



# Snippets

## Small animal newsletter

Issue 22

Spring 2014

Hello and welcome to our spring edition of Snippets. We hope you're enjoying the sunshine.

### LETS TALK ABOUT SEX!

In the last month we have seen several young pregnant cats—much to their owners surprise! As most people know, cats can be prolific producers of offspring if left to their own whims and desires. Tom cats (unneutered males) tend to roam far and wide to find females to mate with.

Female cats may have their first heat cycle as early as **5 or 6 months** of age. Once a female cat reaches puberty she becomes a *queen*, and estrus or 'heat' cycles will start.

In domestic cats' heat cycles run generally from August through April, depending on location and climate.

Until she mates or is spayed, these estrus cycles will repeat as often as **every two or three weeks**.

During these cycles, her entire focus will be on escaping the house to mate, or to mate with a male housemate, even if related. She will be single-minded in her need to mate, will loudly vocalize (call), and lurk near doors, just waiting for the chance to meet up with one of the noisy feline Romeos who will cluster near your home, fighting for the privilege of impregnating your queen.

In this day and age, it is much more responsible to spay and neuter our companion cats, to prevent rampant reproduction, rather than leaving them intact. There are plenty of kittens and cats available for everyone who wants to adopt one or more.

Think about the numbers:

- ◆ The average number of litters a cat can produce in one year is 3.
- ◆ The average number of kittens in a litter is 4-6.
- ◆ In seven years, one female cat and her offspring can theoretically produce 420,000 cats.
- ◆ Only 1 in 12 of those 420,000 cats born find a home!

We do not want homeless kittens. Please spay your cat! Payment for routine surgery is required on the day, however many clients find putting their account into credit before surgery a good way to budget for this.



# FIREWORKS AND YOUR PET



Guy Fawkes Night is approaching and with it a time of great stress for many of our domestic pets. If only the fireworks were restricted to the 5th of November itself, but every year the fireworks seem to start earlier and go on for longer.

The key thing to remember, especially at the weekends around this time when parties may be planned, is to keep your pets indoors. Animals can often take fright and bolt. They then often end up in road traffic accidents or just become lost completely.

Some animals become seriously distressed, even when inside the house. They may scratch at the door, become frantic to get out (thinking they will escape the noise), shiver and shake uncontrollably and even howl.

Some options to make life easier include:

1. Do not try to calm them or fuss over them when they are agitated. This merely serves to reinforce the fearful behaviour.
2. Draw the curtains and darken the room to minimise the flashing light.
3. Play some music, not loud enough to drown out the noise but something with a regular beat.
4. Try to engage your pet in a game of some sort to take their mind off what is going on outside.
5. Conventional sedatives are not suitable for all pets and cannot be prescribed over the counter.

Some products which may help:

**DAP** (Dog Appeasing Pheromone) is a plug in mechanism which releases pheromones or "feel good factors" into the air. It needs to be plugged in a few weeks before the firework season for best effect but please ask our staff for more info if you are interested in this product.

**CALMEX** for dogs and cats— CALMEX® is a unique combination of two amino acids, a psychoactive plant extract and B-vitamins. The amino acids, L- Theanine and L-Tryptophan (a serotonin precursor) reduces fearful and anxious behaviour, calms the 'fight or flight' response, and decreases the dogs stress response. The plant extract, Piper Methysticum, reduces anxiety, and has sedative and muscle relaxant effects. B Vitamins are essential to maintain function of the nervous system.

Great for separation anxiety, noise phobias like fireworks, vet visits, grooming and nail cutting. It is recommended to give CALMEX® one hour prior to when the effect is needed.



**Calmex Cat Stress Relief** 60ml is a fantastic product that has been based on the effective anxiety and stress relief formula that has worked so well for dogs. Come into the clinic to discuss your pets requirements.

**PROTECT THE WHOLE FAMILY THIS SUMMER**  
With a high safety & waterfast profile, we've got everyone covered!

Purchase ANY Merial Anicare flea & tick product\*\* and enter the draw to win one of 10 Hutchwilco life jacket family packs (valued at over \$799). The family pack (2 adults and 2 children) comes complete with an on-boat grab bag and a D-Fa dog flotation device voucher\*\* (for your dog).

NexGard FRONTLINE Broadline  
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Coin operated do it yourself dog wash—great after a days adventures  
24 hours - 7 days a week



Here come the  
**FLEAS...**



## Just like Auckland...

The last two winter seasons in Nelson have been notably mild, humid ones, and this is similar to Auckland. Which means that fleas like the weather more, and will breed faster. Warmth and humidity are important triggers to the development of flea eggs into larvae. The average female flea lays 10-50 eggs per day which will be dropped around the house and kennel area, and can live for up to 2 years before developing whenever favourable weather conditions arise. **Remember the fleas you can see are only 5% of the population.**

## How does your pet pick up fleas?

Fleas rarely jump from one pet to another, as is often thought. Instead cats and dogs pick them up from infested environments.

This could be your garden, the local park, a friend's house – any place where an animal that has fleas, such as a hedgehog, possum or another cat or dog, may be found.



Infested animals leave flea eggs behind wherever they go. New fleas hatch from these infested environments once they sense the warmth, the carbon dioxide and vibrations an animal such as your pet creates and jump onto them.

**Preventing flea infestation**—Make sure **all** cats and dogs are treated regularly to kill adult fleas. It's normal to continue to see fleas on your pet after treatment as new adult fleas will continue to hatch out from pupae in the environment. These new fleas will be killed within 24 hours of jumping onto your treated pet.

Regularly vacuum your carpets and furnishings and wash your pets bedding above 60°C. This will help to reduce the number of any eggs, larvae and pupae in the environment.

So – this summer as the temperature rises we expect flea numbers to rise with it. The take home message is to treat for fleas regularly with effective products! Warm humid weather is also perfect for ticks if you are on rural land.

## NEW IN STORE

Protection  
so tasty, they'll  
**Beg for it.**

Making flea AND tick treatment a monthly  
**PLEASURE** for both dog and owner.



**NexGard**  
(afoxolaner) Chewables



Its irresistible  
beef flavour  
makes it  
easy to give



Kills fleas fast,  
before they lay  
eggs preventing  
infestation



Kills the NZ  
Dog tick

PROUDLY AVAILABLE FROM YOUR LOCAL VETERINARY CLINIC.

## Nexgard—the latest flea treatment for dogs

There are a few new flea products on the market, and we are stocking **Nexgard**, a monthly chewable flea tablet for dogs. It has a very fast kill rate for fleas and won't wash off. You can handle the dog immediately without getting any product on your hands. It also kills the cattle tick on dogs.

This beef-flavoured chew is ideal for dogs who swim or are washed regularly.

Don't forget to treat your cats too—come see us and get your flea treatment started before the spring really heats up.



## DON'T BREATHE ON ME!



'Dog breath' isn't just confined to dogs! Both cats and dogs will slowly accumulate tartar on their teeth as a by-product of sugars and carbohydrates being digested by bacteria around the teeth and gum margins. Once this mineralizes on the teeth, the rough surface harbours even more bacteria and their waste products are responsible for the smell of bad breath.

Start with a clean slate – a dental scale and polish will give a smooth enamel surface again so that bacteria are greatly reduced and gum inflammation (gingivitis) eliminated. This benefits overall health as bacteria are not constantly showering the body system with toxins.

We now have fixed prices for pet dentals dependent on size of the patient- please call to ask and book your pet in.

## PET INSURANCE

Policies for pet insurance are offered by several companies in NZ - Southern Cross, Pet-N-Sure and Petplan (Warehouse Petplan and Petplan policies) – but our uptake of pet policies in NZ is still less than 10%.

A pet is becoming an increasingly important family member and the desire to find diagnosis and treatment can come at a high price, especially if referral to specialists becomes necessary. Pet insurance is a good idea if you have limited ability to absorb an unplanned large cost for treatment. Some plans cover only surgery, others cover medical costs too. All are subject to some exclusions and of course limits of cover.

Warehouse Pet Plan say that 97% of their claims are medical, so surgery only cover may be too limited. The most common conditions claims are made for are lameness, skin/ ears, growths/cancer, gastro-intestinal problems and fighting injuries (especially cats).

Ideally consider what type/level of cover you would like, then check the websites for the companies offering policies to determine which best suits your requirements.

Consumer magazine published an article about pet insurance in Consumer Magazine February 2012; and it is available online at consumer.org.nz.



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