

# BLOCKHOUSE BAY VETERINARY CENTRE NEWSLETTER



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Winter 2018

Dear Clients,

Welcome to the Winter 2018 edition of our newsletter.

The last few months have been very busy here at the clinic and it is crazy to think that we are now half-way through the year. It seems like it was only just Summer.

It is with sadness that we say farewell to one of our vet nurses this month. Kirsty has been with us here at the clinic for six years; firstly as a Unitec vet nursing student and then as a vet nurse. She has been a star at the clinic and we will miss her dearly. Kirsty is off to fly the flag with our national airline starting in June. We wish her well with her new adventures and if you do see her on a flight, remember, your nearest exit may be behind your seat.

In other staff news, we have two new vet nurses, Anouska Litherland and Rachel Xiong, starting with us in June. Both are Unitec vet nurse graduate and have been working at other Auckland clinics. They will work along side Fiona, Mariska and Jaime as our veterinary nurses.

On the veterinarian front we have welcomed in one new vet and one returning vet to the team. Lara Lambert joined us in a full-time role in January after returning from the UK. Rebecca Ladyman was part of the Blockhouse Bay Vet team from 2010-2014 and is now back working some afternoons and Saturdays.

Geoff, Kate, Morwenna, Lara, Rebecca  
Fiona, Vanessa, Mariska, Jaime, Anouska and Rachel



## Welcome Lara Lambert

I graduated from Massey University in 2013. After working for 2 years in a busy small animal clinic in South Auckland I moved to the UK where I balanced locum work and travel for 2 years. I recently made the move back to New Zealand where I joined the team at Blockhouse Bay Vets. I am interested in soft tissue surgery and diagnostic imaging.



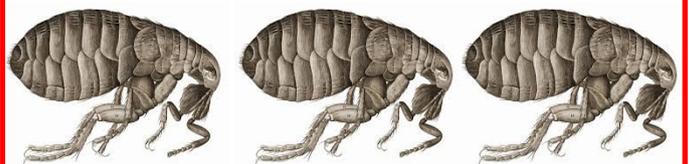
In my spare time I enjoy being active playing netball, walking my greyhound Perry and when the season suits, swimming, scuba diving and snowboarding.

## Fleas, Fleas, Fleas, Fleas, Fleas, Fleas

Just because it is Winter doesn't mean that fleas stop being a problem. They love Auckland weather and keep breeding all Winter long.

Keep up to date with your monthly (or 3-monthly Bravecto) treatments all through the Winter to stop the little biters bothering your pets.

Come in and see the team to get the best flea control for your pets as there are many options now available



## Rabbit Diets

Like most animals, a rabbit's overall health is closely related to its diet. Rabbits have a digestive system that is very different to most other domestic pet species. Rabbits are designed to eat all day, consuming low energy, high fibre vegetation. This diet is broken down in the gut by bacteria and the fermented by-product is then excreted as a faecal caecotroph. These caecotrophs are then eaten, allowing the rabbit to then digest the nutrients made available by the whole process.



Grass and quality hay should make up the vast majority (80%+) of a rabbit's diet and should be available all day. It is required for proper gut function and also to keep the teeth (which are constantly growing) worn down.

If grass is not available all the time then will need to be picked fresh several times per day. Wilted grass and lawn clippings are not to be fed to rabbits.

Good quality meadow hay is the ideal hay type. Poor quality hay (dusty, mouldy, wet etc) is often just ignored by rabbits and not eaten. Alfalfa or Lucerne hay is not needed by most rabbits as it is very high in protein and calcium, and can promote bladder stone formation in adults.



Hard vegetables are often given to rabbits to eat; carrots being the classic. Rabbits can eat carrot but limit their volume to no more than a thumb-length daily. Other vegetables like kale, broccoli, capsicum can be fed but their volumes should each be the same or less than that of the carrot. **DO NOT GIVE RABBITS LETTUCE.**

Pellets are a favourite for both rabbits and their owners. Most rabbits however receive far too many as part of their daily diet and as a result consume less of the grass and hay that their gut needs to function properly. Many poorer quality pellets are also boosted with high fat "treat" items like seeds and corn kernels that promote weight gain. A quality rabbit pellet for adult rabbits should be no more than 1 Tablespoon per kilogram per day.

Rabbits need water available all day, every day. Change this regularly and remember that the water sipper sitting in the sun all day will start to be unpleasant for the rabbit to consume.

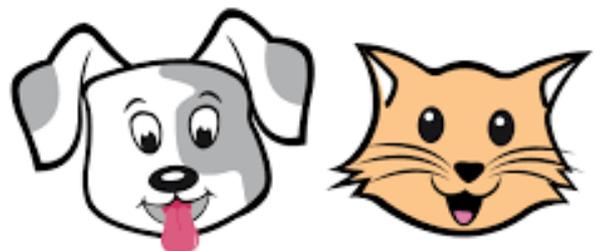
(Java and Onion, the rabbit, hanging about for treats)

## **Clinic Hours**

**Monday - Friday: 8.00am - 7.00pm**

**Saturday: 8.30am - 2.00pm**

**Sunday and Public Holidays: Closed**



# Pet Toxins

We have had lots of comments from clients about the most recent poster board in the waiting room/reception area of the clinic. The nurses made it as a display showing some of the common, household toxins that pets can be exposed to. Some were quite obvious (like Rat Bait) or well known (like Chocolate) but others did raise a few questions from clients.

Some of the most commonly raised questions were around:

## 1) Raisins and Grapes

They are toxic to dogs. They can cause acute renal failure due to sudden damage to the kidney itself. The actual toxic metabolite and damage pathway is still unknown but there does appear to be a huge variation in susceptibility between dogs unrelated to breed and no ability to test who is most at risk.

What is known is that the grape can be in any form, from fresh, dried (sultanas, raisins etc), peeled, cooked, to mixed in with other ingredients (like fruit cake) and still be toxic.

AVOID feeding grapes or raisins or sultanas to your dog.

## 2) Lilies

With Lily toxicity we are mostly referring to plants from the genus *Lilium* (Easter Lily, Tiger Lily, Asiatic Lily) and the genus *hemerocallis* (Day Lily). These plants are often referred to as the "True Lilies".

All parts of these plants are toxic to cats if they are ingested. Cats are very inquisitive and will often chew plants if they can. They will also lick themselves clean if they get the pollen from the stamens on themselves. This pollen is toxic. The actual toxic agent and mechanism of action are unknown but ingestion results in acute kidney failure in cats. Thankfully many florists are aware of this issue and will often enquire about cats in a household if supplying bouquets to people with Lilies in them. They are still however popular garden plants for many people and often picked and brought inside to display.

There are some other plants that have the name "Lily" in their name but not from the above "True Lily" families, that are also toxic to both cats and dogs. These include the Lily of the Valley bush, the Peace Lily and the Calla Lily.

In simple terms, if it has the word "Lily" in the name, be careful with it around your pets and avoid the True Lily plants if you have cats.

## 3) Paracetamol

HIGHLY TOXIC TO CATS.

There is no safe dose in cats.

Cats convert paracetamol into a toxic compound that causes acute, severe, often fatal kidney damage. It is highly toxic and even tiny doses can kill adult cats.

Yes, paracetamol is given to human children, but that does not make it safe for cats.

NEVER GIVE PARACETAMOL TO CATS

The safe dose of paracetamol in dogs is also very low so do not give paracetamol to dogs unless under veterinary advice.

## 4) Fatty Foods

A sudden ingestion of high fat foods can cause acute inflammation of the pancreas in dogs. The inflammation is called pancreatitis and is very painful for affected dogs. Vomiting and not wanting to eat are common signs with pancreatitis but are also symptoms of a number of other conditions so correct diagnosis is important. Treatment of pancreatitis can be long and expensive.

Remember that little bit of fatty goodness may cause a world of pain for your pet.



## How did that get up my cat's nose?

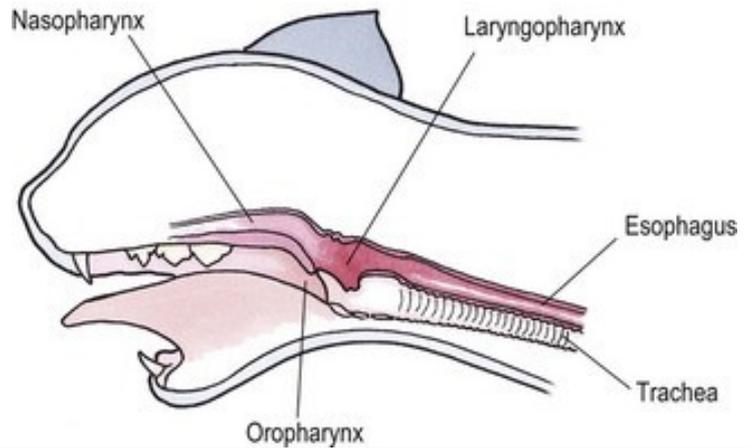
These last few weeks we have seen a spate of cats visiting the clinic making unusual coughing and retching sounds. One was even shaking its head after it ate. In several of these cases we have had to give them a short anaesthetic to examine the back of the mouth from where large blades of grass have then been removed. This has led to a couple of questions from owners regarding "how did the grass get up my cat's nose?"



To begin with, the cat did not stick its head into the grass and get a blade of grass up the nostril that then broke off. The logistics of such a feat would be quite impressive - to line up their nostril and the grass blade, allowing for wind speed and humidity, then insert it. Cows do this with sticks but not cats with grass.



These cats have ended up with the grass up their nose because they have eaten the grass and then proceeded to cough or snort causing the grass to go not out their mouth, but into the back of their nose. This is possible because the cats' oral cavity and nasal cavity are connected at the back of the head. The blade of grass ends up lodging in the nasopharynx (in picture below) causing irritation.



## Making the most of your visit to the vet

### **1) Make an appointment**

We can then allocate a time to see you and your pet. Walk-in visits will usually result in a wait for the person involved and an inconvenience for other clients who have their appointments delayed by someone walking in.

### **2) Ask to see a specific vet**

There are now five veterinarians working at Blockhouse Bay Vets. For many visits a specific vet is not needed but for ongoing cases it is best to get continuity of care by the same vet. Simply ask for that vet when making your appointment.

### **3) Come in with your own pet**

It might sound strange but it is really hard to do a proper consultation on a sick pet when the person presenting the pet knows nothing about what is wrong with it. If possible come in with your own pet or at least be contactable on the phone while we are in consult so that the best care for your pet can take place.

### **4) Remember to mention the actual problem**

In a consultation we will often attempt to tease bits of information out of owners through the questions we ask. "Have you noticed any increase in drinking? Any vomiting?" These questions will hopefully prompt owners to mention anything of concern that they might have with their pet. However if your pet has a specific issue you would like us to look at, please mention it. Sometimes a list can be helpful if there are multiple issues or concerns.

### **5) Book multiple appointments for multiple pets**

If you are planning on bringing both your pets for a check-up then remember to make that known when booking your appointment. Nothing makes a consult schedule fall apart faster than multiple pets being presented when only one appointment has been made. To allow proper time for each of your pets and for the courtesy of fellow clients, please book each pet its own appointment slot.

