

Gilbert St Gossip



Patient of the Month—Hank

Now that it is Spring, you may have noticed more bee activity. Our younger cats and dogs may think bees are great entertainment, however this is not a well thought out idea as Hank possibly found out recently!

Hank is an inquisitive 18 week old boxer who came in as an emergency patient. As you can see by the photos, Hank displayed the classic signs of an allergic reaction – ones not dissimilar to human reactions. He had a very swollen face, especially around his lips and eyes

with his entire body covered in welts. His was an acute case which could have led him struggling to breathe if Mum hadn't brought him in so quickly! His human parents had noticed him sniffing in the bushes during the week and it is quite likely he was stung by a bee or two whilst they were at work. While bee stings are usually not dangerous on their own, if your dog is allergic to bees, it can be deadly. Signs to watch out for are: crying out, swelling of the area, scratching, rubbing, licking, or chewing at the sting. Severe signs include: profound swelling of the face, throat, or neck, hives, vomiting and difficulty breathing.

Unlucky for Hank, he had a similar reaction several days later and was administered antihistamines. He has since made a full recovery and has not had another reaction since.

We don't know for certain it was the bees that caused the reaction however once bitten twice shy – or possibly in this case – twice bitten thrice shy!

Can my cat be vegan?

Embarking on a vegan diet might be suitable for some people but what about our feline friends? **The truth is that a cat cannot survive on a vegan diet.** These diets simply do not provide all of the nutrients that your cat requires for a healthy life.

Cats are **obligate carnivores**. This means that they require meat in their diet and have specific nutrient needs that can *only* be supplied through the ingestion of animal meat.

Taurine is an amino acid that all cats need in their bodies - and they can't create it themselves. If they're low in taurine, cats can experience heart disease, vision problems, and other health issues.

Taurine can only be provided through the diet, and is only available through animal sources. Although there are synthetic supplements available these are not recommended.

Vitamin A and *arachidonic acid* also need to be provided in your cat's food and these are primarily available through animal sources.

As a result of these unique dietary requirements, a cat is unable to safely eat a vegan diet. Even with synthetic supplementation, producing a cat food that is complete and fills all of the nutritional needs of a cat is difficult (and dangerous) without adding meat to the diet.

So if you choose to adopt a vegan diet, we ask that you please do not expect your cat to eat the same way!



Food for Thought!



When it comes to feeding your pet, we know that it can get pretty confusing with the overwhelming number of choices out there. On top of this, pet food companies sometimes complicate things with claims that their food is superior because it is all natural, paleo, vegan, grain free, wheat free and so on.

So what should you be feeding your pet? The answer to that question is easy: *a diet recommended by us!* When it comes to nutrition, we are able to give you the most up to date and advanced information and can recommend the most suitable diet no matter what stage of life your pet is at.

All of the foods we recommend contain natural ingredients but most importantly, these are *precisely balanced* for optimum nutrition. This means your pet won't receive too little or too much of certain nutrients, a claim only particular brands can make.

If you are feeling confused please ask us for the most accurate information. We will help you make the best decision when it comes to your pet's nutrition.



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Is my pet overweight?

You are probably well aware that if your pet is pudgy they have an increased risk of suffering from heart disease, respiratory disorders, osteoarthritis and diabetes. But alarmingly, most people aren't even aware that their pet is overweight.



Here are our top tips for determining if your pet is carrying a few too many kilos:

When you look at your pet from above they will have lost definition of their waist. Instead of an hour-glass figure they might look more like an egg on legs!

You can no longer easily feel their ribs when you run your hands over their sides

A very obese pet may have neck fat, a pendulous tummy as well as fat deposits over the hips

The very best way to determine whether your pet is overweight is to drop in for a weight check with us. This will allow us to score your pet's body condition and, if necessary, start a weight loss plan.

The good news is that getting your pet to lose weight is easier than you think! Physical exercise will help but it is crucial that you are feeding your pet the correct diet and the right amount. This is something we can help you out with. There are diets available that will actually help your pet lose weight, including one to increase your pet's metabolic rate.

When it comes to fighting the flab and counting the calories, we are here to help!



Smelly Pets!

If you notice a bad smell coming from your pet, it's time to take action. In most cases, a strange odour is an indication that something's not quite right and in some cases it can be a symptom of a more a serious and painful disease.

Here are of the most common smells to be on the 'sniff out' for:

Smelly mouth: 'Doggy breath' is not normal! It can indicate dental disease and may be painful as well as lead to other problems such as heart disease and kidney disease. Systemic diseases such as diabetes might lead to a strange 'fruity' smell on the breath. Occasionally a tumour or a foreign object such as a piece of bone or stick can also cause a foul odour. The bottom line is, if your pet has a smelly mouth you should arrange a check up with us asap.

Stinky bottom: A stinky rear end might be secondary to flatulence from a poor diet or secondary to a gastric upset. Blocked anal glands can also lead to a 'fishy' smell from the bottom. When it comes to smells from this part of the body, you should ask us for advice!

Smelly ears: Smelly ears can be an indication that there is a bacterial or fungal infection in the ear/s. These can be highly irritating and painful for your pet. Sometimes foreign bodies in the ear canal/s such as a grass seed or the presence of a growth such as a polyp might also lead to a smelly ear. If your pet's ears don't seem right you should get us to have a look.

Smelly skin: Stinky skin is not normal in pets either. Anything that disrupts the skin's normal protective mechanisms can cause a bad odour. Underlying problems such as wounds, allergies, parasites, cancer, endocrine diseases and immune disorders can all lead to a stinky coat. You should arrange a consult with us for further investigation.

If you are worried about your pet, we are always the best people to ask for advice.

