

# Nose to tail

## Companion animal newsletter



## Dental Health

Dental disease is one of the most commonly encountered problems in cats and dogs and can have a major impact on a pet's health and wellbeing. Once tartar has formed on teeth it can only be removed with a dental scale and polish which needs to be performed under a full general anaesthetic. A general anaesthetic is necessary to allow us to thoroughly and safely examine a pet's mouth prior to performing any necessary treatments.

Prevention involves daily tooth brushing (the gold standard) with special pet toothpaste, feeding special dental diets and utilising dental chews. The type of food we feed can also impact on dental health with moist foods generally causing more tartar build up than dry biscuits. Some of our pets are more likely to have problems with dental disease, for example small breed dogs are over represented.

Having your pet's teeth checked regularly is also recommended and will be performed at each health check when you visit us. A dental grade is assigned to your pet's teeth and gives an indication of your pet's level of dental disease. A grade 2 or higher score indicates that your pet would benefit from a dental procedure.

Dental disease can cause significant pain and suffering in our pets. Unfortunately, they are very good at hiding this pain so dental disease is often not noticed until it is well advanced. This is why it is so important to have their teeth checked regularly.

### ✓ **FREE Dental Check in June**

If you're concerned about your pet's dental health call The Vet Centre to get their teeth and gums checked and if you've been putting off getting dental work done book in now for July and get a **10% discount**.



**At The Vet Centre** every cat and dog who has undergone a dental procedure also receives a **FREE take home post dental care sample pack**

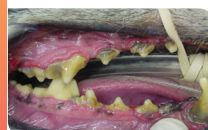
## Dental Grades



**Grade 1:**  
Gingivitis



**Grade 2:**  
Gingivitis & Plaque



**Grade 3:**  
Gingivitis, Plaque & Calculus



**Grade 4:**  
Gingivitis, Plaque, Calculus,  
Root Exposure, Mobile Teeth

**WIN!** Purchase any VEGGIEDENT® FR3SH™, AQUADENT® FR3SH™ or C.E.T.® Home Dental Care between 1 May and 31 August 2021, enter online, and you could win dental vouchers for you and your pet, up to the value of \$500!\*

# Winter Joint Care

As we move into winter our older pets can start to show signs of arthritis such as stiffness after rest, difficulty rising, reluctance to jump, lower activity levels and moaning or vocalising as they lie down or get up. Osteoarthritis is very common in both dogs and cats as they age and something that we see frequently at The Vet Centre. The drop in temperature during the cooler months often results in worsening of arthritic signs in our pets and is often the prompt for owners to bring their pets in to see us.

If your pet is showing any of the above signs then we would recommend booking a consult with one of our veterinarians. They will assess for any signs of osteoarthritis and discuss the options available for confirmation of the diagnosis and the best treatment options for your pet. X-rays can be taken if needed to confirm the diagnosis and identify the location and extent of any osteoarthritic changes. Blood testing is also commonly performed prior to starting any medications.

Pets with mild, early osteoarthritis may only need some lifestyle modifications to improve their symptoms, such as keeping your pet at their optimal weight, ensuring regular, controlled and moderate exercise (e.g. leash walks) and provision of a soft, warm and dry bed. Some pets will also benefit from a warm coat and for cats a litter tray can be provided to avoid them having to go out to toilet if they prefer not to.

Pets with mild osteoarthritis can also benefit from dietary supplementation. This can be done either by adding in a dietary supplement (nutraceutical) or by changing to a prescription veterinary joint diet which also contains joint supplements and anti-inflammatory, essential fatty acids. Some dogs also respond well to in-clinic injections of joint supplements, which are given at regular intervals.

Those pets with moderate or advanced osteoarthritis will be experiencing pain and will require some form of pain management. There are a number of medications available which are licensed and have been tested as safe to use in our pets to help reduce the inflammation and pain caused by osteoarthritis. Please don't give human pain medication to your pets as this can be unsafe and even toxic to your pet.

Our pets are very good at disguising pain and as the changes can occur slowly over time, they are often mistaken for just slowing down due to ageing. Arthritis can be very debilitating for our pets and we can see big improvements in their demeanour and comfort with a few lifestyle modifications and the addition of some pain relief.

**If you have concerns about your pet then please book a consult for a veterinary exam.**





## Symptoms

**Symptoms of rat bait poisoning are not seen straight away and can take between 2-5 days to become apparent.**

This delay in symptoms is due to how the poison works, as the existing clotting factors must be used up first before internal bleeding can occur.

*Symptoms in our pets may include:*



- bleeding
- coughing and difficulty breathing
- pale gums
- weakness
- skin bruising
- blood in faeces, urine or vomit
- lameness



**If an animal is showing any signs of bleeding it is an emergency.**

## Rat Bait Poisoning

During autumn and winter, we commonly see more problems with rat bait poisoning in our pets due to the increased usage of rat bait as the cooler weather brings rodents inside. This year is no exception and we have treated several cases of rat bait toxicity in dogs across all of our clinics. Rat bait is commonly used to control rodents but does carry risks to our pets especially dogs. Rat and mice traps are inexpensive and much safer than rat baits for our pets, and may be all that is needed in some situations.

If rat bait is to be used then care must be taken to place it in bait stations or well away from areas that your pets can access, with the remainder of the packet stored in a secure place. Bait blocks which can be secured in place are also a good option as this helps to prevent rodents from moving them around. Rat bait is made to be tasty for rodents so most dogs will also readily consume it. Most rat baits contain an anticoagulant which prevents the body from making clotting factors and results in haemorrhaging and death. This is the intended outcome for rodents but will also occur in our pets if a toxic dose of bait is ingested.

The severity of poisoning and level of bleeding depends on the type of bait, amount ingested and time since ingestion. Try to use shorter acting or 1st generation baits as these are considered safer (such as Racumin paste) though all baits are deadly to our pets.

Most baits contain a dye, generally a blue/green colour. If you notice this dye colour in or around your dog's mouth or face or in your pets faeces then this is a sign they have ingested bait.

If your pet has been poisoned then we will need to know the active ingredient of the product so bring along the packet or alert our receptionists to the name of the product used. This allows us to identify the active ingredient and give effective treatment. We also need to know when the bait was ingested, how much was ingested and what symptoms your pet is showing. The sooner we see your pet the better the prognosis for recovery. Treatment can be intensive and may include decontamination, blood testing, Vitamin K1 therapy and if required a blood transfusion.



## Working Dog Winter Care

Working dogs are an essential part of the team and need a bit of extra care over the winter to keep them in tip top shape.

Working dogs benefit hugely from being fed a good quality working dog food to maximise health and maintain a good body condition. The Vet Centre stocks Black Hawk Working Dog, which is specifically formulated for New Zealand conditions and contains the optimal amounts of protein, fat, essential vitamins and minerals. It also includes joint supplements and oils to allow for premium health and performance.

### FREE Sacking bed!

Buy a bag of Blackhawk Performance Dog and get a free sacking bed



Keeping working dogs warm overnight is something that is often overlooked. Working dogs burn energy to keep warm once temperatures in their kennels drop below 20°C. Dogs that get cold overnight are harder to keep condition on, need more food and can be stiff and slower in the mornings often needing more time to warm up.

Ideally kennels should be made from wood or have insulation. Having a warm, dry and draft free kennel reduces the amount of energy used to keep warm, allowing this energy to be used for other purposes such as maintaining body condition. Bedding can also be provided to improve warmth and give dogs a softer resting place overnight. Dog coats are another option which can be used to improve warmth overnight. They are also a good option for those dogs that don't tolerate bedding in their kennels.

Regular worm, flea and tick treatments are another important thing to continue to give throughout the year as even in winter we can still see parasites in Northland.

 ACTIVITY  
 SLEEP  
 BEHAVIOUR  
 CALORIES

**BUY A BRAVECTO  
DOG PRODUCT  
DURING THE PROMOTIONAL PERIOD  
FOR YOUR CHANCE TO  
WIN!  
AN ANIMO<sup>®</sup> ACTIVITY AND  
BEHAVIOUR MONITOR\***



**YOUR CHANCE TO WIN  
WIN!  
BRAVECTO<sup>®</sup>**



**EASY, LONG LASTING  
FLEA & TICK PROTECTION  
IN ONE DOSE**

Animo is a trade mark of Sure Petcare and used under licence.  
\*One entry per pack of BRAVECTO SPOT-ON SOLUTION or BRAVECTO CHEW purchased.  
Refer to staff for full terms & conditions including promotional period. Limited time only, conditions apply.

**Book in your routine requirements with your local Vet Centre clinic.**

**Waipu Clinic**  
53 The Centre | 09 432 0693  
✉ waipu@thevetcentre.net.nz

**Ruawai Clinic**  
23 Jellicoe Road | 09 439 2506  
✉ ruawai@thevetcentre.net.nz

**Mangawhai Clinic**  
36 Moir St | 09 431 4535  
✉ mangawhai@thevetcentre.net.nz

**Maungaturoto Clinic**  
184 Hurdall St | 09 431 8318  
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