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Gawler Gossip

THE newsletter for furred or feathered creatures, and their two-legged friends

VOLUME 1

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Feline AIDS: A Real Risk

Feline immunodeficiency virus, FIV, is also called cat AIDS. Although it is not the same virus that causes human AIDS, it is the same family, and so causes a similar sort of illness. There is NO risk that you will catch AIDS from an infected cat.

How is it spread?

FIV is spread through fight wounds, mainly through saliva that can get into bite wounds from cat fights. Hence, any cat that is outside at any time is at risk of getting FIV, as most cats that go outside will get into a fight at some stage. Many feral cats carry the FIV virus, with up to 20% of the cat population suspected to be carrying the disease.

What signs will I see?

Many cats will carry the virus for years without showing any signs. However, as the cat gets older, the virus starts to cause various problems, including:

- Weight loss
- Poor coat condition
- Sores in the mouth
- Infections

The virus works by attacking the cat's immune system, weakening the immune system and making the cat more at risk of other infections. These infections can occur anywhere – in the mouth, bladder, kidneys, skin or other areas. Eventually, even with veterinary care, the cat's immune system becomes too weak to fight these other diseases.

How can we tell if our cat is infected?

There is a simple blood test that can be performed to identify infected cats. We strongly recommend this test if your cat goes outside at all or has ever got into a fight with another cat.

Is there any treatment?

While we can offer treatment during the later stages of the illness to treat the infections the cat develops, there is no cure for feline AIDS.

Bone to Remember:
Humans cannot catch AIDS from an infected cat

Protecting Against Feline AIDS

There is a vaccination available to prevent feline AIDS in cats. Cats kept completely indoors are not at risk of feline AIDS, but we recommend vaccination against feline AIDS for any cat that goes outside. If your cat is

older than 6 months, we strongly recommend an initial blood test to check that your cat is not already infected before starting on the vaccinations.



Microchipping: Identification for Life

Staff:

Veterinarians:

Dr Tony Atyeo

BVSc

Dr Tim Lawrie

BVSc (Hons), GCM

Dr Michelle Starr

BVSc (Hons)

Dr Duncan Borland

BVSc, BAnimSc

Dr Andrea Bolderson

BVA, BVSc (Hons)

Receptionists:

Angela Hay

Connie Stanton

Nurses:

Kate Glazbrook

(AVN Cert 4 ACC)

Jenielle Burgess

(VN Cert 4)

Leanne Tomlinson

(VN Training)

Sue Cowmeadow

(VN Training)

Practice

Manager:

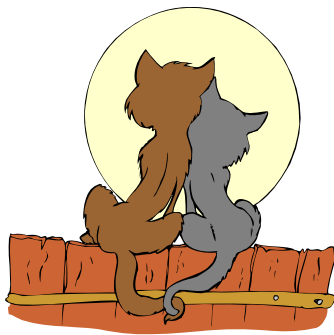
Chris Coad

Microchipping is the only permanent way to identify your pet. Should your pet ever escape, it can lose any collars that you may put on, but microchips remain in your pet for life.

What is a microchip, and how does it work?

A microchip is a small rice-grain sized object that is placed underneath the skin or into muscle. Using a microchip reader, any veterinary clinic or animal shelter is able to read a unique number from the microchip in your pet.

There is a national registry which holds the microchip numbers with your contact details. By contacting the national registry, the clinic or shelter is able to use these details to reach you and reunite you with your pet. Thus, it is important that you update your details with the registry whenever you change your phone numbers or address.



With a national registry, even if your pet goes on holidays with you, the microchip number can be read and traced to you anywhere throughout Australia.

What does microchipping involve?

A microchip can be implanted into your pet either while they are awake or under sedation. Many animals are microchipped while they are awake without problems. While it is a larger needle than a normal vaccination, it is generally not too painful for the pet. However, we can also implant the microchip while your pet is sedated, which may make the procedure easier, especially for smaller pets.

If we use sedation, this also gives us an opportunity to place a tattoo in the right ear of your pet to identify the dog as being microchipped. While it is law that any stray animal that is found must be scanned for a microchip, microchips can migrate so they may not always be found in the normal area. If your pet has a tattoo to prove it has a microchip, the veterinary clinic or animal shelter will know to continue scanning to find a microchip, even if it is not in the normal place.



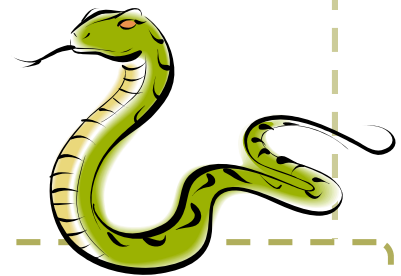
Microchip with a grain of rice

Where are microchips implanted?

In dogs and cats, microchips are placed under the skin between the shoulder blades. However, since this area is quite mobile, the microchip can move from this position over time.

Can pets other than dogs and cats be microchipped?

Certainly. Many different animals are able to be microchipped, from rabbits to snakes and even birds can all be microchipped. Contact the clinic if you would like more information.



Clinic News:

- Congratulations are extended to Andrea Bolderson who is marrying Fraser McKinley in November. We would all like to wish you both the very best that life can bring, and great happiness in your coming life together.
- Sue Cowmeadow is rejoicing at the recent addition of a horse to her home menagerie - just ask after 'Lacey'!

- Connie Stanton also has an addition to her home - a Siamese fighting fish named 'Red Fish'.
- A very warm welcome to Jenielle Burgess who is joining our nursing team at Gawler and Smithfield. Jenielle is a very experienced nurse from Western Australia with several horses and a couple of very cute dogs.
- Congratulations to Duncan Borland, who won second best and fairest for Willaston Football Club B division for this season.



The Summer Itch: Allergies

Coming into spring and the warmer weather, many pets will start showing allergies again. Just like humans with hay fever, many dogs experience an increase in allergies during the warmer months of the year, although some will continue to have problems throughout the year.

What are the signs that my pet may be allergic?

Most pets will show allergies by scratching and chewing at their skin, either in a small area or over the entire body. Allergies can also affect the ears, so you may see your pet shaking its head and scratching at the ears as well. They may even scratch so obsessively that they damage the skin. Other animals may show coughing and sneezing, while others may develop on-going diarrhoea or vomiting.

What can I do if I think my pet may have an allergy?

If your pet is showing any of the signs mentioned above, it is best to have a full veterinary check of your pet initially to determine if your pet has an allergy. There are many treatment options available, from special shampoos to help the

skin, to fish oil capsules to improve the skin, to medical therapy, through to full desensitisation treatment, so it is best to discuss all the options with a veterinarian first.



Aloveen Shampoo and Conditioner - excellent for itchy skin.



What can Animals be Allergic to?

What causes allergies?

Like humans, it is difficult for animals to avoid the things they are allergic to. Many animals that are allergic have allergies to multiple things, especially different plant pollens or mites, so it can be difficult without further work-up to establish what your pet is allergic to.

Animals can be allergic to:

- Dust or dust mites
- Pollens from many different types of plants
- Grass mites
- Fleas
- Food
- Shed skin cells (like 'pet allergies' in humans)
- Contact with certain plants, such as Wandering Jew

- Contact with cleaning products, household sprays, or garden sprays

Bone to

Remember:

Dogs can have allergies to hundreds of different things, making identification of the allergen difficult.





Sun Dangers

In the warmer weather, many pets will head outdoors and sunbake. Sunbaking is a habit that many dogs, cats and other animals will enjoy throughout their lives. While dark-skinned animals rarely develop any problems from sunbaking, animals with pale skin and white hair are not as fortunate.

Skin cancers are, unfortunately, quite common on noses, ear tips and tummies that have been exposed to lots of sun during an animal's life. Long exposure to the sun also affects the animal's skin, drying it out and irritating the animal.

What areas are most at risk?

Pink areas of skin around the eyes and nose, and thin white hair over the ears and tummy are the areas

most likely to be affected by sunbaking. Animals can get sunburnt just like humans, and can also develop skin cancers on these exposed areas.

Bone to

Remember:

Pets must have protection from the sun.

Fun in the Sun: Keeping your pets safe



There are several simple measures you can take to keep your pet safe while out enjoying the sunshine:

For small areas, you can apply normal zinc cream on the pink skin to prevent sunburn. Just be aware that animals are more likely to lick any creams off, so the cream may need to be applied several times during the day to maintain good protection.

For larger areas of skin, there are special suncreams designed for pets. We have a product called Filtabac Sunfilter cream that can be used to protect large areas of the skin from the effects of the sun.

Please do not use human sunscreen on your pets - they will lick any cream you apply, and human sunscreens are not designed to be eaten by your pet.



Sun Cream for Pets

You can also find fashionable sunhats and t-shirts for when your pets are outside during the warmer weather. These provide the best protection with a physical barrier against the harmful rays of the sun, but you have to get your pet used to the idea early and slowly.

Opening Times

Gawler Veterinary Services:

3 Bright Street, Willaston

Phone: 8522 2055

Open Mon-Fri 8am-7pm

Saturday 8am-12pm

Tanunda Veterinary Clinic:

21 Murray Street, Tanunda

Phone: 8563 0235

Open Mon-Fri 9am-6pm

Saturday 9am-12pm

Smithfield Veterinary Clinic:

Shop 5 Crn Anderson Walk and Queen St

Smithfield

Phone: 8254 1000

Open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Saturday 9am-12pm

GAWLER

VETERINARY

SERVICES

FOR ALL EMERGENCIES: RING GAWLER ON 8522 2055

EMAIL: gawlervet@gawlervet.com.au

FAX: 8523 3541

WEBSITE: www.gawlervet.com.au



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