

# Paws, Claws and More

## Mount Hutton Pet Hospital Newsletter

Winter Edition 2018

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**Mount Hutton**  
PET HOSPITAL

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## Does your pet have bad breath?

By Dr Emily

Unfortunately, dental disease is the most common disease in our furry friends, with over 70% of animals being affected by the age of 3. Dental disease is due to bacteria that forms a sticky film, called plaque, over the teeth. This plaque is attacked by the body which causes destruction of the gum tissue, leading to gingivitis, pain and

eventual bone (and tooth) loss. Within 48 hours the plaque has calcified to tartar, which is only able to be removed with an ultrasonic scaler (not manually)

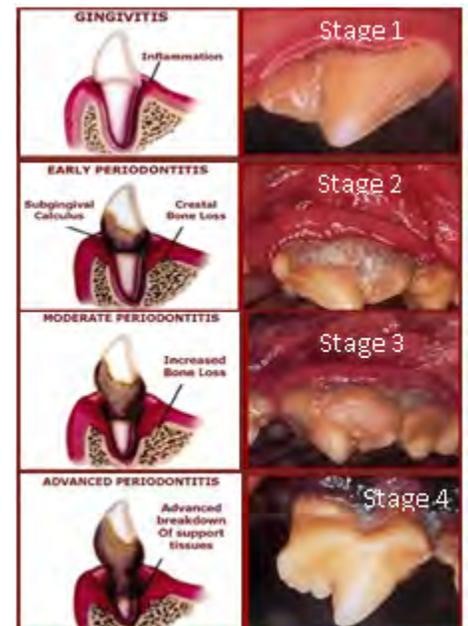
Symptoms of severe gum disease include bad breath, bleeding or red gums, loose or discoloured teeth, problems eating food, blood in water bowl or on chew toys and chewing on one side of mouth.

There are 4 stages of dental disease in our pets, from red and inflamed gums (stage 1), to periodontal pocket development between the teeth and gums (stages 2 and 3) to severe bone loss causing the teeth to become unstable in the mouth (stage 4).

Unfortunately, the only way to get an accurate assessment of your pets teeth, they need to be anaesthetized so we can fully explore around the teeth.

There are a variety of ways to help prevent and minimize dental disease in your pet

- Brush their teeth regularly – start with a makeup pad and slowly work your way up to a toothbrush (either an animal one or a soft bristle children's brush). Make sure it is a positive experience and always provide lots of encouragement and treats
- Get regular dental check-ups and cleanings to remove the calcified plaque already present
- Dental diets, treats and toys – these work to help make your pet chew more and use all of their teeth, to manually wear away the plaque





# Dr Kat's Crazy Critter Corner Health Checks for Pocket Pets



We all know how important it is to take your cats and dogs to get vaccinated yearly, but did you know that our other pets can benefit from regular check-ups too? When you come in for a vaccination, you not only get the booster, but also a full health check and a chance to ask the vet about any concerns you might have. Vaccinations help us to pick up on any health problems, before they have the opportunity to cause a serious issue for your furry friends.



When it comes to our smaller furry or feathered family members, most people don't think about calling the vet unless they can see something is wrong. However, many exotic companion animals are prey species that hide signs of illness for as long as possible. This often means that owners often don't pick up on potential issues until it is too late to do much about it.

As vets, we are trained to pick up on subtle changes that could be signs of larger issues, but it is very difficult to do this unless we see your pet regularly. Something as simple as your rabbit or guinea pig not wanting to eat their usual favourite foods can be a sign of dental disease, which unless treated, is often fatal.



We are also able to discuss your pet's specific requirements and give you advice on things like diet, housing, behaviour and husbandry. One of the main issues we see with our more unusual pets, is that people are following well meaning, but bad diet and husbandry advice. Simple changes like, changing your bird's diet from all seed to pellet and vegetables, or your guinea pig's diet from pellets to a hay based diet can have a huge impact on the length and quality of their life. Many products that are sold in pet stores that are specifically designed for exotic and avian pets are actually not suitable for them, and can actually be very dangerous. Did you know that rope toys for birds can lead to life threatening illness and injury, or that some "complete" rabbit foods should only make up 20% of their diet?

At Mount Hutton Pet Hospital, we recommend getting a yearly check-up for your birds and guinea pigs, and six monthly check ups for rabbits and rats. This will help us to help you keep your uncommon family members healthy and happy for many years to come.



## Breed Bio – Rosella



The Eastern Rosella is a medium-sized colourful parrot native to southeast Australia and Tasmania. They can be found from Queensland to Victoria, southeast South Australia and the eastern part of Tasmania. Their plumage is especially vividly coloured. They have white cheek patches, red head, neck and breast, yellowish to greenish upper body, a yellow under body, blue shoulders and a yellow-green to blue-green rump, with a red under tail. Females are usually similar colours to males but sometimes slightly duller. They are often found in urban habitats such as backyards, parks and golf courses. Eastern Rosella's mainly feed off the ground and their main dietary items include seeds, fruits, insects, nectar and flowers. The Eastern Rosella mates for life. The female does all the work, choosing and preparing the nesting site and once the eggs are laid she will incubate them while the male regularly feeds her.

# Do You Have An Older Pet?

Studies show 80% of dogs older than 8 years old have osteoarthritis. Arthritis is abnormal wear and tear of the joint causing cartilage changes. Cartilage acts as a cushion to protect the bones and, when it is worn away, the joints become stiff, painful and mobility decreases.

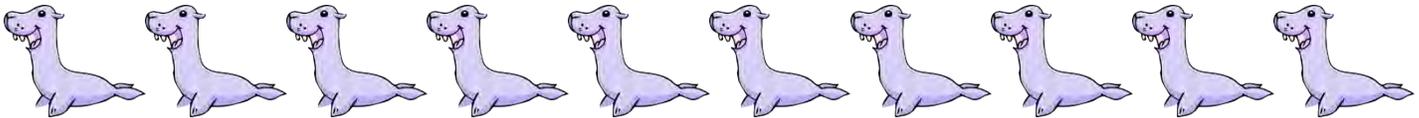
The following are common signs seen with arthritis – decreased ability to jump/play, exercise intolerance, difficulty getting up or using stairs, slow recovery from exercise or a stiff gait.

While we cannot fix these joint changes, we can minimise the progression and severity of them. At Mount Hutton Pet Hospital, there are a few simple things we recommend to help keep your pet comfortable as they age. These include;

- **Cartrophen** – it provides anti-inflammatory effects and stimulates the production of joint fluid and cartilage. It is a series of 4 weekly injections and then usually every 3 months.
- **4cyte** – a natural daily dietary supplement containing a plant extract to help cartilage to be produced and reduce inflammation in the joints
- **Adding 1-2 servings of fish to their diet per week** – this provides omega 3 and 6's to help reduce inflammation of the joints
- **Joint food (e.g. j/d)** – contains multiple components aimed at improving joint health
- **Maintaining a healthy weight** – reduces the amount of pressure on the joints
- **Exercise modification** – from high impact (e.g. off leash running, jumping to catch balls) to low-impact (e.g. swimming, leash walks) to reduce stress and strain on the joints



While these are not all you can do to make your pet comfortable, they are a good starting point. Joint changes cannot be reversed but early management is key to prevent further progression and is the best way to keep your pet comfortable.



## Go Native! – Australian Fur Seal

This seal is found around the coast of south-eastern Australia in the waters off Tasmania, Victoria and Bass Strait, as east as southern New South Wales and as far west as Port Fairy.

The Australian Fur Seal, along with the Cape Fur Seal, is the largest of the fur seals. Males (bulls) are approximately 2.3 meters long and weigh 218-360kg and females (cows) are approximately 1.5 metres long and 36-113kg.

Bulls are dark greyish-brown with a mane of coarse hair. Cows and immature seals are silver-grey to brown with a creamy yellow throat and chest.

They are called fur seals because they have two layers of fur. The outer layer of dark guard hairs is on top, with an undercoat so light, thick and dense that the skin stays dry even when the animal is underwater.

They move swiftly in water, diving to up to 200m, but move awkwardly on land; they need to lift the front of their bodies to maneuver themselves using their flippers.





# Ray's Reptile Report



With the cold days of winter here, it is necessary to ensure that your reptile is adequately and effectively heated. In the Hunter, all wild reptiles will be hibernating as the cold temperatures of winter render them susceptible to all manner of ailments which could result in their death.

In warmer climates, reptiles will still function normally as their preferred temperature requirements are still being met. For keepers of reptiles that did not originate locally, it is important for them to be heated to their ideal temperature.

Theoretically, local species such as Diamond Pythons or Bearded Dragons can be induced to hibernate by exposing them to the lower winter temperatures but this can be risky if not done properly. In my experience, it is far better to maintain your reptile at its preferred temperature all year round and this seems to result in less health problems.

Each reptile has its own preferred optimal temperature, at which it functions most efficiently and this temperature should be aim of any heating system that you employ.



The main heating methods employed are heat lamps or lights and under-floor heat mats or heating tape or rocks. In my opinion, under floor methods, especially heat rocks should be avoided at all times and an effective overhead lighting system is, by far, the most efficient and safest method.

When you think about it, the environment is heated by the sun that is located above the landscape, not by the Earth's core.

An overhead lighting system diffuses the heat effectively and allows a thermal gradient to occur that allows the reptile to select the most desirable thermal zone. It is not necessary to heat your entire habitat but provide a suitable heated zone that your reptile can safely inhabit and maintain a healthy body temperature.

Heat mats and, especially rocks, are prone to malfunction and can severely burn a reptile that is in contact with it. Nasty thermal burns are common with poorly positioned or badly made heat rocks and should never be used. Always ensure that heat lamps are covered by a protective box to prevent your reptile coming into contact with the heat source and burning itself as a result.



Always make sure that you regularly monitor the temperature inside your habitat via a thermometer or heat gun and adjust the output of your heat source accordingly.

A quick and simple method to raise the temperature within your enclosure is to apply an insulating layer such as a blanket over the outside to trap more heat inside but be very careful not to raise the temperature too much or this can also be harmful to your reptile. As the warmer weather approaches, you can turn the heat off for periods of time that still allows a suitable temperature to be achieved.

In summary, identify your particular reptile's preferred optimal temperature and attempt to provide a thermal zone that satisfies their requirements by using a safe and effective overhead heating source that will keep your reptile healthy when the outside environmental temperature is too low for it to function and survive.





# Kid's Corner

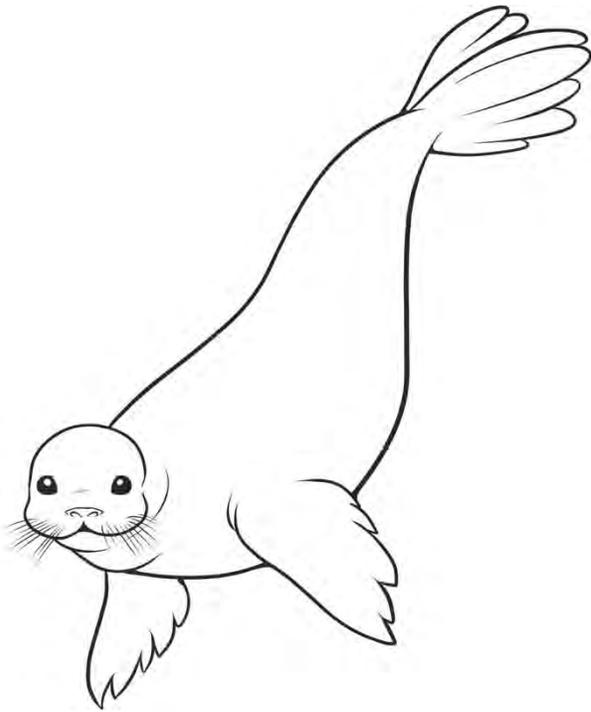


Connect the dots



Colour me in

Match the animal and its name



Colour me in

SHEEP

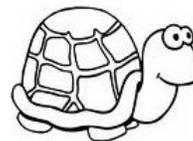
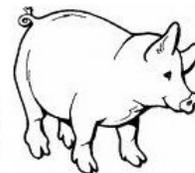
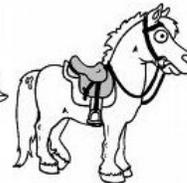
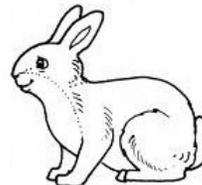
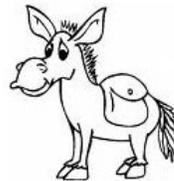
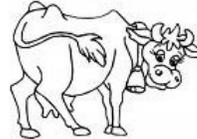
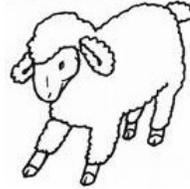
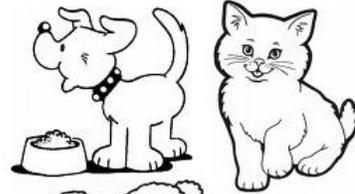
DUCK

RABBIT

DOG

COW

DONKEY



MOUSE

PIG

CAT

PARROT

TURTLE

HORSE

Colour in the picture!  
Use the numbers to  
find out what colour  
to use



1 = yellow    2 = pale pink    3 = brown    4 = pink  
5 = cream    6 = gray blue    7 = rust    8 = gold

### Animal Kingdom Word Search

b	e	a	r	s	r	a
i	l	i	o	n	a	l
r	e	s	w	a	b	i
d	p	w	i	k	b	i
w	h	a	i	e	l	g
p	a	n	d	a	t	a
i	n	t	o	a	d	t
g	t	i	g	e	r	o
z	e	b	r	a	x	r

- bear
- lion
- elephant
- whale
- panda
- pig
- ant (x 2!)
- tiger
- owl
- rabbit
- snake
- bird
- dog
- toad
- swan
- alligator
- zebra

### Learn to Draw a Dog

