



**Inside this
Issue**

Lucy the Dog Ambassador	2
Heart Disease in Small Dogs	2
Lumps—what to do	3
Chocolate Toxicity	3
Holiday Trading Information	4
Practice News	4
Contact Details	4



Autumn News

Autumn is a time of changing seasons, and we have seen some changes in our clinic as well! You may have noticed some new faces if you have been in recently. Dr Guy Wolfenden has joined our team. Guy spent last year at the specialist centre in Osborne Park so comes with some great knowledge in medicine and emergency medicine. We have been super impressed with how well Guy has settled in to our team. I am sure that those who have met him have found Guy very approachable and professional. From the pictures below, we are pretty sure that our patients like Guy too! You may have also met Gemma, our new vet nurse. After over 4 years with us, Amy has left to do further study (but will still be working on Saturday mornings). Gemma started with us late last year to do her practical training. However, we liked her enthusiastic approach to work and her happy, friendly nature so offered her a full-time position. We are sure you will agree that we have been very fortunate to have such enthusiastic additions to our team.

The cooler, damper weather brings out the **snails and slugs**. If using snail and slug killer, make sure your pets can't access them. Dogs love the taste and they cause serious clinical signs (vomiting, trembling, drooling, seizures, death). Immediate veterinary treatment is required if your dog has eaten snail pellets.

Chocolate toxicity—for your dog, not yourself! See article on page 3.

Cash for Charity: At a staff workshop late last year, we discussed that as a clinic we would like to give back to our community. We decided that one way to do this would be to select 3 charities each month to raise money for. Both Grantham Street and Dalkeith clinics now have charity boxes which we will donate \$100 per month to a selected charity. We will keep the boxes available for our clients to help these charities. If you would like to suggest a charity, local community group etc, let our receptionist know. We would love to be able to help your local group.



**Dalkeith Veterinary Clinic
Grantham Street Veterinary
Clinic**



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GranthamDalkeithVet@OurVet**

**COMPETITION
WINNERS**

Congratulations to our two winners of the Summer Time Colouring In Competition. Eva (Grantham Street) and Alyssa (Dalkeith), both won hampers worth over \$200 for their pets Wilbur and Matilda. Thanks to everyone who entered and brightened up our clinics with their colourful pictures!



CONGRATULATIONS

Lucy becomes a Doggy Ambassador



We understand every pet holds a very special place in their family's hearts and homes. But one of our patients has gone beyond their family's recognition to be nominated as the first Animal Ambassador for the Murdoch University Veterinary Trust. Murdoch's Veterinary Trust has been set up to attract donations and generate funds to help support the Veterinary Hospital. These funds enable the Hospital to undertake ongoing research, purchase specialised veterinary equipment and train veterinarians. Cameron, Paul and the staff have supported the Trust in a variety of ways, including financial donations, support of various fund-raising events and Paul has been an advisory committee member since 2011.

Lucy was born with an uncommon congenital heart disease, but it didn't stop her from being a fun-loving, loyal pet. However, after a routine surgical procedure, her condition resulted in post-operative complications which became life-threatening. After stabilisation at our clinic we felt the medical team at Murdoch had the necessary expertise and equipment which was required to nurse Lucy back to health. Lucy spent a week being treated in the intensive care unit at Murdoch University and made a miraculous recovery, thanks to the expert team of vets and nurses.

Last year the Veterinary Trust asked for nominations for an Animal Ambassador and Lucy's loving nature, enthusiasm for life and the support and dedication of her owners, put her at the top of a long list to be named the Veterinary Trust's very first Animal Ambassador.

We think Lucy is a very worthy winner!

More information on the Veterinary Trust can be found at www.murdoch.edu.au/veterinarytrust.

Photo thanks to Studio Noah Pet Photography www.studiohnoah.com.au. 'Tested by animals since 2003'



Heart Disease in Small Dogs

Have you noticed your dog coughing lately? If so, is it worse at a particular time of day – morning, evening or possibly the middle of the night whilst you are trying to get some much needed shut-eye? Your dog may be showing signs of heart disease, but don't panic too much. The information below will let you know if it is something you need to get checked by a veterinarian.

Endocardiosis, or chronic mitral valve insufficiency (CMVI), is the most common cause of heart failure that we see in dogs.

Which breeds are susceptible to CMVI?

The most common breeds we see with heart disease are; Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, Maltese, Shih-tzu and other small or toy breed dogs. Males are slightly more prone to heart disease than females, and increasing age puts dogs at risk of developing heart disease and heart failure.

What should you be looking out for at home?

Most small, toy breed dogs will not give away any clues of heart disease or heart failure. Often it is detected as a heart murmur at their regular vet check. Dogs are often over the age of 8-10 years old – some don't even show signs of heart failure until 13+ years!

The first, and most common sign of heart failure is the development of a cough. This will usually be a soft cough, often associated with exercise. It may be worse in the morning or at night. Your dog may also be unwilling to do as much activity or exercise as they previously have. An increased breathing rate may also be seen at home. A healthy sleeping dog should be taking 40 or less breaths per minute. More severe and worrying signs of heart disease or progression to heart failure include wheezing, open-mouth breathing, difficulty breathing and collapse. These warrant urgent veterinary attention.

So what should you do if you notice any of these signs?

Firstly, do not panic! Our recommendation would be to take your dog to a veterinarian for assessment, even if it's only an occasional cough that you hear. Your vet will perform a thorough physical examination, take an in-depth and vital history and will likely recommend a few diagnostic tests.

Firstly, x-rays of your dog's chest will be performed – these give us great information regarding the size and shape of their heart, as well as their lungs. Endocardiosis manifests as an increased size of the heart and then progression to fluid build up within the lungs. Definitive diagnosis of endocardiosis is made from echocardiography. This is an ultrasound scan of the heart, performed by a specialist who can look at the size and shape of the heart, as well as its ability to contract properly in order to pump blood around the body. Your veterinarian will likely recommend this as a diagnostic step.

Is the disease treatable?

Endocardiosis is a disease that does not have a cure, but is managed well with medical therapy. Your veterinarian will most likely provide medication to improve blood flow through the heart, lungs and to a lesser extent, the body. A diuretic may be dispensed to remove excess fluid from the lungs if it is detected during the assessment.

Therapy is life-long, but has shown to dramatically improve the longevity of dogs and prevent, or delay the onset of severe, life-threatening heart failure.



Lumps: To Leave or Not To Leave.....

.... that is the question! And one which we are regularly asked...

Pets are very prone to getting lumps—some of these will be of little consequence to your pet, but others can be life threatening. So how can we tell the difference?

Assessment of a lump by your veterinarian is the first step. Things which are looked at include where the lump is situated, what the lump looks like, how quickly the lump is growing and if there are other lumps associated with it. Often your veterinarian will recommend doing a fine needle aspirate to remove some of the cells from the lump. These can be sent to the laboratory to give an indication of what the lump is. Whilst this is a very good initial diagnostic step, in some cases, the results aren't conclusive. If this is the case, then either the lump can be totally removed and sent for histopathology which is diagnostic in most cases. It is also possible to do a biopsy if removal of the entire lump has associated problems (eg: is close to vital organs, is very large). Removal of the mass or biopsy requires a full general anaesthetic and surgery.



WHAT'S THAT LUMP?

In some situations, a decision is made to 'leave and monitor'. If this is the case, it is very important to watch for certain things. If the lump grows rapidly, starts to bleed, starts to irritate your pet (eg: they lick it or bite at it), then it is very important to bring your pet back for further assessment. If you are monitoring lumps, it is important to have them assessed annually by your vet. Your pet's annual health check is an ideal time to do this.

If you find a lump on your pet, it is best to have it checked as soon as possible. If the lump is one of the nastier type, then early treatment may save your pet's life!

Chocolate Toxicity in Pets

Many people are aware that chocolate is toxic to dogs, but we get a lot of calls to ask how much is too much. Easter is a time when dogs are at more risk of getting into chocolate. Dogs not only have a liking for chocolate, they have a very strong sense of smell, so are able to sniff it out readily. This is important to remember if planning on an Easter egg hunt!

The compound which is toxic to pets in chocolate is Theobromine. This product is metabolised slowly in dogs which results in its higher toxicity. Chocolate also contains caffeine which can be toxic to pets. The concentration of caffeine is much lower and less of a risk.

If your pet eats sufficient chocolate it can start to show clinical signs. The symptoms start quite quickly after ingestion and initially include increased activity and abnormal behaviour, along with possible vomiting and diarrhoea. Theobromine affects the heart, so worsening signs include increased heart rate, weakness or trembling, increased urination and can progress to seizures then death. Cats can also be affected but are less inclined to hunt it down. The foil wrapping of chocolate eggs can also cause gut obstruction if consumed in sufficient amounts.

Early veterinary treatment (within a couple of hours of ingestion) involves making the patient vomit. If the patient is showing clinical signs, then the treatment is supportive, including intravenous fluids and muscle relaxants or induced anaesthesia to control seizures while the body eliminates the toxins. There is no antidote for the toxin.

So how much is too much?

This is dependent on several things. Different types of chocolate have different levels of Theobromine. Dark cooking chocolate, cocoa or cocoa beans have much higher amounts than white chocolate. The toxic dose rate also varies with individual dogs with small dogs being more susceptible. As an indication, 15gms of cooking chocolate could be toxic to a 10kg dog, with 25gm of dark chocolate and 100gm of milk chocolate potentially causing problems. The darker the chocolate, the more toxic it will be. Other factors including a pet's individual susceptibility and the amount of other food in the stomach, will affect if clinical signs develop.

So, if your dog does get into your chocolate stash, presenting to your local veterinarian as soon as possible to induce vomiting is the best course of action. And if you are planning an Easter Egg Hunt, maybe pop your canine friend in a safe place, or hide your eggs very well.....





Holiday Trading Hours

Our trading hours for the public holidays during Autumn are:

- Friday 25th March: Good Friday CLOSED
- Saturday 26th March: Open 8.30am to noon.
- Sunday 27th March: Easter Sunday CLOSED
- Monday 28th March: Easter Monday CLOSED
- Monday 25th April: ANZAC Day CLOSED
- Monday 6th June: WA Day CLOSED

Did you Know?

Over 50 000 dogs were used during WWI by both Germany, France, Britain and Belgium. They were used in many roles such as scouts dogs, to find casualties, as messengers, to guard secure areas and as mascots.

Over 100 000 homing pigeons were also used in WWI as messengers, often when no other message could get through. The pigeons had an amazing 95% message delivery success rate.

And just for Fun:

Me: My diet isn't really working

Friend: Why, what's happened

Me: I had eggs for breakfast this morning.

Friend: Scrambled??

Me: No, Cadbury's.



GRANTHAM STREET VETERINARY CLINIC

58 D Grantham Street
Wembley WA 6014

Mon-Fri: 7.00am—7.00pm
Saturday: 8.30am—12noon
reception.grantham@petwellness.com.au

DALKEITH VETERINARY CLINIC

5/142 Stirling Hwy (Cnr Marita Rd)
Nedlands WA 6009
08 9386 6277

Mon-Fri: 7.30am - 6.30pm
Saturday: 8.30am-12noon
reception.dalkeith@petwellness.com.au

Practice News

Staff News:

As noted on the first page, we welcome Guy and Gemma in to our team. We have also had a change in vets schedules with Dr Jen now doing Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays at Dalkeith Veterinary Clinic and Dr Claire doing these days at Grantham Street. Claire will still be working Mondays at Dalkeith. In line with our commitment to further education, Claire is doing further study in radiology. Her time at Grantham Street offers her more opportunities to expand her knowledge in this area.

Partners in Veterinary Education (PIVE):

Many of you would have been in our clinic when we have had veterinary students doing practical experience with us. As part of our ongoing commitment to veterinary education we regularly accept veterinary students to do their practical placement at our clinic. As recognition of our willingness to take on veterinary students, and based on these students' positive feedback on their experience whilst with us, we have been invited to participate in the PIVE scheme. This gives the practice ongoing access to continuing education events, so that our staff can stay up to date and continue to give the best possible care to your pets! We also acknowledge the wonderful understanding from you, our clients and pets, whilst we are helping to train our future veterinarians.

Outside our clinic... What do our vets and nurses do when they aren't looking after your pets? Many of our staff enjoy energetic pursuits. Dr Claire is a keen horse rider and recently came 3rd in a jumping competition with her horse "Whizz". Dr Jo is keenly training for the Busselton half iron man. Although needing a little encouragement, when she found out her team was raising money for cancer she was easily convinced! We wish Jo all the best for the first of May!

Puppy Preschool: Puppy Classes are run weekly at Grantham Street Veterinary Clinic. Puppy Preschool is for pups from 8 weeks of age—call our clinic if you would like more information on Puppy Preschool classes.



Grooming Days

Grooming is now available:



Grantham Street Clinic: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

Dalkeith Clinic: Every Wednesday and second Friday