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Welcome to our 'new look' newsletter, put together to help keep our clients well informed. If you would like to receive this newsletter on a regular basis, as well as our special clinic offers let us know your email address so we can keep you up to date on the latest in pet care and bring you special VIP discounts. If you have any suggestions for articles in future editions of the newsletter, or have any questions regarding the content of this one, feel free to contact us at admin@latrobevetgroup.com.au or call us.

BEATING THE WINTER BLUES— ARTHRITIS IN YOUR PET



Starting to feel the cold?? Well chances are your animal is too, especially if they're getting on in age. Winter is the time when most older

animals tend to stiffen up and slow down-and arthritis is one of the main causes of this. Other signs of arthritis include limping, increased lethargy, difficulty going up or down stairs, reduced exercise intolerance and sometimes altered behaviour or changes in toileting.

Arthritis is inflammation of the joint and develops from wear and tear on the joint. In normal joints cartilage provides a smooth surface for bone surfaces to glide over each other and joint fluid lubricates these joints. With arthritis cartilage becomes worn leaving an uneven surface causing pain and inflammation.

So what can you do to help your animal? There are a number of options available and as each animal is unique-some things work better than others in different animals. One thing that assists in ALL cases is weight control. The less weight on the

joints the better so good diet and sensible exercise is a great way to go. Talk to your vet about what you should be feeding your animal, how often and different 'light' or 'diet foods' to assist with weight control.

A variety of different drugs and supplements are available to make animals with arthritis more comfortable. These include products that act to protect cartilage-including cartrophen® injections and sasha's blend®. These help improve the health of the joint cartilage by decreasing inflammation, increasing lubrication, cartilage growth, repair and circulation

Cartrophen® injections are given initially as 4 injections each 1 week apart. Usually improvement isn't seen until after the 3rd or 4th injection. Some animals benefit from regular injections others may be fine for 12 months or longer-or only need a course before the onset of winter. Sasha's Blend® is another product available and comes in capsules or powder form. It is added to your pets food and can be given daily. Sea Flex® is another new natural product which is also available as a daily supplement.

Anti-inflammatory drugs can be used in more severe circumstances

where animals need ongoing pain relief. Several forms are available including Metacam®, Rimadyl®, Prolet® and Previcox®. These can only be used under veterinary guidance and animals on these medications require regular check ups.

There are special diets available to help with arthritis and joint support. As each dog is different it is best to talk to your veterinarian about which diet may best suit your animal.

Here at Latrobe Vet Group we are lucky enough to have Dr Kate Haines who offers veterinary chiropractic care, which can be a very effective approach to arthritis management.

Finally the simple things such as nice warm supportive bedding (special orthopedic pet beds are available), protection from drafts and gentle low impact exercise such as lead walks, swimming or steady jogging can also make your pet more comfortable this Winter.

For more information make an appointment for an arthritis assessment with your vet today and we will let you know which options best suit YOUR animal.

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Interesting Fact:
 Geese mate for life and grieve for a long time, if one is killed the other may mourn the loss forever and never remarry



Interesting Animal Fact:

In some form sharks have been around for a about 400 million years

Cat Fight Abscesses



Has your beloved Moggy been protecting the back yard from that rotten wandering tom cat and ended up in a bit of a blue leaving your cat battered and bruised with scratches, bite marks and now a huge swelling somewhere on his/her body! Well, don't wait until your cats not eating or drinking and has a temperature of 42. Bring your puss straight into a vet clinic as soon as you notice a small lump. Most likely they will go home on a course of antibiotics and possibly have the abscess cleaned, lanced and left to drain that nasty bacteria away.



If you don't, your cat may have to stay at the clinic for the day (which creates a very unhappy cat), have a general anesthetic to have the large abscess drained and flushed out, a drain tube put in and two more visits back to the vets afterwards to have the drain tube removed then the sutures out, which is all going to cost you more money!!

So, the motto of this little story:

- Check your cat regularly for puncture wounds if he/she is prone to fighting.
- Bring your cat to the vets early.
- Cats tend to fight more at night (and there is a night curfew for cats) so keep them inside at night!

Hummingbirds are the only animals that can also fly backwards!

CASE OF THE MONTH

A little while ago we were presented with 'Seth' a 5 1/2 year old bull terrier cross. Seth's conscientious owners had recently noticed a small lump on his shoulder and on his tail which had gotten slightly bigger. He had otherwise been well but just to be safe they decided to bring him in and get them checked out.

On examination of Seth, he was bounding with energy and on physical exam he was a healthy dog. The small lumps were very innocent looking but to be safe a needle was used to take a small sample of cells to determine what it was. This sample showed the lumps to be mast cell tumours-a very nasty and easily malignant skin tumour which has potential to kill a dog in less than 6 months due to its ability to invade throughout the body. Due to the aggres-

sive nature of these tumours, surgery with very wide (3cm) margins the whole way around was indicated.

After a long discussion with Seth's owners the decision for surgery was made as this was his best option for full recovery. Our senior surgeon Dr Amanda Rhodes-Andrew carefully examined the areas where the masses were located and devised a surgical plan. This involved making a 'skin flap' to help close over where the lumps were taken out. The skin flap was taken from above the lump and turned around to help close the skin. It took several hours and involved hundreds of stitches both under and above the skin.

Seth recovered well from the surgery and was soon back to his happy and playful self. This is a good example of how such an innocent looking lump can

"the lumps were mast cell tumours, a very nasty and easily malignant skin tumour"

be potentially life threatening. To help catch these problems early, examine your animals often for lumps and make sure you bring them in for their yearly check ups so that the vets

can find any potential problems before they become to serious. Ask your vet if you have any lumps on your animal you are concerned about or for more information on what to .



Weird Animal fact:

The only 2 animals that can see behind itself without turning its head are the rabbit and the parrot.



Staff Profile – Dr Kate Haines

Dr Haines is the Practice Principal. She has a Graduate Diploma as well as a Masters Degree in Animal Chiropractic, one of the first two in the world to gain that qualification. She is also qualified in Acupuncture with the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society. Chiropractic and acupuncture now comprise the majority of her workload, combined with her efforts towards developing the practice overall. Dr Haines has extensive experience in cattle medicine (accredited bovine pregnancy tester, accredited countdown advisor) and equine sports medicine, particularly equine endurance riding.



Dr Haines is currently secretary of the Australian Veterinary Chiropractic Association, has been a member of the honorary veterinary panels for both Victorian & Australian Endurance Riders Associations, and is actively involved in Australian Veterinary Association South Gippsland Branch and Victorian Division Animal Welfare Advisory panel. She is also a lecturer in Animal Chiropractic at RMIT University, and is an Academic Associate of Melbourne University, which is why we often have veterinary students seeing practice with us. Dr Haines has presented lectures on Animal Chiropractic for the Post Graduate Foundation in Veterinary Science (Sydney University), Melbourne University and Equitana, amongst many others.

In her rather limited spare time, Kate plays in a local Irish band, "the Molly Maguires", rides a road bike, paddles a kayak, and tries to keep the garden under some sort of control.



Magnetic Dog Beds

What a great way to give your older canine companion some relief from the onset of old age. Magnetic dog beds can be of some benefit. A great web site to explore is:

www.animalmagnetism.info/magnetism_dogs.htm

So go on give them a try, they can also be purchased through our clinic's just give us a call and place an order, or come in and have a look at them.