



THE STRAVEN ROAD
VETERINARY
CENTRE (LTD)

VETERINARY SURGEONS

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Newsletter – SUMMER 2009/10 Issue 6

All the staff at The Veterinary Centre wish you and your pets a very happy and relaxing festive season and all the best for 2010.

Over the next month or two, most of the vets at our 2 branches will be taking a week or 2 off for a well deserved holiday. If you have a particular need or preference to see a specific veterinarian, please make sure you check who is on duty when you book your appointment so that we can do our best to accommodate your requests. Remember in urgent situations, all our veterinarians are very capable and a visit should not be delayed if your favourite veterinarian is unavailable.

With the hot balmy summer days ahead, make sure that your pets left at home have plenty of fresh water and shade freely available to them. Check out this nifty product for making sure there is clean fresh water available to your dogs all day:
<http://www.thepethub.co.nz/shop/Pet+Products/Water+Dog.html>

Also remember that your dogs will find the heat of the day exhausting for walking, not to mention the risk of them developing heat exhaustion which can be life threatening. Rise early and enjoy the best part of the day to walk your dog before the heat of the sun hits or walk them late in the evening or even consider doing both. It's good for both you and your dog!!

Finally, don't forget that if your pets are going into the kennels or cattery, they need to be up to date with their vaccinations. Check with your veterinarian what they need and when, and also check whether your dog should have an additional intranasal kennel cough vaccination just prior to going to the kennels. You should also make sure all your pets are wormed and treated for fleas prior to going to into the boarding facility.

PET CARE

Obesity in our pets

By Anita, Ansell, Veterinary Nurse

Nutrition plays an important part in your pet's health and well-being, so having a nutritious balanced diet is essential for your pet to lead a healthy, active lifestyle. Studies have shown that a leaner pet will live a longer happier life! Overeating can lead to being overweight and your pet will have a greater risk of developing health problems such as arthritis, diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems. Being obese can also make your pet an increased surgical and anaesthetic risk, their coat and skin could be of poor quality and have lowered immunity.

Every pet has an ideal weight for their size and breed. Some signs that your pet may be overweight include - loss of a waist, their collar needs loosening, difficulty walking, shortness of breath, sleeping more than usual or their ribs cannot be easily felt.

If you think your pet may be overweight (and approximately 60% of your cats and dogs are in this category), your veterinarian can recommend a prescription food specially formulated for weight loss. All of these foods will provide a complete and balanced meal for your pet and ensure they are kept satisfied while losing weight. The success of your pet's diet relies on the whole families motivation, your pet's diet and exercise. Your own involvement is so important, as at the end of the day you are responsible for controlling their diet and level of exercise.

Hills Petfit™ programme is a great way to keep on track to improve your overweight pets quality of life. Check out their website www.hillspet.co.nz/petfit. This online programme is specifically designed to help you. It is full of tools and information you can use, helpful exercise tips for cats and dogs to keep them moving. Once registered you can access your pets record from home, enter information into the progress tracker, not to mention the rewards and competitions to keep you motivated. Remember you can pop into the clinic at anytime for a weight check!

If you are interested in registering your pet for Petfit™ online, just let one of our Veterinary Nurse's know and they can set your pet up with a feeding programme, how long it will take for your pet to reach their target weight, and how much weight you would expect your pet to lose per week. Don't worry you will get reminders via email for a weight check to keep you on track.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Hyperthyroidism in Cats

By Dr. Michael Averill, Veterinarian and Practice owner

Hyperthyroidism is a relatively common hormonal disorder in cats. Most cases (up to 99%) result from a benign (non-malignant) nodular enlargement of the thyroid gland(s) located in the neck. In approximately 70 to 75% of cats with hyperthyroidism, both thyroid glands are affected.

The incidence of this disease has increased steadily since the early 1980's but the reason for this is still unknown. Multiple factors such as dietary, environmental, genetic and immunological causes may be involved.

Hyperthyroidism occurs most commonly in middle-aged to

older cats, with an average age of onset of 13 years. The thyroid gland produces thyroid hormones which regulate the body's rate of metabolism and in hyperthyroid cats there is an excessive production of thyroid hormones which causes an increased metabolic rate.

The most common signs seen in hyperthyroid cats are weight loss, increased appetite, vomiting, increased thirst and urination, restlessness, unkempt hair coat and diarrhea. Some cats may present with loss of appetite and weakness. Cats with hyperthyroidism commonly develop rapid heart rates, heart murmurs and high blood pressure. Left untreated these can lead to heart failure, kidney failure, liver failure or blindness.

In normal healthy cats the thyroid glands cannot be palpated in the neck but in most cats with hyperthyroidism an enlarged thyroid gland(s) can be felt. The diagnosis can be confirmed in most cats by a blood test to measure thyroxine (T4) hormone levels, which are usually high in cats with hyperthyroidism.

The good news for cats with hyperthyroidism is that only 1 to 3 % of cases are caused by a malignant cancer of the thyroid gland. Because most cases are benign nodules (adenomas), treatment of hyperthyroidism in cats is usually very successful. There are 3 choices of treatment available, which can be tailored to suit each individual cat:

Radioactive iodine - Radioactive iodine therapy is a simple, effective and safe treatment of choice in otherwise healthy cats with hyperthyroidism. We have a special license to treat cats with this by injection at The Straven Road Veterinary Centre. It destroys the abnormal thyroid tissue but does not damage the normal thyroid tissue. Cats require hospitalization after treatment, usually for 5 to 7 days. Dr Mike Averill has treated 166 cats this way over the last 10 years. The oldest cat he has treated was 19 years old and another cat treated at 17 years of age lived until it was 21.

Surgery - This involves surgery to remove the abnormal thyroid gland (thyroidectomy). It is generally only safe to remove one thyroid gland in affected cats, because of the risk of damage to the adjacent parathyroid glands during surgery. The risk of anaesthesia in an elderly cat also needs to be considered.

Medical treatment - An orally administered anti-thyroid medication called methimazole (Neomercazole™) can be used to treat hyperthyroid cats. It can also be applied as a transdermal gel to the ear. It works by blocking the production of thyroid hormones, so it does not cure the disease and has to be given daily for the remainder of the cat's life. Some cats can develop side effects such as lethargy and vomiting on this drug.

In conclusion, if your elderly cat is losing weight, remember to get it checked by your veterinarian, as it may be due to hyperthyroidism, not just old age. With appropriate treatment these cats will regain weight and can lead a normal, healthy life.

PROMOTIONAL OFFERS

Colouring in Competition!

This is a great competition for your kids while they are on their summer holidays, especially on a rainy day.

You can download the picture from the website and print it out. Once it is coloured in, just drop the completed entry

in before the 31st January 2010 and be in to win. Check out the website for all the details.

The competition is open to 5-10 year olds.

Check out our website regularly for new offers and promotions.

PET CARE

A new kitten?

Kitten season is upon us. At The Animates Veterinary Centre Papanui, we take in a small number of kittens to help them find loving homes. These kittens are available at Animates Papanui or Animates Tower Junction.

All our kittens are fully health checked before they are put up for sale, which includes:

- two vaccinations at 8 and 12 weeks (rrp \$98)
- full worming and de-fleaing until 12 weeks of age (rrp \$18)
- quarantine for 2 weeks to ensure no health problems develop and it also helps with toilet training and socialisation
- all kittens are fed a premium kitten food which we encourage you to keep them on until one year of age at which time you should then change to an adult diet
- desexing before sale (rrp \$70-\$105) - this helps decrease the load of unwanted kittens in the community
- free introduction to Pet-n-Sur (Pet Insurance) for 1 month
- information brochures on kitten health and well-being
- vouchers for kitten food

Because we want your kitten to have the best start in life, if during the first week home, your kitten is unwell (excludes traumatic causes), we will cover any medical costs needed to help keep them healthy.

The cost for your kitten, which includes all of the above benefits, is only \$220, so it makes them great value.

Come into Animates Papanui or call us on 354 2380 or Animates Tower Junction on 341 2227 to find out what kittens we have in store and if your next friend is waiting for you! More kittens arriving throughout the kitten season.

WEBSITE

www.veterinarycentre.co.nz

Have you checked it out yet? Make sure you save it to your favourites and check regularly for new promotional offers. Tania (our head nurse) is doing a fantastic job of adding new ones regularly.

Did you know our website has profiles of all the staff at The Veterinary Centre. You can find out a little more about all the veterinarians and veterinary nurses that you will meet on your visits to us.

We would love to hear your feedback on our newsletter – what would you like to see in our newsletters?

We thank you for your custom and we look forward to seeing you again soon.