

Gilbert St Gossip

There's something wrong in ear!

If you think your pet has smelly, dirty or red ears it is time for a check up with us. Ear infections are very common at this time of the year and it's important that we visualise the canal and make sure your pet is not in any pain.

The ear contains its own 'mini environment' and this can be easily disrupted by heat, moisture and self trauma (for example from itching due to allergies). Bacteria and yeast love the change in environment and begin to increase in numbers, resulting in a very unhappy ear canal and an uncomfortable pet.

Watch out for:

- Shaking of the head
- Rubbing ears along the floor or furniture
- Itching behind ears with paws
- A head tilt
- Flicking of the ears (especially cats)
- Discharge - may be smelly and can be black, white or yellow
- Hot and red ears

We will use an otoscope (a fancy tool with a light) to examine your pet's ears and make sure there is not a foreign body such as a grass seed contributing to the problem.

A sample must be taken and stained with special chemicals to identify the type of bacteria or yeast under a microscope. This enables us to prescribe the correct medication for your pet and gives the ear the opportunity to heal as quickly as possible.

The good news is, we have lots of very effective medications available as well as some treatments that can help prevent recurrent ear infections - just ask us for more information.

If you think your pet might have itchy or smelly ears arrange a check up with us ASAP. The longer you leave an ear infection, the more painful the ear becomes and the harder (and more expensive) it becomes to treat.

Recognising heart disease in your pet!

With Valentine's Day in February, there's never a better time to talk about your pet's heart health.

Knowing the early signs of heart disease can really make a difference to your pet's life. It means you can seek medical help from us, we can start treatment early, your pet will feel better and in most cases live a longer life.

As a general rule, heart failure affects the pumping mechanism of the heart and oxygenated blood does not travel around your pet's body effectively. This can have an impact on your pet's overall health as blood ends up pooling in their lungs and/or abdomen leading to detrimental changes in other organs.

Note that our feline friends seem to be very good at hiding signs of heart disease (and it's often harder to pick up these changes at home as we don't tend to take our cats for a walk around the block!).

The signs to look out for in both dogs and cats:

Laboured or fast breathing - the most common sign in cats ; An enlarged abdomen;
Weight loss or poor appetite

Signs to look out for in dogs only:

Coughing, especially at night; A reluctance to exercise and tiring more easily on walks;
Weakness or fainting associated with exercise

If we are concerned about your pet's heart we will initially recommend X-rays and an ultrasound of the heart. An ECG or further examination with a heart specialist may also be required.

Thankfully we have a number of medications available to help improve your pet's heart function and management of heart disease is advancing quickly.

If you think your pet is showing one or more of the above signs, it is important that we see them for an examination, as early treatment can help your pet lead a longer and happier life.



Molly is a lovely 5 year old kelpie cross. She started her new year off with a bang, literally. She had an encounter with a car.

Molly was brought into the clinic straight away, where she was assessed and admitted for xrays. Molly had completely dislocated one elbow, and on the other backleg she had nearly torn off a toe. She also had a lot of grazes and bruising. BUT, she had no fractures, and no damage to vital organs. She probably wasn't feeling lucky, but she really was a very lucky girl.

Molly went in for surgery with Dr Jenni. Her dislocated elbow was reduced and bandaged, and the dangling toe was amputated. Her scrapes and bruises were cleaned up, and her pain was managed.

Since then, Molly's elbow has stayed in place really well, her amputation site has healed, and she has made a slow and steady recovery, much to the relief of her family. It didn't really slow her down for long!

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Back to School Pet Blues!

Summer is drawing to a close which means back-to-school time is upon us. While your kids know the routine, it can be difficult for your pets to make the transition.

Below we have compiled our best back to school tips for your kids and your pets to ensure a smooth move into the school year for everyone!

1. Leave Interactive Toys Out During the Day

When your pets' favorite play buddy heads back to school their day can suddenly feel very empty. Help **your pets stay occupied with interactive toys** and food puzzles.

Bonus tip: Keep a few different smart toys on hand, rotating them every week or two, to keep your pet's interest fresh!

2. Put the Radio on Low

During the summer the house is full of sounds: the kids romping around, the tv running and music streaming from iPods and laptops.

When the kids go back to school many of these sounds will suddenly be cut off for the majority of the day.

If your home will go from full of activity to quiet and empty, consider leaving the radio on for your pets.

The sound of voices talking and singing will comfort both dogs and cats until the family returns home.



3. Set a Daily Routine for Your Children

Remind your children that even though their schedules are now busier, they cannot forget about their furry best friends.

Create a daily routine that ensures your children and pets will continue to spend quality time together, including:

Exercise and play in the morning before they leave the house

Extra attention and play when they get home from school

Exercise and "family time" in the evening

This not only ensures your pets get the attention and love they deserve, but it will help your children learn how to be responsible and caring pet owners.

These are important lessons your kids will carry for life.

4. Plan Fun Activities for Your Pets

Now that your pets will be spending more time home alone it's important to **plan evening and weekend activities that include them.**

The most dangerous worm of all!

Heartworm is spread by mosquitoes and it is **the most dangerous of all the worms for our pets.**

Think about this: wherever there are mosquitoes, there is the risk of heartworm.

When an infected mosquito feeds on your pet's blood, the heartworm larvae enter the blood stream. These larvae mature into worms that can reach up to a scary 30 cm in length!

The worms can eventually become lodged in your pet's heart leading to heart failure. It is at this point that the disease can be fatal. Dogs are more commonly affected by heartworm disease but cats may also be at risk.

Prevention of heartworm is far better than an attempt at a cure but choosing the right heartworm medication can be confusing, especially with so many options on the market.

You need to be aware that many of the intestinal 'all wormer' tablets do not prevent against heartworm infection.

There are topical treatments, oral treatments and a yearly injection for dogs. Ask us for the most suitable prevention for your pet - we will make sure your pet is protected.

