



# Paws, Claws and More

Mount Hutton Pet Hospital Newsletter  
Winter Edition 2013

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**Mount Hutton**  
**PET HOSPITAL**

## Why should you vaccinate your pet ?

### Why vaccinate pets?

Cats and dogs are at risk from a number of serious infections. However you can help to protect against several of these diseases with a simple vaccination programme. It is easy for dogs and cats to come into contact with infections present because of unvaccinated dogs and cats in the environment.

Because dogs tend to socialise and go for walks outside, they are exposed to diseases on a daily basis. Some diseases are so serious that people can spread the disease to their dog, simply from walking in a contaminated environment.

Vaccinations are a very cost effective way of protecting your dogs and cats against serious disease and the possible high costs involved in their treatment, not to mention the life-threatening nature of some of the diseases they face.

It is strongly recommended that dogs and cats should be given 3 vaccinations as puppies and kittens and then kept up to date with a yearly vaccination for the rest of their life.



## MYXOMATOSIS IN RABBITS

Myxomatosis is a disease that rabbits contract from mosquitoes. Unfortunately it is not treatable and the only prevention we can suggest is to have the rabbit cage lined with fly screen, to prevent mosquitoes entering the cage.

As there have been a few cases come into our clinic in the last few months, we would like to make you aware of the symptoms of the disease.

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**PLUS KIDS CORNER!!!**

1. Listless
2. Loss of appetite
3. Nasal discharge
4. Pussy eyes
5. Mucous discharge from eyes
6. Hot and swollen ears and genitals

If you notice any of these signs please call and make an appointment to have your rabbit checked.



# Caring for your Senior Pet

Did you know that from the age of 7 your pet's health can change? Although your pet may still look and behave like a youngster, after their 7<sup>th</sup> birthday (or 5<sup>th</sup> birthday for large and giant breeds) cats and dogs enter their senior years. In human terms, it's equivalent to entering your 50s. And just as our nutritional and physical needs change when we're seniors, your pet's feeding and exercise routines need to change too.

Regular visits to your vet will help detect medical conditions that could become evident or more pronounced in old age. The earlier these diseases are detected, the better the chances of managing them successfully. Diseases such as cancer, diabetes and kidney disease are more common in senior pets. Conditions such as arthritis also occur much more frequently.

During this winter Mount Hutton Pet Hospital is promoting wellness checks. Call our Pet Hospital and ask about scheduling yearly physical examinations and laboratory tests to screen for common diseases.

We are promoting a winter **senior wellness health check package** that can help with managing our senior's best years.

Our clinic is now offering health checks for any dog or cat over the age of 7 years, or any large breed dog over the age of 5 years, as part of the Hill's Senior Screening Programme.

These health checks aim to detect and treat diseases in the early stages. Early detection and the right nutrition are crucial to keep senior pets healthy and happy.

## ***The main health areas which we will be checking on are:***

**Kidney and liver health** - are these organs functioning properly?

**Heart and lungs** - is your pet coughing and having trouble breathing? Is the stomach swollen?

**Diabetes** - checking blood sugar levels

**Eye sight and Hearing** - does your pet bump into things?

**Mobility** - Is your pet having trouble getting up, stiff and sore?

**Dental health** - does your pet have bad breath, bleeding gums, or any worn or broken teeth?

**Lumps and bumps** - there growths on the skin are ?

This will be covered in a full physical examination with one of our vets, and a blood sample taken and tests run in house, with the results delivered to you to discuss the treatment plan.

A nutritious and balanced diet is an essential part of an active, healthy lifestyle for all senior cats and dogs. Crucially, to maintain kidney and heart health, pet foods for senior cats and dogs need to have reduced levels of phosphorous and sodium.

## **Keeping senior pets happier and healthier for longer**

- \* To aid digestion, consider feeding them several meals a day instead of one large serving.
- \* Keep your pet on a regular exercise routine to help preserve muscle tone and to keep bones and joints strong.
- \* Provide a comfortable, warm bed. Many older pets suffer from arthritis or general muscle stiffness.
- \* Keep their bed and surrounding areas clean, and always remain proactive in controlling fleas.
- \* Because senior pets are prone to inactivity, inspect their nails on a regular basis and trim them when necessary. We can do this for you!
- \* Natural oils in the skin are reduced with age and can make your pet's skin and coat dry and lustreless. Older cats often have difficulty grooming themselves. Brushing and grooming will help stimulate the skin to produce natural oils.
- \* Accidents may become a problem as bladder muscles weaken. Pay extra attention because your pet will need to be let outside more promptly and frequently to avoid house soiling. You might need to have an extra litter tray inside for your cat as an extra precaution.

Thanks to Hill's, 4,000 people can claim a **\$20 discount on their senior pet's checkup**. For the chance to claim a discount voucher, to access full terms and conditions, and to find out more about senior pet nutrition, visit [www.hillspet.com.au/seniors](http://www.hillspet.com.au/seniors) today.

**To book in your pet for their senior health check, call 4947131**

**We're looking forward to seeing you and your pet soon.**

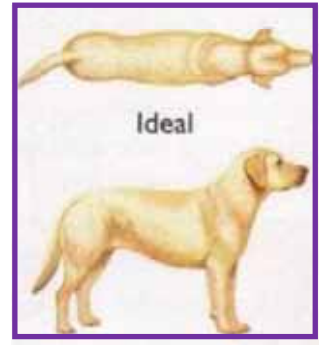
Conditions apply, see [www.hillspet.com.au/seniors](http://www.hillspet.com.au/seniors) Open to Aust. residents 18+. Starts: 12am AEST 1/5/13. Ends: 11.59pm AEST 31/8/13 or when 4,000 claims received, whichever occurs first. Limit 1 claim per person per pet. Gifts: 4,000 x \$20 discount voucher for senior dog/cat pet check-up consultation for any dog/cat aged 7+ years weighing up to 25kg or any large breed dog aged 5+ years weighing 25kgs or over; at participating vets only. Voucher is valid until 30/9/13 & must be surrendered at time of redemption. Promoter: Hill's Pet Nutrition Pty. Ltd.

# Winter is coming, and so is arthritis.

Just like with humans, cats and dogs with arthritis tend to be a bit sorer during the winter months. Arthritis can affect any animal, and signs which may suggest that they are arthritic include: difficulty getting up after resting, limping or appearing “stiff” during or after exercise, trouble walking up and down stairs, and not managing to walk as fast or for as long as usual. Any animal can get arthritis, and we most commonly see it in middle- to older-aged animals, especially in those who are overweight. Animals that have had joint surgery, or have had previous injuries to their joints (such as a ruptured cruciate ligament), are also expected to have some degree of arthritis.

## How can we manage arthritis?

The number one contributor to arthritic pain is excess weight. Every little bit of extra baggage is putting more pressure on the joints, and as long as its there your animal will continue to struggle and its arthritis will get worse. We rank “fatness” by using a Body Condition Score, and with the ideal body figure we should be able to feel the ribs with minimal fat coverage and a distinct waist region should be visible. Being overweight also increases the likelihood of other complications such as heart disease and diabetes. While there are a number of things we can do to manage arthritis, getting down to an appropriate weight is the main priority.



## Breed Bio!

### Checked Giant Rabbit

The Checked giant rabbit also known as the Giant Papillion was developed in Europe in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as one of the largest breeds of rabbit, it is easily recognised by its distinctive white coat, coloured ears, coloured rings around its eyes and a large coloured spot around the nose.

The minimum weight of the Checked Giant is 5kg with many weighing over the 6kg mark, they have a smooth short coat and come in only black and white or blue and white.

This breed of rabbit is very active and playful and requires a lot of room to run around and exercise. The cage they are kept in must contain a mostly solid base so they can suffer from abscesses on their feet if left resting on a wire bottom cage for too long



## Have you considered a ½ groom

**Now that the weather is cooling down you might think that it is too cold to have you pet shaved, but why not consider a ½ Groom?**

**A ½ groom is where we shave the pet's belly, bottom and tidy up the feet and face, and give nice warm hydro bath.**

**This clip allows your pet to stay warm, without getting too messy or knotty over winter. Please call us today to discuss the options we have available, you can even talk to our groomer Nicole.**



# RAYS REPTILE REPORT

## Care of the Newborn

The successful hatching of the reptile egg or the birth of a live newborn is followed by what is called the neonatal period--the early stages of growth. Whether it is a snake, lizard or any other reptile species, the neonatal period is vital to the successful growth of any animal.

The most important factors to consider involve proper housing and feeding to ensure that the newborn is given the best start in life.

There are many different housing requirements to consider when first caring for a newborn. Immediately after hatching the neonate should be maintained at or near the incubation temperature.

All hatchlings are prone to dehydration at these higher temperatures and so the relative humidity of the neonatal environment should be maintained near 100%. In snakes in particular the risk of dehydration lessens significantly after the first shedding. Moistened paper towels are cheap, clean and easily replaced and are a good substrate for hatchlings. There is a significant risk of infection in the newborn, especially during the first few days of life, before the yolk sac has fully absorbed into the coelomic cavity. At this time hygiene is extremely important to keep the newborn healthy. Neonatal lizards and snakes can be aggressive after hatching and this is normal behaviour designed to deter predators or facilitate feeding. Should any hatchlings display aggression to others in the enclosure then they should be separated immediately. It may also be necessary to separate newborns to ensure that all are feeding equally and have the proper access to food. After feeding, the newborns can be put back together. Under wild conditions, newborns immediately disperse in all directions so they are not accustomed to feeding together.

The yolk sac provides early nutritional support for the first few days of life and most newborn young will not feed until after their first shedding at approximately 1 to 3 weeks of age. With large clutches it is a good idea to separate the young to monitor their appetite and health status. Good record keeping and weekly weighing of juveniles is a good idea if possible. Most newborns should eat spontaneously when offered the appropriate food items and it is essential that the correct food is offered. Insects, small pink mice, termites, meal worms, small fish, frogs and even mouse parts can be used to stimulate the appetites of neonates. The nutritional value of can be enhanced with vitamin and mineral supplements, especially calcium. Dusting food items with calcium powder has been shown to be of benefit to the rapidly growing hatchlings. Regardless of the health of the hatchling, there are always some who refuse to eat voluntarily.

Techniques that are used to encourage feeding include gently tapping the snake on the nose with a small food item to stimulate the striking reflex. Alternatively, placing the food item in the newborn's mouth or warming the food can increase its attractiveness. In extreme cases, if the newborn is rapidly losing weight or stubbornly refuses to eat then force feeding can be considered. Care should be taken not to harm the delicate newborn and this technique of feeding via a lubricated stomach tube may or may not be successful.

Force feeding whole prey items is rarely indicated and is potentially dangerous. Force feeding is controversial and rarely results in a normal feeding routine.

Most medical conditions affecting newborn reptiles are the result of genetic or developmental abnormalities. As a result, some newborns, even if they appear normal will die soon after birth. The advantages of multiple births and large hatchling numbers ensures that at least a good number of newborns will live to adulthood.

In summary, as with adults but more importantly with newborns, proper management and husbandry are the most important factors in raising healthy newborn reptiles. Deviation from accepted procedures will result in increased neonatal mortality and a failure to grow properly in the immediate neonatal period.





Kids



# Korner



## FARM ANIMAL CROSSWORD

- CAT
- CHICKEN
- COW
- DOG
- DONKEY
- DUCK
- GOAT
- GOOSE
- HORSE
- PIG
- SHEEP

