

**EVERY DOG OWNER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT...GASTRIC DILATION AND VOLVULUS**

Gastric dilation and volvulus is also known as a GDV. It is a medical emergency and can quickly become fatal. So what is a GDV? Basically it is where the stomach becomes more and more bloated with air, fluid and food. The stomach can even twist over on itself and become 'torted'. The stomach gets bigger and bigger putting pressure on the blood vessels, affecting circulation and leading to shock. It makes breathing difficult and can also cause parts of the stomach and other internal organs to die. The dog can die very quickly (within a few hours) as a result of these problems or other complications.

You may notice that your dog has a painful and bloated abdomen. They may also look like they are trying to vomit or retch but without actually vomiting anything up. Finally, they may appear really depressed.

The exact cause of a GDV is not known, however there are several risk factors that are recognised. It typically occurs in large dogs with 'deep-chests' such as Dobermanns, Great Danes and Boxers but can also occur in small dogs and even cats. Taking your dog out for exercise not long after a meal has been recognized as one major contributing factor. Dry dog foods, although fantastic for their teeth, have also been implicated at times. But not all dogs that develop a GDV follow the pattern described above, therefore recognizing the clinical signs and being able to seek rapid treatment is the key to a successful outcome.

You should ring your vet immediately if your dog is showing the clinical signs listed above. Waiting until the next day can be disastrous. The vet will probably need to take x-rays and often the dog may need to have surgery.

**ITS THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN....****CHANGE OF SEASON!****Time to worm your pets**

Spring is here again, and with it comes lush spring grass (we hope) and all the problems associated with it! This time of year is the time we need to be especially careful with our equine friends who are prone to laminitis (also known as founder).

Laminitis is an inflammation and separation of the hoof wall and associated structures. Grazing lush pasture is a common cause of laminitis in susceptible animals (usually fat, cresty ponies). It is a very painful condition that can affect all four feet and can lead to serious sequelae such as rotation of the pedal bone of the foot.

As with most things, prevention is much better than cure. Restricting intake of lush pasture and carbohydrate-rich foods is very important, especially around spring. Regular hoof maintenance and trimming is also vital in laminitis-prone horses and can greatly influence treatment of affected horses and ponies.



## DIABETES IN CATS

In the last couple of months, we have had a few cats come in that have had diabetes. Diabetes can occur as a result of the cat not producing enough insulin. So what does insulin do and why is it important? Insulin allows glucose to actually get into the cells, where it is needed for energy. Thus, without insulin, the body cannot get the energy it needs to survive and work properly.



Cats with diabetes tend to be older, male and de-sexed. The typical signs you might notice is that your cat is drinking a lot of water, urinating a lot, has an increased appetite and yet loses weight. When you take your pet to the vet, they may diagnose it by looking at a blood and urine sample.

Cats are then generally given insulin injections, often 2 times a day, for the rest of their lives. Thus, having a diabetic animal can be a huge commitment! It is very important, although it can be very time consuming, to work out the right insulin level for controlling the blood glucose levels. Often the best way to work out the appropriate insulin level is to keep the cat in hospital for possibly a week and take lots of blood samples to measure the glucose level in the blood and determine if the amount of insulin being given is keeping these levels within an ideal range over the day. It can be very tricky to work out the appropriate level, especially as some cats get very stressed in hospital and this can artificially increase their glucose levels. Once the appropriate insulin level has been determined, doing something called a fructosamine? test intermittently can give you a vague idea of whether the insulin dose being given is controlling the diabetes over the longer term. Taking the time to work all of this out early is very important for the long term health and happiness of your pet.

In addition to insulin therapy, dietary management is also an important part of controlling diabetes in a cat. Feeds such as Hills m/d are designed specifically for diabetic animals and so make this part of management easy.

A risk with diabetic animals if they do not have proper control of their insulin or skip insulin injections is a thing called ketoacidosis. This is a very serious complication of diabetes and if not treated appropriately and promptly (and even sometimes in spite of good treatment) these animals can even die. If an animal becomes ketoacidotic, these cat's need to be in hospital with fluid treatment and insulin control as part of their management.

An unusual thing which can sometimes occur with diabetic cats is a thing called diabetic neuropathy. The cause of this is unknown but these animal's walk with a very crouched gait. This can sometimes but not always improve with proper insulin control.

So now you know a little bit about how complicated and time consuming diabetes can be in a cat! It is a long term commitment having a diabetic animal but with a little understanding and a lot of love, you can make your animal once again the happy pet they once were!

## WILDLIFE HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

The University Of Melbourne is conducting some wildlife health surveillance focusing on kangaroos and koalas. We are looking for cases of sick, injured or dead young kangaroos or koalas. Please contact Dr Jacotine at the clinic for further details if you believe you have a suitable animal for this research project.

