

THOUGHTS

FOR PAWS



The Vets
who ❤️
your pets

Winter 2015

Practice News

It's that time again to wrap up for the winter blues! We hope you have all enjoyed the warm weather.

Our furry friends will also be feeling the cold but we do have a range of warm winter jackets available to keep them nice and snug as well. Feel free to bring your pooch in for a fitting.



In this edition of the practise newsletter we will be talking about a common problem that often reveals itself in the winter. Many animals suffer from this condition, it's called arthritis. You will be aware of the symptoms and signs to watch out for in case your animal has arthritis.

Signs & Symptoms:

Physical signs:

- Stiffness
- Lameness/limping
- Reluctant to jump or climb
- Slow start in morning – need to warm up
- Sore after exercise

Behavioural Signs:

- Seems lazy/sleeps a lot
- Restless through night
- Reduced exercise tolerance
- Aggression or disobedience

All about Arthritis



In people the most common forms of arthritis are related either to old age or primary causes. In dogs arthritis is most commonly the result of abnormal wear and tear of a joint due to an underlying problem.

Arthritis cannot be cured and arthritic changes cannot be reversed, but steps can be taken to slow the progression of joint disease and to alleviate the symptoms associated with the condition.

The three most important aspects of treating arthritis are:

1. Pain relief: The use of anti-inflammatory drugs. Initially this may be intermittent to combat pain from flare-up episodes, but may need to become long-term treatment as the condition worsens. Fortunately the modern range of such drugs is extremely safe and efficacious for our patients.

2. Weight loss: Recent studies confirm that the majority of dogs are overweight! Force-plate studies at Universities have shown that the peak force transmitted through a joint for a dog trotting beside its owner is up to five times its bodyweight. Therefore weight-loss can make a big difference to the degree of force – and ongoing damage put through a joint.

3. Exercise modification: Controlled regular exercise is beneficial for diseased joints, because it improves blood-flow and strengthens supporting muscles. High impact exercise such as ball-chasing can be very damaging.

There are various supplements and alternative treatments. Basic massage and physiotherapy techniques are easily learned and can be very useful in certain cases.

Regular checks with a vet who knows your pet well form the cornerstone of treatment and will allow the vet to advise appropriately on subtle changes in your pet's condition.

Did you know that nearly a quarter of all cats are physically obese?

Our pets are an important part of our families but they are also suffering from the pitfalls of modern life such as too many calories and not enough exercise!

Pet obesity has mirrored the human population situation and is causing many health problems that could be easily avoided. The treats that are available for our beloved animal friends are often the equivalent of feeding them sweets and hamburgers. Often we are inadvertently killing them with kindness!

Pets that are obese are more prone to diseases and have a shorter life span. The most commonly seen problems are:

1) Diabetes: Just like humans obesity can actually cause diabetes and start the need for insulin injections and life threatening situations.

2) Heart disease: The more weight the body is carrying the harder the heart has to work. This may eventually lead to failure of the heart muscle.

3) Liver disease: Currently this is a major problem in cats in the USA. We are beginning to see this trend but it is one we would not like to follow!

4) Skeletal problems: Increased weight travelling through any joint will mean there is increased wear and tear of the internal structures. This will lead to arthritis and ligament ruptures.



How can I tell if my pet is overweight?

Ideally, your pet should be properly weighed for a true measurement of body fat but at home a good way to tell is by running your hands over your pet. If you can easily feel every rib and the spine, this is ideal. If you have to try hard or cannot feel this then your pet is overweight.

How can I help my pet lose weight?

Sensible advice is to feed a good quality, low calorie complete food so you can measure exactly how much your animal is receiving. At Bayfair and Papamoa Vets we can discuss your pet's weight and diet issues and design a regime that is best suited for your particular pet.

THE DANGERS OF CAT COLLARS

Collars are worn for many reasons:

- Identification & cat flap entry
- Early warning system for wild life
- Flea repellent



In trying to do the right thing are innocent pet owners putting their cat's life at risk?

The collar could be the cause of injuries and vet bills. It's a mystery how it actually happens, but cats can hook one of their front feet into the collar. As they struggle, the collar works further up the leg. It can end up wrapped around the back of the shoulder. If it does not break or stretch then over time it cuts into the cat causing some horrific injuries. These wounds can require extensive stitching. Not wearing the collar can avoid this, but for many reasons this is not practical.

We strongly advise you to invest in a collar with an elasticated part and a quick release catch. This may result in your cat coming home repeatedly without a collar, but better this than not coming home at all!

Dog vs Cat

- Isaac Newton invented the cat flap. Newton was experimenting in a pitch-black room. Spithead, one of his cats, kept opening the door and wrecking his experiment. The cat flap kept both Newton and Spithead happy.
- A cat almost never meows at another cat, mostly just humans. Cats typically will spit, purr, and hiss at other cats.
- **Why are dogs' noses so wet?** Dogs' noses secrete a thin layer of mucous that helps them absorb scent. They lick their noses to sample the scent through their mouth.
- A dog's paw print may look pretty generic but their nose print is as unique as a human fingerprint. Their combination of ridges and creases is so distinct it can be used to identify them.

