



BerryHaven Veterinary Group

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TALKING ABOUT YOUR PETS

Issue #13

Hello from Mark



I have been very surprised and pleased with our recent Senior Programme successes. After 5 years of running the 6-monthly programme, our clients are much more aware of the many things that older pets (and people) suffer from, and much less hesitant to bring them along for their FREE 6 monthly Senior Health Check.

More often than not, I don't find anything wrong when examining their pets. But having been here for over 7 years now, some of those "youngsters" from way back then are starting to slow down (or is that up?).

It's a great opportunity to discuss things like dental health, arthritis medications, worrying lumps and bumps. If nothing else, they get a clean bill of health and a FREE nail clip with each visit.

In April and May, we found 4 cats and 2 dogs were in chronic renal failure (CRF) even though they looked normal and the regular urine and blood tests did not indicate a problem. This was due to a brand-new test called SDMA which detects early CRF before any other test does. More on this later on.

We also found 4 pets had urinary tract infections and 2 were suffering from liver disease.

On the home front, Lynda has finally finished her garden and watering system, and we thank everyone for their kind comments (and plant donations) as the garden took shape. She can't wait until the next school fete to get there early and snap up some more plants.

Halle, our border collie x kelpie rescue dog, takes Lynda on a walk 3-4 times every day. She loves meeting Cheryl's dog, Chateau, and Lindsay's 2 border collie pups, Baxter and Monty. Then it's on for all (plus the owners get a good workout trying to catch them when it's time to go home). [BHVG](#)

BHVG Comes to You FREE!

BHVG offers house calls at no extra charge, and a FREE pet transport & drop off service for food, merchandise and medications for patients residing in the 2535 postcode.

Call (02) 4448 5621



Worming Reminder

Is it time for your pet's 3 monthly intestinal wormer? Worming is very important as some products do not protect against all intestinal worms. Please check and see which medication your pet is on or ask us for advice on which product is best suited to you and your pet.



SDMA Test Detects "Hidden" Kidney Disease

This has to be one of the most exciting advances in veterinary medicine in recent years. SDMA is a brand-new blood test for the early detection of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) in both dogs and cats. Early detection and treatment of CKD can increase the life of a pet considerably.

Advantages of SDMA Testing Over Traditional Tests

- It is not affected by underweight thin bodies
- It detects CKD when only 30% of kidney function is lost (compared to 75% with traditional tests)
- It detects CKD before urine concentration starts to drop

• Age, sex, species and breed have minimal effect on SDMA levels

Did you know that over 30-40% of cats over 10 years old have CKD?

Did you know that some cats with CKD can still manage to produce a relatively strong urine i.e. it's not weak or diluted?

Did you also know that traditional kidney blood tests (urea and creatinine) can be normal in old thin pets giving rise to the false belief that their kidneys are ok when they actually are not?

Until now, vets checking for the presence of CKD have had to rely on a combination of these older style blood tests and

measuring the strength of a pet's urine. Many false "healthy" results occurred.

Unfortunately, these blood tests don't get elevated until approx. 75% of all kidney function is gone.

Special SDMA Deal as Part of the BHVG Senior Health Check Programme

When combined with our regular Senior Pet Blood and Urine Test package, the SDMA test is just an additional \$30.00 (normal stand-alone price \$70.00 - SAVE \$40.00).

Call BHVG on (02) 4448 5621 to book your senior pet in for its FREE Senior Pet Health Check. [BHVG](#)

Yesterday Today and Tomorrow Poisoning



Whereas fewer and fewer cases of snail bait and slug toxicity are seen due to better owner awareness of how and where chemicals are applied, more and more vets in the region are being presented with pets poisoned by a newish plant in the popularity stakes called 'Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow'.

This flowering shrub can cause very serious illness and death in pets, especially dogs who seem to be attracted to its taste. The symptoms of this plant can mimic anything from snail bait to strychnine poisoning.

The plant is known by its Latin name "Brunfelsia australis or Grandiflora" and grows as a shrub or small tree. The toxin, which cause seizures, is contained in all parts of the plant, but the leaves and flower heads appear particularly palatable and are often eaten in vast quantities.

Symptoms

In the initial stages, or with small amounts ingested, the dogs cough and gag,

drool copious amounts of saliva, may or may not have rolling of the eyeballs, and have a wide eyed spaced-out look with mild to moderate agitation and anxiety.

If enough toxin is ingested, severe life-threatening seizures similar to strychnine poisoning can occur, and the dog may be weak in the hindlegs or paralysed. The number of cases peak between May and September.

Similar toxicities

Cases can be mistaken for snail bait, toad fish poisoning or spider bites. Affected pet's owners need to check any garden the dog may have visited in the last few days for this plant, and assess how much of the plant has been ingested.

Prevention

The plant should be dug up immediately and put in the bin as we have had cases where the dog returned home to access the plant in the compost bin.

Treatment

Therapy is supportive with IV fluids, sedation with anticonvulsants, and in severe cases, stomach flushing and general anesthesia and enemas. Recovery can take days to weeks with no guarantee of success.

Hopefully with increased awareness amongst vets and pet owners, this type of poisoning can be diagnosed and treated appropriately and offending plants removed from a pet's environment. **BHVG**

Raw Chicken- the Myth!



I have been on a mission for 15 years trying to get pets off raw chicken.

One of my older clients cultured up the human chicken in a local Wollongong supermarket (as part of a PhD study), and showed me all the not so lovely bacteria growing on it e.g. E Coli, Salmonella, Campylobacter.

Up to this time, I along with most other vets, had been recommending raw chicken (carcasses, necks and wings) as a means of keeping small dogs and cats teeth healthy.

Since I started putting clients off feeding raw chicken, I have seen a huge reduction in the number of pets with severe gastroenteritis. Symptoms included...

- Watery diarrhea (sometimes with blood present)
- Vomiting
- Depression
- Dehydration

There are quite a few nasty bacteria in raw chicken- that's why everyone is so careful about handling and cooking it for themselves. I had 2 un-related clients in Dec 2016 get very sick for 3 days after both of their pets came down with gastroenteritis after eating raw chicken necks and wings.

Pets can develop colonies of these nasty bacteria in their intestines. They can easily spread to owners, especially children handling the pet and not taking the necessary hygiene precautions.

Campylobacter bacteria can cause paralysis in humans and there has been recent speculation in the Illawarra that this is also the case for dogs fed raw chicken.

I recommend avoiding raw chicken in any shape or form, whether or not it is for pet or human consumption.

No one eats raw chicken in a restaurant, but a medium - raw steak does not seem to cause any issues. So, go for beef or lamb bones when thinking about a raw diet for your pet. **BHVG**

Joke Corner



Q: Why did the cow cross the road?

A: To get to the udder side.

Q: What do you call a fish without an eye?

A: Fsh!

Q: What do you do if your dog chews a dictionary?

A: Take the words out of his mouth!

If your pet has any signs of dental disease or you are unsure, call us on

4448 5621

for a FREE dental check & FREE Nail Clip

But hurry as this is limited to the first 15 patients each month. That's right; it's FREE and gives you peace of mind knowing your pet's oral health is in great shape.

BHVG BerryHaven
Veterinary Group
**24 HOUR
Emergency Cover**

02 4448 5621

Want to Try Your Hand at Being a Vet?

Lift up your pet's gums, go on... don't be afraid. Have a really good look at those teeth and gums (provided your pet does not mind you doing so)

Is there a nasty smell present?

Are the gums inflamed along the teeth

margins (painful gingivitis).

Is there any tartar and/or loose teeth present

How would you grade your pet's teeth and gum health on a scale of 1 to 4 using this chart ?



Grade 1

- *Plaque and/or tartar on the rear teeth only*
- *No pockets*
- *Mild gum inflammation (gingivitis)*
- *No bone loss or destruction*



Grade 2

- *Plaque and/or tartar on most of the teeth*
- *Up to 25% loss of tooth attachment to the bone*
- *Gingivitis*



Grade 3

- *Plaque and/or tartar extend down into the gums*
- *25-50% loss of tooth attachment to the bone*
- *Extensive loss of bone*
- *Some gum recession and loose teeth*



Grade 4

- *Extensive tartar and calculus*
- *Severe inflammation*
- *Over 50% loss of tooth attachment to the bone*
- *Severe bone and gum loss*
- *Loose teeth*

How would you react if your own dentist said to you... "Hi Mark, you have grade one dental disease. Tell you what, give me a call when you get to grade two when those gums are really sore and the teeth are 25% looser in their sockets and I'll see what I can salvage" Luckily for me, I have a great dentist and there is no way he would allow that to happen to me. So, it's a yearly scale and polish for me despite regular flossing and twice daily brushing (I can't quite get my teeth going on those raw bones yet).

Before I started seeing my old school mate (Greg Broady from the class of '76

at Wollongong High School if you must know), I used to have sore gums just from mild gingivitis, and I hated drinking anything cool or eating hard foods. That's pretty tough when you really like ice cream.

Well, the same applies for pets, with even just grade one dental disease.

If your pet has any signs of dental disease or you are unsure, call us on 4448 5621 for a FREE dental check. That's right; it's FREE and gives you peace of mind knowing your pet's oral health is in great shape. [BHVG](#)

Bones? No Go?



Bones have some advantages, but also several disadvantages.

They are mainly given to pets to keep their gums and teeth clean and healthy. By themselves, they can be a complete meal, just like pets in the wild.

However, vets are often faced with pets who have damaged themselves when eating bones.

Constipation

Cooked bones are NOT suitable for pets. The stomach acids cannot dissolve them, and they come out of their bottom the same way they swallowed them.

We often have to deal with constipated pets on Monday or Tuesday after they have been fed the weekend BBQ chop bones or Sunday roast bone.

Occasionally, the bone fragments don't get as far as the rear end, and cause a blockage in the stomach or intestines. If severe, bone blockages can kill a pet.

Some cases require emergency surgery to open the bowel and remove the bones which is a very expensive exercise.

Fractured Teeth

We probably remove 2-3 fractured main upper molars in dogs every month. There is a trend amongst vets specialising in dentistry to avoid large "dinosaur" or "soup" bones.

Some dogs don't realise their own jaw strength and bite down so hard they fracture their main upper molars (carnassials). This can expose the root canal leaving a very sore tooth and potential for a large painful tooth abscess to form. These teeth have to be removed which unfortunately means the lower teeth now don't have a tooth to "match-up" with, and they are more prone to getting plaque and tartar build-up.

Choking

I have seen 3 smaller breed dogs die suddenly when trying to swallow a whole chicken neck/wing or a smaller piece of gristle/bone.



continued...



I have also seen some mighty big bone fragments get stuck in the oesophagus (the food tube between the mouth and stomach) in large dogs (see the x-ray above). They were sent to a specialist centre to have them removed at a cost of approx. \$4,500 each.

Be very careful when thinking about feeding bones to your pet. Consider the dog's size and the possibility of it breaking off a large section and swallowing it, only to have it get stuck in their throat or chest.

Food Poisoning from Raw Chicken

As mentioned earlier, this has been my mission in the last 15 years to stop pet owners feeding raw chicken to their pets.

What Bones are Best?

Well, this depends on the size of your dog and how intent it is on breaking the bone with its teeth. Some of the specialist vet dentists don't recommend bones at all!

Personally, I don't mind raw brisket bones for most dogs. They can be a bit fatty, so if a dog is prone to pancreatitis, they are off the menu.

To keep the teeth clean, use pigs ear, rawhide chews, dental sticks, Hills T/D or Vet Essentials dry foods and daily brushing.

Summary

- No raw chicken (necks, wings or other parts)
- No large bones
- No cooked bones
- No small bones which small dogs can choke on
- Brisket bones for dogs appear to be the safest
- For bad teeth and gums, ask one of our nurses for some professional advice.

BHVG

Contact BHVG

Berry

1/78 Albert Street
Berry NSW 2535
Ph: (02) 4464 3986
A/H Emergency: (02) 4448 5621

OPEN:

Monday-Friday: 8:30am - 1pm
2:00pm - 5:30pm
Housecalls: 1pm to 2pm
Saturday: 9:00am - 10:45am

Shoalhaven Heads

2/133 Shoalhaven Heads Rd
Shoalhaven Heads NSW 2535
Ph: (02) 4448 5621
A/H Emergency: (02) 4448 5621

OPEN:

Monday-Friday: 8:00am - 6:00pm
Saturday: 9:00am - 12:00am

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BHVG Pet Gallery

Each newsletter we feature our very photogenic customers. Is your pet here? Make sure you get a snap shot at your next visit!



Buddy



Dinnigan



Horace



Jinx



Louie



Ned



Shadow



Toast



Wally