



Paws, Claws and More

Mount Hutton Pet Hospital Newsletter

Spring Edition 2008

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Mount Hutton

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Snail bait Poisoning in Pets

Nobody wants nasty pests ruining their garden in the spring but unfortunately the baits you put out for these pests are also harmful to our curious pets that go snooping and eating what they shouldn't.

What is in Snail bait to make it poisonous? Snail and slug baits contain the ingredient metaldehyde which is a chemical poisonous to all species; however dogs (especially inquisitive puppies) seem to be most frequently poisoned.

Why is it so attractive for pets to eat? Pets will readily eat baits made from metaldehyde since it is often combined with food products such as soybeans, rice, oats, or apples to attract the snails. Therefore, you should only store and apply this product in areas where they cannot possibly have access.

What are the signs of metaldehyde poisoning? Metaldehyde has neurological effects therefore the most common signs of poisoning are convulsions, continuous shaking, bizarre behaviour, and an unsteady gait. Unfortunately, many other diseases can have these same signs. Therefore, it is very important that you provide as much detail as possible about the animal's previous possible exposure, and about the environment, such as any chemicals or other poisons accessible.

Can it be treated? There is no antidote for metaldehyde poisoning. However, medications can be given to control the seizures, to help remove the poison from the digestive tract, and to correct changes in the blood that occur because of the poison. Intravenous fluid therapy and hospitalisation will be required.

As with any poison, the prognosis depends on the volume of metaldehyde that the animal ate and on the length of time between eating the poison and starting treatment. If you think your pet has ingested any poison, taking them to a Vet clinic as soon as possible is the best thing you can do.

Death can occur in 4-12 hours if the animal is not successfully treated due to ongoing seizures and loss of brain function. In those that survive initially, liver disease can sometimes develop 2-3 days later. Animals that do recover may have diarrhoea, memory loss, or temporary blindness.

Keep your pet's environment free from potential poisons and if you notice any abnormal behaviour associated with these symptoms, contact us straight away on (02) 4947 1311.

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WATCH OUT... TICKS ABOUT



Due to climate change we haven't really had true seasons this year, and because of this we are still seeing **Tick** cases. It is very important to be **checking your pet over daily** and to use a **tick prevention fortnightly**, if you live in a high tick area (any where with surrounding bush or where a lot of native wildlife are present). It is also advisable to avoid bushy areas when you take your pet out, to prevent the possibility of them picking up a tick. If you find a tick on your pet pull it straight out, **NEVER** put anything on the tick (such a metho or turps) as this just causes the tick to release more poison. **Then contact a Vet Immediately** if you notice any wobbliness in the hind legs, gagging or vomiting. Because even if the tick is removed your pet could still die.

Coprophagia (Eating Poop...Ick)

Does your dog have a dirty little secret??

He's not alone, in fact eating of faeces is quite common in the canine world.

So why do dogs eat faeces? Most cases of Coprophagia appear to be purely behavioural but there are some medical problems that can cause this behaviour.



Some Behavioural Reasons behind Coprophagia

Eating of faeces is a common problem with puppies, which generally stops once they mature, there are several theories about why they do this. Sometimes when puppies are left unsupervised they will investigate and play with their faeces out of curiosity. Often if an owner witnesses this behaviour the general response is one of disgust, the owner will often rush over to the puppy to try and stop them eating the faeces often making a lot of noise. When doing this they are unknowingly giving the dog attention and therefore reinforcing the faeces eating behaviour.

Another reason a dog may eat it's faeces is to do with their den instincts, if a wild dog was in its den they would often eat their puppies faeces so that predators wouldn't be attracted to them. So if a dog is in a confined space they will often carry out this behaviour. However this behaviour is more common in female dogs.

If a dog's toileting area becomes over-populated with faeces it can also stimulate this behaviour.

Some Medical Reason behind Coprophagia

Feeding a poorly digestible diet, underfeeding, and medical conditions that decrease absorption of food such as digestive enzyme deficiencies or parasites, can lead to malnutrition, vitamin and mineral deficiencies and therefore an increased appetite and possibly faeces eating. In addition, if the stools contain large amounts of undigested food material, a dog may often be more attracted to the faeces as it would smell like food.

So how can we stop or prevent this behaviour?

For behavioural faeces eaters preventing access to faeces and properly cleaning their environment will help significantly. Also not reacting if your pet is caught with a mouthful of poo.

For dogs that eat their faeces because of a medical problem, firstly you will need to see a vet to establish if there is a medical reason and then try to correct the underlying cause.

If your dog has a faeces fetish don't hesitate to contact us.

Worming – Do you have a “booty scooter” ??

Your pet could have intestinal worms. We recommend 3 monthly worming of animals over the age of 6 months for the prevention of roundworm, hookworm, whipworm and tapeworm. It is as simple as coming in to purchase a tablet or if you prefer, and you have a cat that is contrary with tablets, there are top spot products that make life a lot easier for both you and your puss. If you have a puppy and would like advice on worming, just call in or phone us and we will be very happy to give you the correct advice.



Breed Bio – Devon Rex

Pixie like in appearance, the Devon Rex is a small to medium sized cat with large eyes and ears. The most prominent feature of the Devon Rex is its short, curly hair which is more like a down than fur, because of this they don't shed a lot of hair making them a better choice for people with allergies. Its whiskers and eyebrows are short and curly also. The Devon Rex is an intelligent, mischievous and active breed, they crave human attention and love to be close to their owners and especially like to climb high around their shoulders and go for a ride. Devon Rex's aren't overly talkative but do chirp occasionally.



Is Your Pussy Cat Fully Protected?



When you get your cat vaccinated they are generally given a standard Fe3 vaccine which protects your cat from Feline Enteritis and two types of cat flu calicivirus and rhinotracheitis virus (also known as herpes virus). But there are two other viruses they can be vaccinated against, they are Feline Leukaemia and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV-Feline Aids).

Feline Leukaemia is an interesting disease when compared with leukaemia in humans. In cats, a virus causes it, but this has not been confirmed in humans.

If cats are infected with the feline leukaemia virus, about a third of them remain infected and can therefore pass the disease on to others. Infection is transmitted by saliva, tears, nasal secretions and urine. The virus can also be transmitted to other cats when they groom each other, and when food bowls, litter trays, toys and so on are shared.

The first sign is usually a reduction in appetite. Depression and weight loss occur as does vomiting and diarrhoea. It also causes increased susceptibility to other infections, solid tumours can develop in various parts of the body. Death is slow and usually occurs within three years. The Feline Leukaemia vaccine is administered as an initial series of 2-3 vaccines, Cats more than 6 months of age should be tested to ensure they are free of leukaemia first before the vaccine is administered.

Feline AIDS, commonly known as FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus), is spread by cats fighting. Just like human HIV (AIDS), cats infected with FIV can develop a reduced ability to fight off infections as the disease progressively disables the immune system. The Feline AIDS vaccine is administered as an initial series of three doses, two to four weeks apart. It is given to kittens at 8 weeks of age or older. Cats more than 6 months of age should be tested to ensure they are free of the AIDS virus before being vaccinated an annual booster is needed to ensure continued protection.



If your cat goes outside they really should be fully protected, Mention this article when booking in for your cats vaccination to receive 20% off the Feline Leukaemia and Feline Aids Vaccinations.



Have You Got A New Puppy?

Why not enroll your puppy in one of our Pre-School classes today!

What you & your new puppy will learn:

- *How to deal with some common natural, but sometimes 'naughty' puppy behaviours, such as: play biting, jumping, digging, toilet training & barking.
- *A few basic commands, (which will teach your puppy some manners, concentration & obedience).
- *Socialisation skills, a vital ingredient to minimise the risk of anti-social behaviours, due to fear of other dogs, new people &/or environments.
- *Diet & Nutritional requirements, & most importantly, what is needed to keep your puppy healthy, right through to its adult life.

Spring Puppy Pre-School Classes:

Thurs, 4th Sept 2008

Thurs, 2nd Oct 2008

Wed 22nd Oct 2008

(These classes are subject to change depending on class numbers)

Please call to make a bookings.

Don't forget...

- * To change your puppies microchip details into your name.
- * Puppy will need to have 3 initial vaccinations, then annual boosters for life.
- * Regular worming for intestinal worms.
- * Heartworm prevention - in the form of injections or tablets.
- * Flea & Tick control – this can be started from 2days of age, with some products.

Classes are for puppies between the ages of 8–18wks.

Rays Reptile Report ~ Lizards

Some people prefer their reptile pets to have legs and fortunately there are several species of Australian lizards that are both unique in appearance and also easy to keep. In addition there are several small monitors (goannas) that are suitable pets.

The species most often kept are the Bearded Dragons, Blue Tongue lizards, Shingleback Lizard and small Goannas such as the Spiny-Tailed and Black-Headed Monitor.

Within these groups are various sub-species such as the Inland Bearded Dragon that represents the different types of the same species but are slightly modified to their particular habitat. All Lizard species are basically the same with regards to feeding but require subtle housing variations to keep them healthy. The eastern Bearded Dragon and common Blue Tongue are by far the most popular and we will base our discussion around these species.

Unlike Snakes, Lizards are not carnivores, in the wild will eat insects, snails, carrion (decomposing animals) and some fruits and berries. Basically they are omnivores and this makes them easy to satisfy with regards to diet. Many pet shops can supply insects such as crickets and meal worms, to these you can add commercial supplements and fruit such as banana, grapes, herbs such as coriander and parsley.



Offering different food items will determine what foods your lizard prefers.

Housing requirements are similar to snakes with good reliable heat source plenty of hiding place and a proper substrate that is easily cleaned. Although most lizards are ground-dwellers, they will climb so make sure your enclosure is secure.

Most pet Blue Tongues and Bearded Dragons can become quite tame and will allow hand feeding. These inoffensive reptiles make great pets for younger keepers or those who are not keen on snakes.



Thinking of boarding your pet over the Christmas or New Year Holidays? Make sure to book in early as to avoid disappointment as our Boarding facilities fill up very quickly. We cater for species of Animals, call us to ask for a quote.

4947 1311

Staff Profile ~ Dr Geoff Campbell

Hi I'm Dr Geoff. I grew up in Forster and graduated my Bachelor of Veterinary Science with First Class Honours at Sydney University in 2002.

My First Veterinary Job was at Mudgee Vet Clinic where I learnt a lot while working with both small and large animals between 2002-2005. I had always wanted to Travel so I worked abroad in the United Kingdom between 2005-2007, it was a great experience as there were lots of different illnesses and pets that we don't see in Australia. I started off at Mt Hutton Pet Hospital as a Locum Vet in March 2007 and liked it so much I thought I'd stay on a more permanent basis. I enjoy working with all small animals, dogs especially and one day would like to own a Staffordshire Bull Terrier.

I like to go cross country skiing and fishing in my spare time and have just returned from a week of trekking across Mt Kosciusko and the 'rolling grounds'.

