

BOWRAL VETERINARY HOSPITAL

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2009

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU VACCINATE YOUR PET?

Many of you may have caught the recent media interest in vaccination protocols for cats and dogs.

To clear the air and provide the current recommendations we can provide a copy of the protocols recommended by the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA).

These follow the guidelines determined best practice by the Australian Small Animal Veterinary Association (ASAVA).

We will give a brief summary. There has certainly been reduced vaccination frequency of the core vaccines overseas for a few years now.

This pertains to Distemper, Hepatitis and Parvovirus or C3 in dogs and Feline Enteritis, Calicivirus and Herpes virus or Feline 3, in cats.

However, it has seemed prudent to fully assess the Australian situation before implementing any changes to ensure it is safe to increase vaccination intervals.

As a result the current recommendations are a core vaccination (ie a C3 or Feline 3) every three years for adult dogs and cats.

Non-core vaccinations such as the Kennel Cough vaccine (Bordatella and Parainfluenza) in dogs and Leukaemia vaccination in cats must be given at least annually.

Therefore every boarding dog will need to have an annual kennel cough booster vaccination.

Furthermore the AVA wishes to highlight the importance of the primary puppy and kitten vaccinations. They should be given at six, twelve and no earlier than sixteen weeks of age and most importantly the first adult vaccination be given no longer than 12 months later. A further emphasis is placed on the yearly health check, which has always been integral to the vaccination examination.

We agree with the AVA recommendation that people continue to have the pet's health checked yearly in an attempt to address any health issues including weight, dental, heart

or skin disease and any new lumps or bumps.

This allows significant health issues to be addressed as early as possible to ensure optimum health and quality of life for our pets. Like your vaccination reminder an annual health check reminder will be sent to all pets to ensure this is not forgotten.

Please speak to the vets at your next visit to determine what is the most appropriate vaccination protocol for your pet.

LUMPS AND BUMPS

Have you noticed a lump on your pet?

This is quite common especially as cats and dogs age. Thankfully a lot are quite innocuous. They can be warts, sebaceous cysts or benign fatty lumps called lipomas.

However, animals are also at risk of aggressive skin tumours and these too can at times look quite innocent.

As a rule of thumb, if the lump is mobile and very slow growing it is more likely to be benign, ie not harmful and not likely to spread.

Lumps that grow quickly, feel attached, worry the pet or ulcerate are more likely to be locally aggressive and possibly spread to other parts of the body. Sometimes this can occur quite quickly.

While these general rules can be helpful in very old animals where surgery may be risky, it is certainly not a definitive way of assessing lumps. As an example, a relatively common skin tumour

Hospital Hours

8.30 – 5.30

Mon – Fri

8.30 – 12noon

Saturday

Consultations

8.30-5.30

Mon – Fri

9.00-12 noon

Saturday

10.00-11.00 am

Sunday

Phone 48611 444

in dogs is the mast cell tumour.

It can appear like almost any type of benign skin tumour. However, some of these will be Grade 3 and can be very aggressive and very rapidly spreading.

While sometimes, based on the behaviour and appearance of the lump and possibly a quick test called a fine needle aspirate, where a few cells from the lump are examined under the microscope, we may be happy to make a call on the lump. As a general rule however, if the lump is a concern it should be removed and if necessary examined by a pathologist. This gives both peace of mind and the opportunity to use adjunctive treatment should it turn out to be a nastier tumour.

If you have concerns please make an appointment to have these lumps checked.

VETERINARY PRACTICE IN 2009

It is quite amazing how progressive veterinary practice has become in the last twenty years. Up until then the concept of specialist veterinary practice in this country was quite rare. We now have at least five specialist practices and the University close by. These centres provide every aspect of veterinary care including orthopaedic and soft tissue surgery, ultrasonography, MRI and CT scans, medical specialties including neurology, oncology, ophthalmology, dentistry and dermatology and 24hour monitoring and emergency care. These centres with their expertise and state of the art equipment can effectively treat many conditions that in the past were not always possible in general practice. Complicated, difficult fracture repair, hip replacement, elbow arthroscopy, cataract surgery, chemotherapy and chronic allergic skin disease would be some of the more common reasons pets are referred to these specialist centres.

While these treatments come at a cost, having these centres and the option of further treatment, if necessary, has improved the care and health of pets with complicated and potentially life threatening illnesses.

While we appreciate not everyone, no matter how much they would love to do everything possible for their loved pet, can undertake specialist care, it is great to know it is available and will always be offered if it is felt it may enhance your pet's care. The specialist veterinarian always keeps us well informed of your pet's treatment and progress and advises us of any ongoing care that may be necessary when they return home.

If you would like your newsletter emailed to you please advise reception of your email address

PET DENTAL MONTH

Each year we recognise the importance of dental hygiene for pets with a whole month devoted to dental health.

Unfortunately, often we are dealing with advanced dental disease of older pets rather than talking preventative health care.

Dental month gives us the opportunity to examine pet's mouths, to educate clients on good dental care, recognise gingivitis or gum disease and determine any treatments that may be necessary for your pet.

Good tooth care needs to start young. Cats in particular can have significant gingivitis even as kittens as their teeth erupt.

Keeping a pet's teeth clean does not have to be difficult but does need to be individualised for you and your pet. In the wild chewing the meat and bones from prey helps clean the teeth. We can mimic this by providing RAW bones that takes the pet a couple of minutes to chew right up. These should be provided at least three times a week.

Raw chicken necks are often appropriate for cats and small dogs, increasing up to brisket bones or chicken carcasses for larger dogs. As long as the bone is raw and appropriately sized we rarely see problems with feeding pets raw bones.

Brushing a pet's teeth is also a good procedure to start when young. Even dogs that chew a lot of bones can get gingivitis and calculus of the front teeth and canines. A toothbrush with a doggy toothpaste used on a daily basis can keep these teeth clean and disease free.

If time is scarce Hills Science Diet have formulated a tooth diet or TD diet for cats and dogs. The bigger firmer biscuit very efficiently cleans the teeth as the pet chews its food, as it does not crush like regular dry pet food. It is also fully balanced so can be the sole diet.

In rare cases and older pets gingivitis will still occur. This then leads to calculus and loose teeth. This can be managed with an in water medication or an easily applied oral cleansing gel.

As you can see there are many options available to you to help your pet maintain a healthy mouth and therefore body. Over Spring take time to check your pets teeth or we can do it for you. Any odour, discolouration or bleeding needs to be addressed.

If you would like an appointment to have your pet's mouth checked or learn how to brush their teeth please phone the hospital.

Dental disease is definitely better prevented than cured. Unfortunately once dental disease becomes chronic there will be ongoing treatments throughout the pet's life. Start cleaning now and help your pet to a healthier more comfortable life.