

Animal Medical Services

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Alexandria, Kingsford and Brookvale South

Veterinary Hospitals

And Mobile Veterinary Services

AUGUST NEWSLETTER

In this newsletter we focus on how to let your pets age gracefully. It's hard to imagine that your little one is now a senior citizen but there are ways to making this transition more comfortable for them and giving them a better quality of life.

Dispelling the feline AIDS Myth

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) despite its similarity to the human form isn't contagious to humans or dogs. It is most commonly spread by deep bite wounds between cats.

Outside cats at risk can be tested quickly by your veterinarian in hospital. If positive then the focus will be on management of the disease.

To prevent further spread to other cats it is important to keep infected cats indoors. However casual contact at the food bowl and snuggling with the other cats is very unlikely to spread the disease.

Any other cats in the household should be tested and if negative then they can be vaccinated to protect them. Full protection requires three initial

injections two to four weeks apart and then a yearly booster. The same regime is recommended if your cat is outdoors and roaming. At risk cats should be tested before being vaccinated.



A cat max is a great solution to keeping an outdoor cat indoors.

Like human AIDS, the virus suppresses the immune system so regular cat flu vaccinations, worming, good dental hygiene and a good commercial diet would reduce the risk of serious secondary complications.

The average life expectancy is five years after diagnosis is made.

If normal cats are allowed outdoors it is recommended that they are desexed to prevent roaming and fighting over territories and safest to keep them indoors during the night. Please ask your Vet for more information.

Old Age Is Not a Disease

On top of regular health care like vaccinations and worming, our older animals need a bit of extra care as their bodies start to wear and tear. It often surprises people to find that their six year old cat or dog has already hit middle age.

Cat's Age	Equivalent Human Age
6 months	14 years
1 year	16 years
3 years	20 years
6 years	30 years
8 years	40 years
9 years	50 years
10 years	60 years
13 years	70 years
16 years	80 years
20 years	90 years

Cat to human age graph.

Dog Age	Age in human years				Weight in Kgs
	0-10 Kg	10-20 Kg	20-40 Kg	Over 40 Kg	
1	7	7	8	9	Puppy
2	13	14	16	18	
3	20	21	24	26	
4	26	27	31	34	Adult
5	36	38	40	42	
6	40	42	45	49	Senior
7	44	47	50	56	
8	48	51	55	64	
9	52	56	61	71	Geriatric
10	56	60	66	78	
11	60	65	72	86	
12	64	69	77	93	
13	68	74	82	101	
14	72	78	88		
15	76	83	93		
16	80	87	99		
17	84	92	104		
18	88	96			
19	92	101			
20	96				
21	100				

Dog to human age graph.

As animals age, it is important to have them vet checked twice every year. In a physical exam, a Vet can detect common ailments like arthritis and dental disease.

Sometimes the signs are subtle and may just start off as slowing down on walks or chewing on just one side. Some may start as small behavioural changes that should be mentioned to your Vet.



These diseases are common in older dogs and your Vet can advise you on things you can do to help alleviate their negative effects. "People often tell me that their dog is like a puppy again after some simple arthritic treatment and wish that they had started them earlier" says Dr Toni Nguyen at Alexandria Vets.

Kidney disease, diabetes and hyperthyroidism are common in older cats and signs to look out for are increased drinking and urinating, change in appetite, weight loss, poor coat condition and change in behaviour.

These conditions can be picked up on routine geriatric urine and blood testing. Any animal over eight years old should be tested. Detecting these problems early is important so treatment can be started and hence prolong the life of your pet or give them a better quality of life.

We have introduced a special package for dogs and cats which involves a general health check, blood and urine monitoring and blood pressure checks for cats over ten years and dog over eight years of age. Don't forget to ask

at reception or call us for further details.

Sad Farewells To Old Friends

This month has brought on sad tidings for some of my long term clients 'Dev' Lowe and 'Lucky' Gordon. They were much loved and will be sorely missed but their owners are grateful for the wonderful years they have had with them and that their passing was quick and painless.

It's always a hard decision about when it's time to have a beloved pet euthanased. What should be the primary focus is whether or not the animal has a good quality of life that is free from pain. If this is not possible then euthanasia may be the kinder option.

A large number of animals are euthanased due to behavioural issues and not medical ones. This can be due to barking, destructive or aggressive behaviour and poorly socialised animals.

It is important to have a Vet assess the animal initially and then provide further direction regarding behavioural training or medications. Euthanasia is always the last option in these cases but may be necessary if other people or animals are in danger.

A Vet may help assess an animal and its circumstances which will help guide the owner but ultimately it is the responsibility of the owner to make the final decision.

Euthanasia of animals involves a single injection placed through a catheter. The animal will fall asleep and then fall into a deeper plane of anaesthesia where the heart will stop. This takes a matter of 3-10 seconds.

The animal will experience no pain during this. Sometimes they may take a few deep breaths after death but this is a muscle reflex.

Some important things to think about:

- Bringing the animal into the clinic vs. having a Vet come to your house.
- Making an appointment during a quiet time of the day.
- Being very clear at the time of booking that you need the animal euthanased.
- Staying with the animal during euthanasia or not.
- Afterwards, to take them home with you, have a common burial or a private cremation.



Cremation urns and boxes for people who want to keep their animals with them.

- It may help to bring someone along to help with the grieving process.

Most owners will know when it's time and careful planning with your Vet will ensure that the process is done in the most humane way possible.

Who doesn't love animals? Some people love them so much they dedicate their lives to helping them like our staff at Animal Medical Services.

Not only that but we also love helping other people get into the field as well. Nurse and Vet students are able to organise work experience through their course co-ordinator at any of our three clinics.

This often involves helping take care of our boarding and hospital patients and getting a 'backstage' view of how a clinic is run. This involves observing surgeries, medical procedures and helping clients.

Entry into the veterinary science course at Sydney University not only requires a high ATAR score but also takes note of any industrial experience the student has as evidence of commitment.

Entry into the certificate IV vet nursing requires a certificate II in Animal Studies at TAFE which can take one to three years. This course is very competitive and those who already have worked in the industry have an advantage when applications are being selected.

As all of us have found, this industry is certainly demanding emotionally and physically but it is highly rewarding and most find that they wouldn't work in any other field.

Foremost it requires someone who has compassion and empathy for animals and people, confidence, good communication skills and who doesn't mind getting their hands dirty!

We ♥ Animals



Amelie is finishing her 5th year of work experience, she's come so far.

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