

December 2011

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ENJOYING SUMMER WITH YOUR PETS

BY SALLY AITKEN

Summer time is great fun for pets and their owners. Here are a few things to watch out for so you can enjoy your summer:

Overheating

This is a very common problem. Never leave your pet in your car, even for a few minutes. Heat stroke occurs very quickly and can be fatal. Pets with heart or breathing problems and older pets have a much harder time in the summer. If they are panting more, coughing, or struggling to exercise, then you should have them checked by a vet. Medication can make them more comfortable. Always walk your pet in the cool of the morning as this reduces heat stress on them. Provide shade and cool water for them if you are going to the lake. We have seen heat stroke in young healthy pets who have spent the day at the lake with the family. These dogs often don't like swimming, so they overheat very quickly with their furry coats.



Grass seeds

These catch us out every year. - Always check your pet's feet, ears, and under the front legs for seeds. Seeds can also lodge in areas of matted fur, and with pets shedding more fur at this time of year, it is important to keep grooming your pets.

Fly strike

We have seen a case of fly strike in a cat already this summer, so please watch your pets closely for this. Flies will attack normal skin, not only smelly areas. It usually occurs around the tail end, but can be along the back too. Pets with any signs of itching, licking or chewing at themselves need to be assessed by a vet, so any underlying skin conditions can be treated. This will help make pets less attractive to the flies. Rabbits are also at risk.

THE STORY OF PETER...ONE LUCKY CAT!

BY MARIA POST



Meet Peter - the cat with the lucky spot on his nose. Peter arrived in a cardboard box at VET-Plus in Taupo - a cold, frightened, starving and dehydrated wild kitten. He weighed only 500 grams. He had been found seeking shelter in a car engine at the lakefront. The couple that found him felt that they had no option but to bring him in to us.

After attending to his immediate needs for fluid and nourishment, it was apparent that aside from starving, he was actually quite healthy with no evidence of the cat flu or ringworm that we often see in wild cats. So what to do? The good

samaritan who brought him in, was a high country shepherd. She had a team of dogs. "Cats are not like dogs, are they?", she commented. "Well, I can't just leave him, I guess he can live outside with the dogs". And off she went, kitten and tins of cat food in hand.

Fast forward 6 months. Peter is now fat and glossy. He sleeps on the bed. He is fed on demand. All the dogs respectfully make room for him wherever he goes. This little 2.5 kg cat now has the entire household wrapped around his white paw. His new owner cannot believe how this "cat" has managed to worm his way into her lifestyle. That was not the plan. Turns out he is more than just an extra mouth after all, his charm and determination have added a new dimension to the lives of the shepherd and her dogs.



Dogs Day Out in Rotorua on the 13th of November 2011

The sun was shining, the dogs and owners arrived and a great morning was had by all. The VETPlus Dogs Day Out was once again a huge success and we had close to 250 dogs turn out for the annual event held in Rotorua. All money raised goes to the Rotorua SPCA and this year we totalled \$3300.00!!

VETPlus would like to thank all the sponsors that helped make the day a success - Tony Bland Photography, Rotorua Dog Sports, Taupo District Council, Scion, Conning Signs, Frontline Plus, Masterpet, Hills Pet Nutrition, Mr Whippy, Andys Party Hire, Bakers Delight, The Coffee Chick, Petnsure, Bayer Animal Health to name a few!!

Check out more pictures from the day on our website www.vetplus.co.nz



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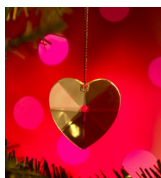


Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year!

Your team at VETPlus

Remembering the lost ones...

This Christmas, the VETPlus Taupo and Rotorua clinics will each have a remembrance tree, upon which you can hang a gold heart with your deceased pets name and a message. It's our way of remembering the animals we love, who won't be here at Christmas. There is the option of donating a gold coin to the SPCA if you would like to as well. The gold hearts are available at the front counter.



FLEAS...GLORIOUS FLEAS!

BY SALLY AITKEN

Around this time of the year we start seeing more and more problems associated with flea infestation of pets. Fleas can cause a constant irritation and annoyance for affected pets. Unfortunately some animals are hypersensitive to flea saliva causing a disease syndrome known as flea allergy dermatitis. For these animals one bite can lead to a vicious cycle of biting and scratching which often causes a nasty bacterial skin infection and hair loss.

Most of the fleas in a household are usually not on the animal. The flea has a similar life cycle to the butterfly, involving eggs, larvae, pupae (cocoons) and adults. Eggs are laid on the animal and then fall off in bedding, on to carpet, floorboards and soil. The larvae hatches quickly, feeds on the faeces of adult fleas and then spins a cocoon within several weeks. The cocoons can lie dormant for up to 1 year before the adult flea emerges. Warm temperatures, high humidity, floor vibrations and carbon dioxide can stimulate the cocoons to hatch. This can be a particular problem when a house has been empty for an extended period of time. Suddenly the hustle and bustle of animals and people can cause hundreds of fleas to hatch at the same time. We had a very long warm summer and autumn earlier this year, so this will mean there are more larvae and eggs in the environment waiting to jump onto your pet.

Irritation is not the only problem associated with fleas, they also can carry tapeworm which can infest cats and dogs.

We recommend defleaing all year round, especially if your pet is inside your home, and if it goes to boarding kennels or places where other dogs have been like dog exercise areas. We have a new way to remember your pet is due. Advantage flea treatments can now be mailed to you when the treatment is due, saving you having to remember. Come and ask our staff about this new service, and for other skin problems come and see the team at VET-Plus.

MEET MARIA, OUR VERY ACTIVE VET

Maria lives in Taupo with her hyperactive husband Warwick (so she says!) and her two very special SPCA cats, Whoopi and Bedu.

When Maria grew up, she had no TV and was surrounded by books, animals and the outdoors. So she spent a lot of time riding horses for miles and coming home in the dark, picking blackberries and baking pies! Maria was already fascinated by biology at a young age and decided she wanted to become a vet. However, before vet school she did try out laboratory work, but decided that vetting would offer her a lot more variety and more people contact.

Maria works in our Taupo branch as a small animal veterinarian. Her day typically starts at 9.15 AM when consulting, and 8.30 AM when she is on surgery. She enjoys the interaction with clients and their pets and loves investigating medical cases. She is also very interested in animal behavior and how we engage with our pets. She says about herself: "I think of every animal as if it were my own."

Maria has worked for VETPlus for 4.5 years, but she has worked in Taupo for 12 years including taking a year out to study. Her first job was in Stratford for 5 years as a large animal/ equine vet.

Maria's favourite thing about working for VET-Plus is working with a number of caring, dedicated people who can always be relied upon to have a laugh.

In Maria's spare time, she loves exercising, such as going for long scenic runs, biking or doing the Tongariro crossing. But she also enjoys a good movie or dinner with friends. For a holiday destination she loves biking in France, and one of her most exciting moments ever was biking down Mt Ventoux while spinning out from vertigo. Only singing stopped her from going over the edge!

In her future, Maria would love to travel more and do some volunteer aid work with WSPA or Vets Beyond Borders, and find some time to read more!

