



HALL VET SURGERY

AUTUMN

NEWSLETTER

Autumn is a beautiful time of year in Hall Village.



Say hello to Jenny.....



.....the fresh face on our front desk!

Jenny's Dorper ewes are lambing on her farm near Hall at the moment so if she wants to show you her baby photos expect some little white furry faces!

Jenny's soft heart has won her a few rescue dogs over the years. At the moment she shares her home with two Tenterfield Terriers, Boss and Jack; a good old Heinz variety, Molly; and Ruby, the kelpie, the worker around the place. She is also a keen warm blood breeder and dressage fan.

As the trees clothe themselves in reds and yellows and the geraniums and grevilleas flower once more before winter, the vets and nurses at Hall Veterinary Surgery prepare themselves for dental health month in May, old dogs and cats stiffening up with the cold, and a new crop of puppies and kittens.

This newsletter focuses on preventative health: how often we should worm dogs, especially those with access to carcasses; toilet training pups; the benefits of desexing your dog; and how to prevent or remedy aggressive behaviour. We also showcase our new digital X-ray system.

Hall Veterinary Surgery is now open for desexing and dental work on Saturdays.
Please book at least a week ahead to secure a place.
Admissions are between 8-8.30am.



Maggie's Diary

Life's a ball...

Chai and I found a dead sheep last weekend out at the farm. We ate all we could and rolled in the leftovers so we wouldn't forget where we left them.

Mum wasn't very happy when I hopped in the car to come back to town. She dragged me out to the tap and lathered me up with Chai's shampoo. All that glorious sheep scent washed off - just as well Chai knows the farm like the back of her paw!

When we got home Mum phoned Hall Vet Surgery and we went in for a talk with Dr Jim. He shook his head and gave me a lecture on worms.

Hydatid tapeworms form cysts in sheep and kangaroos. If I eat the cysts they become adult tapeworms in me.

When my family pet me they might pick up the tapeworm eggs. If they forget to wash their hands and ingest the eggs they develop into cysts on the liver, lungs or other organs and can be fatal.

I felt very sorry that I had been so naughty until Dr Jim took out some yummy treats. Mum says they were tablets to kill the nasty worms. I wanted more but Dr Jim said I had to wait 6 weeks for another one.

Chai has a wormer like Drontal or Milbemax every 3 months that kills all the intestinal worms: hookworm, roundworm, tapeworm and whipworm.

The hydatid tapeworm has a lifecycle of 6 weeks so dogs like Chai who have access to animal carcasses and hydatid cysts must be wormed for hydatids every 6 weeks. She takes a tablet that only kills tapeworm in the interval between the allwormer doses.

My next worming will be in 6 weeks time with a tapewormer. Six weeks later I will take my Drontal as usual.

Mum says I have to get out of the car because we are not going back out to the farm again for a long time. But I hope we visit Dr Jim again soon - he keeps a bucket of liver treats on his desk!

Improved diagnostic services



Dr Helen admires Bull Mastiff George's X-ray on our new digital X-ray system. The high quality of the X-ray images increases the accuracy of our diagnoses. We are able to fine tune and individualise your pets' body and dental X-rays and save them directly to their computer records. Copies of the X-rays can also be sent electronically to veterinary imaging specialists and an opinion returned the same day. Already many pets' lives have been improved or saved by this leap forward in technology.



Nurse Ella lines up the new dental digital X-ray unit with Lily's molars. Crisp clear X-rays of pets' mouths enhance vets' decision-making. No longer do we have to agonise over whether a tooth is healthy enough to leave or whether we should extract it to prevent mouth pain and infection.

Reflections

"Dogs are our link to paradise. They don't know evil or jealousy or discontent. To sit with a dog on a hillside on a glorious afternoon is to be back in Eden, where doing nothing was not boring--it was peace."

Milan Kundera



Aggressive behaviour

A few months ago an older couple with a Blue Heeler called Jack came in to see us. Jack lunges, growls and barks at other dogs and makes their daily walks a nightmare. The owners had seen punishment-based methods of controlling aggression on television and had tried to physically subdue the dog whenever it was aggressive. However, the behavior was not improving.

A recent veterinary study confirms that if you're aggressive to your dog, your dog will respond with aggression, too.

Meghan Herron, veterinarian author of the study says "the number-one reason why dog owners take their dog to a veterinary behaviorist is to manage aggressive behavior. Our study demonstrated that many confrontational training methods, whether staring down dogs, striking them, or intimidating them with physical manipulation, do little to correct improper behavior and can elicit aggressive responses."

The use of such confrontational training techniques can **provoke fear** in the dog and lead to **defensively aggressive behavior toward the person administering the aversive action**.

These **fear inducing techniques** include:

- Hitting or kicking the dog (41% of owners reported aggression in response)
- Growling at the dog (41%)
- Forcing the dog to release an item from its mouth (38%)
- "Alpha roll" (forcing the dog onto its back and holding it down) (31%)
- "Dominance down" (forcing the dog onto its side) (29%)

- Grabbing the jowls or scruff (26%)
- Staring the dog down (staring at the dog until it looks away) (30%)
- Spraying the dog with a water pistol or spray bottle (20%)
- Yelling "no" (15%)
- Forced exposure (to something that frightens the dog, such as tile floors, noise or people) (12%)

After discussion about Jack's problem his owners decided to try **non-aversive methods** including:

- Training the dog to sit for everything it wants (only 2% of owners reported aggression afterward)
- Rewarding the dog for eye contact (2%)
- Food exchange for an item in its mouth instead of forcing the item out (6%)
- Rewarding the dog for "watch me" (0%)

They found after a few months that Jack responded much less fearfully and was much less often aggressive to other dogs.

"Canine aggression and other behavior problems are **not** a result of dominant behavior or the lack of the owner's 'alpha' status," Heron says, "but rather a result of **fear (self-defense) or underlying anxiety problems**. Aversive techniques can elicit an aggressive response in dogs because they can increase the fear and arousal in the dog, especially in those that are already defensive."

With consistent and regular training Jack is slowly gaining confidence in his owners and they are much less fearful about taking him out on walks.

Lab test for bowel cancer?

A trained Labrador Retriever detects colorectal cancer almost as accurately as a colonoscopy, research from Japan shows.

The dogs smell a chemical produced by the cancer in the faeces or breath of patients. They detect the cancer in its very early stages giving surgeons a very good chance of curing the disease.

Other non-invasive tests do not detect bowel cancer as early and as efficiently as the Labs.

Other diseases of the lower bowel such as inflammatory bowel disease or benign colorectal disease don't confuse the dogs. They react only to colorectal cancer.

Scientists are trying to pin down the volatile components that the dogs are responding to so that they can formulate a chemical test for them.

Check out our NEW website at www.hallvet.com.au
for the latest tips and news on pet care issues.

Toilet Training Puppies

Toilet training is fundamental to a new pup's introduction to family life. Start it the minute you get home with her.

Choose a **toileting place** away from the deck, thoroughfares and busy spots like the clothesline.

Give her **plenty of opportunities** to go to this place. Take her out to this spot before she has time to find another: as soon as she **wakes** from a snooze, **after food, after play** or if she starts to **sniff or circle** suspiciously.

Stay still and quiet so that you do not distract her. While she is toileting say 'wee' or 'potty' so that she learns to **toilet on command**. This is useful for the last walk before bed or when travelling.

Positive reinforcement is the key to successful toilet training. **Immediately reward her** after she relieves herself. Praise her with a pat, 'good girl' and, especially at first, give her a food treat. Try not to miss an opportunity for rewarding her for the right behaviour and she will soon learn to do the right thing.

Once she has toileted she may come inside off lead for 1-2 hours.

Set an alarm to remind you to take her out again so she doesn't make a mistake.

If she doesn't go when you take her out set a 10-15 minute alarm and keep her on lead, in a crate or with you to prevent any mishaps.

Short term confinement in a crate inhibits elimination and many pups will toilet as soon as they are released. Take advantage of this by rushing her to the chosen place as soon as you open the crate.

If the pup soils inside it sets a precedent. She will then reuse that spot again. Until she is toilet trained you must provide **constant supervision** to prevent this vicious cycle.

If she soils inside ignore her and clean the area with a non-ammonia based cleaning product like *Urine-off* so she doesn't use the same place again.

Punishment for toileting inside will associate toileting near you with trouble. She will avoid you and toilet training will be delayed.

Desexing

Desexing prevents conception and removes the sexual urge. We take out the ovaries and uterus in the female and the testes in males. Dogs and bitches are usually desexed at 6 months of age although some are done earlier.

Dogs do not lose their spirit or intelligence with desexing. As long as they don't become obese they remain as active as an entire animal.

The hormone testosterone takes about a month to decline after castration. Once it is out of the system desexed male dogs are less likely to wander and have no interest in bitches on heat. Because they don't escape or wander, they are less likely to get run over, get involved in fights or lift their legs on every post.

Sometimes a testis does not descend into the scrotum. Testes retained within the abdomen often develop tumours and should be removed while the dog is young.

Desexing, or speying, of females is least complicated when they are not on heat, pregnant or overweight. We recommend desexing at 6 months of age before they come on heat and while the uterus is still immature.

Bitches come on heat, or into season, about twice a year and stay on for 3 weeks each time. Desexed bitches do not come on heat and cannot conceive puppies.

Bitches on heat often surprise their owners with their dogged attempts to escape and find a mate. They must be confined in a cage or house impervious to determined males to prevent pregnancy.

Desexing is done under general anaesthesia. Dogs must be in good health and fasted for twelve hours prior to surgery. General anaesthesia carries only a very slight risk in young dogs and with modern anaesthetic agents. A vet examines all dogs on admission to hospital. Discuss any worries with the vet and let us know if your dog is not in peak health.

Speying prevents pyometron, a serious uterine disease of older dogs. Removal of the diseased uterus is the best treatment for pyometron but general anaesthesia for the surgery carries a greater risk in these very sick bitches.

Desexing before the first heat reduces the risk of breast (mammary gland) cancer. Having a litter of pups significantly increases a bitch's risk of breast cancer.

There is no scientific evidence that a litter improves a bitch's temperament.

HALL VET SURGERY

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Consultation hours:

8.30am-6pm Mon to Fri

8.30am-2.30pm Saturdays

By appointment only

www.hallvet.com.au

**We prefer to email reminders for checkups and vaccinations.
To help us save trees, time and postie's tyres, give your email address to our
receptionist next time you are in.**