to encourage them to use those areas.

Use a summer coat on dogs that have thin coats, where the skin can be seen and on unpigmented skin when they are out in the sun. Train them now to get used to coats in the winter months so they will accept a light one in the summer. Make sure the coat is designed for the summer months and is a light colour to reflect the heat, as well as being a UV resistant fabric.

Apply zinc based animal sunscreen like 'Filtabac' to areas such as the ears, nose and belly that can't be covered by a coat.

Dog goggles or sunglasses are available from many pet suppliers. These are an excellent way to reduce sun damage to the eyes of pets.

**If you live in an environment where it is very difficult to assist your pet in completely avoiding the sun and the resulting damage, think carefully about the breed and colour of pet you choose. We can help you!**

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## PROMOTIONS

Check out the website for details on our current promotions. Current for December 2010:

1. Hills Puppy and Kitten Promotion – Free Pet Year book
2. Frontline promotion
3. Revolution promotion

Check out: <http://www.veterinarycentre.co.nz/pet-product-promotions.php> for full details

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## WEBSITE

[www.veterinarycentre.co.nz](http://www.veterinarycentre.co.nz)

Over the last 3 months we have been working hard to increase the content on our website. You will now find a number of new articles with important information for you as pet owners. Here is a selection of the types of articles we have for you:

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## New content on the website:

**Dental Care** – things you can and should be doing at home to provide optimal dental care for your cat or dog:

<http://www.veterinarycentre.co.nz/dental-care.php>

**Teeth brushing** – step by step, how to introduce your cat or dog to teeth brushing:

<http://www.veterinarycentre.co.nz/teeth-brushing.php>

**Blood Tests** – read about the reasons for and the benefits of blood tests prior to anaesthesia, for a senior pet and also when your pet suffers from carrying too much weight:

<http://www.veterinarycentre.co.nz/blood-tests.php>

**Pet Insurance** – find out more about this and get some help with questions you should ask to choose the best pet insurance company for you:

<http://www.veterinarycentre.co.nz/insurancechecklist.php>

**Checklist** for choosing a boarding kennel or cattery for your cat or dog:

<http://www.veterinarycentre.co.nz/boardingfacilities.php>

**Lumps** – what you need to do if your pet develops a lump:

<http://www.veterinarycentre.co.nz/lumps-and-bumps.php>

As much as it is a difficult and sensitive topic, we have put a few articles on **euthanasia and grief** on our website. We hope these are useful in helping you understand and come to terms with the loss or impending loss of a loved one:

<http://www.veterinarycentre.co.nz/euthanasia.php>

**Prescriptions** - We are often asked by clients for medications without a consultation and also why clients with pets on long term medication have to come back for check ups every 6 months to continue getting the medication. We hope this next article is helpful in explaining why:

<http://www.veterinarycentre.co.nz/prescriptions.php>

A common thing to do over the summer holiday period is to decide to get a new pet. With this in mind there is now an article on our website with a few **tips on successful introduction of a new pet** – both to your home and to other pets:

<http://www.veterinarycentre.co.nz/introducing-a-new-pet.php>

These are just a small selection of the new articles now available and more will be added over the summer months, Please visit our website to read more.

We also want you, our clients, to be part of our website. Share your favourite pictures of your pets by emailing them to us.

We'd also love to hear their stories too, especially if your pet has undergone treatment with is and you'd be willing to share. Let us know if you are happy to share your pet's story and we can put something together and contact you for your perspective too.

More content is being added regularly to keep checking the website!

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**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.**