

133 Marsh Street  
Armidale NSW 2350

P: (02) 6772 1686

F: (02) 6772 1644

E: info@northhillvet.com

W: www.northhillvet.com.au

## OUR VETS

### Dr Sarah Butler

BVSc (Sydney)

### Dr Craig Bailey

BVSc (Brisbane)

### Dr Fiona Le Surf

BVSc (Murdoch)

### Dr Hannah McRae

BVSc (Sydney)

## OUR SUPPORT STAFF

### Receptionist

Lisa

### Accounts and Nursing

Jess, Lucy, Zoe & Eddie

Are all eager to help you with your appointments, food supplies, flea treatment plans, worming regimes and any other questions you may have about the care and welfare of your pet.

## CLINIC HOURS

The clinic can be contacted between 8.30am and 5.30pm weekdays, and between 9.00am and 11.00am on Saturdays.

Consultations are made by ringing for an appointment time.

## AFTER HOURS SERVICE

We offer a 24 hour emergency service now sharing with Creeklands Vet clinic, 7 days a week.

You will need to ring the emergency mobile number 0407 510 309, or our clinic number 6772 1686, and you will be directed to the vet on duty.

We do ask that you save this service for emergencies – one time it could be your animal in need.

# YOUR VET



**FREE!!**  
TAKE ME HOME

**AUTUMN 2018**

## Why cats don't need milk

In many illustrated children's books, cats are often seen contently lapping milk from a saucer. From these story books, it is easy to believe that milk is a staple of any cat's diet. Contrary to common belief however, cats don't need milk, nor should they be given it. In fact, most cats are lactose intolerant.

Of course, all kittens need milk to thrive, but the milk that comes from its mother is full of key enzymes that break down the sugars and lactose within it. Cow's milk and many other varieties of milk do not feature these enzymes.

Once a kitten stops drinking its mother's milk, its levels of lactase can disappear, meaning the stomach may no longer be able to handle lactose. It's beneficial to feed your kitten solid, veterinary-recommended cat food, rather than another form of milk.

### What happens if I give my cat cow's milk?

Milk is not toxic to cats, but it may cause extreme discomfort, cramps, diarrhoea, and gas – symptoms most cat owners want to avoid. Not all cats are lactose intolerant as not all kittens lose their lactase. But, even if

your cat does not experience discomfort as a result of drinking milk, it may not be a good idea to include it in its diet. Although they may be happy to consume it, milk might upset the caloric balance and contribute to obesity.

### Is there any milk my cat can drink?

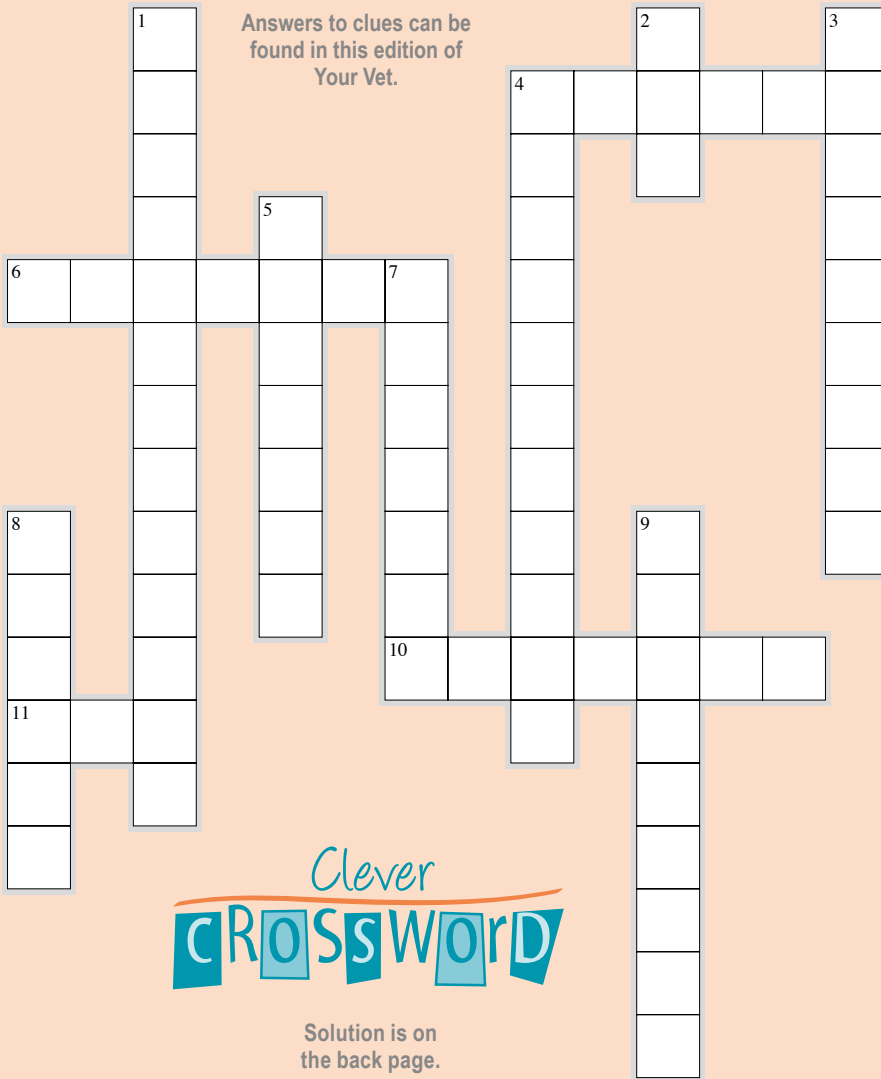
There is a type of milk cats can drink. Pet milk is safe for your furry friend and is available for you to purchase. This milk has no lactose, and many brands feature additional nutrients for the health and wellbeing of your cat.

Some cat owners like the idea of giving milk as a treat for their cat as it appears to be something they enjoy, however it is important to note that well-fed adult cats do not need any form of milk. There are many other ways to treat your cat and it's a good idea to choose treats that are

veterinary-approved, or alternatively opt for kibble or even a fun toy.

Everyone wants the best for their feline friend, and while treats are perfectly acceptable to give in moderation, they should be an occasional delicacy and only a minimal part of your cat's diet.





### Across

4. Pet parasites pose a threat to dogs, cats and \_\_\_\_\_. (6)
6. Most cats are \_\_\_\_\_ intolerant. (7)
10. A kennel must be big enough for your dog to \_\_\_\_\_ in. (5,2)
11. Almost every \_\_\_\_ in five houses in Australia owns a dog. (3)

### Down

1. The third most popular breed of dog in Australia in 2017. (6,7)
2. What type of animal were feeding puzzles initially designed for? (3)
3. Something you can line a kennel with to keep it warm. (9)
4. A type of disease that a vet looks for during an oral examination. (11)
5. A feeding puzzle can reduce levels of this in pets. (7)
7. The milk that comes from a kitten's mother is full of these to breakdown sugars and lactose. (7)
8. Daily tooth brushing of your pet can help control this. (6)
9. A common sign of dental problems. (3,6)

## Dental care is not just important for you

Most people have a very strict oral health routine that is carried out daily. You might brush your teeth, floss, use mouthwash and see your dentist on a regular basis. But did you know that dental care is equally just as important for your pets as it is for you?

It's all too easy to think your animals don't suffer from tooth pain, infections or general dental hygiene problems, but they do. They just can't express pain and discomfort in the same way you or I can. To pick up any problems before they occur, or to treat any problems that arise, the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) encourages and wholly recommends regular oral health assessments for your pets.

During an assessment, a trained and qualified vet will use general anaesthesia to check your pet's mouth thoroughly. While oral exams are completely routine, anaesthesia is required so that your pet's experience is as pain-free and stress-free as possible. During the exam, your vet is looking for signs of broken teeth and roots, periodontal disease, cysts, tumours, defects, and general signs of inflammation and discomfort.

Regular exams are also particularly crucial for older dogs, as teeth begin to wear with age.

All pets can suffer from dental problems and as your pet can't tell you that their mouth is sore, it's helpful to always be on the lookout for signs of discomfort, even if their oral exam is not due.

Some common signs of possible dental problems include:

- Bad breath
- Broken or loose teeth
- Discoloured teeth and excess tartar
- Abnormal drooling, or chewing
- Dropping food from the mouth
- Reduced appetite or refusal to eat
- Bleeding and swelling around the mouth

According to the AVA, four out of five dogs and cats over the age of three years have some sort of dental disease which may go unnoticed by their owners. Annual dental health checks can identify existing problems which have gone unnoticed and also help ensure bacteria and poisons from dental infections do not spread to the heart, liver and kidneys through the blood stream.

So, if you haven't scheduled your pet in for an oral health check, there's no time like the present to make an appointment to see your vet. Your pet's dental care is just as important as yours.



## Keep your pet in tip top shape



Many pet owners do not consider avoidable risks and hazards to their pets ahead of time. Prevention is less traumatic and less costly than treatment. Here are a few basic steps that you as a pet owner, can take to keep your pets healthy and reduce the need for interventional treatment.

### 1. See your veterinarian

The first step is to make use of your veterinarian as a source for early detection and information. Your pet should be thoroughly examined by your veterinarian at least yearly. Regular physical examinations often allow your veterinarian to detect problems before they become critical.

### 2. Observation

Always be aware of what is going on with your pets. Are they active and playful? Is their weight and body condition good? Do

they smell clean? Changes in appetite, toilet habits and water intake can be an indication of a problem. Carefully observe your pets when they're healthy. After all, if you don't know what is normal, how can you recognise a change?

### 3. Avoid common threats

Keep your dog in a fenced, enclosed yard and ensure your dog stays on a leash when walking. These precautions can reduce the risk of fighting, eating toxic substances, automobile accidents and encountering other animals that may be sick.

### 4. Vaccinate

Preventing infectious diseases involves a combination of avoidance and immunisation. Vaccination recommendations have changed a great deal in recent years and

it is important that you discuss preventive vaccination options with your veterinarian.

### 5. Stay on top of parasites

Most pet parasites are also preventable by using year-round controls and preventives. These parasites pose a threat to dogs, cats and people (especially children). While some parasitic diseases are incurable they are often avoidable.

### 6. Reduce the risk of dental disease

Daily brushing will not necessarily prevent the need for veterinary dental care, but will do much to control tartar, calculus and gum disease. Ask your veterinarian to teach you how to brush your pet's teeth.

### 7. Practice regular hygiene

Diseases of the ears and skin cause discomfort to your pet and can lead to chronic problems. Make sure your pet is well groomed and clean. Evaluate their ears for discharge and odour and ask your veterinarian how best to keep them clean.

### 8. Prevent pet obesity

Obesity puts dogs and cats at risk of avoidable health problems. As we are responsible for feeding our pets, we are also responsible for their diet and weight management. Although many pet owners will admit their pet is overweight, they do not consider it to be a health problem and are not aware of the many issues and conditions that can arise as a result.

None of these steps are difficult, nor are they particularly costly, but they are significant to the health and quality of life of your pet.

If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian - they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.

## Australia's most popular dog breeds

In 2016 there was an estimated dog population of 4.8 million in Australia. That's 20 dogs for every 100 people.

For the past five years the Labrador Retriever has taken top spot as Australia's most popular dog breed. This is consistent around the world as the breed is well recognised for its outgoing personality, friendliness to both humans and other dogs along with confidence, adaptability, intelligence and they can be easily trained.

There is a clear trend however, that a few smaller breeds are becoming more and more popular.

Here were the most popular dog breeds across Australia in 2017.

1. **Labrador Retriever**
2. **Staffordshire Bull Terrier**
3. **French Bulldog**
4. **German Shepherd**
5. **Border Collie**
6. **Golden Retriever**
7. **Cavalier King Charles Spaniel**
8. **American Staffordshire Bull Terrier**
9. **Schnauzer (Miniature)**
10. **Rottweiler**

Dogs are by far the most popular type of pet, with almost two in five Australian households owning a dog. They're not called "man's best friend" for nothing!



## PRACTICE UPDATE

### A BRIGHT FUTURE

Sarah (Butler) is very excited to announce a new partnership at North Hill Vets. Fiona Le Surf, one of our senior vets, who has been working in the clinic for the last year recently made the commitment to buy into the practice. Fiona really enjoys the clients, the animals and the staff ethos of North Hill Vet Clinic, and is looking forward to continuing the high level of animal care that is presently a trademark of our clinic. Sarah and the team welcome her aboard, and know it will be a beneficial partnership to all.

### NEW STAFF

Eddie Balta recently moved from Sydney with his Armidalian wife, Michelle, and their furry family. He joined our team in September.

Eddie is a qualified Vet Nurse, graduating in 2014, and for the past 4 years he had been working at the Small Animal Specialist Hospital and Emergency Services (SASH) in Sydney. Vet Nursing is Eddie's life passion. He builds a very good rapport with the patients, and being part of their care and recovery gives him a real sense of fulfilment and purpose.

In his spare time you may find him in one of the towns' coffee shops with his Chihuahua Toby or riding his beloved motorbike (even in subzero temperatures!) as they are inseparable!

### NEW TOY

We have recently purchased a mobile ultrasound machine that gives excellent depth and detail, as well as Doppler. We are now able to offer pregnancy scans, chest and abdominal assessment, as well as external lump imagery to help with diagnosis and treatment of your animal.

### STAYING HYDRATED

It's important to ensure your pets have access to fresh drinking water at all times, but during the summer months you should check the water level twice a day and refill when needed.

## Sleeping outside

Some dogs spend part or all their time outdoors, and when it's cold they need somewhere warm to sleep.

Whether your dog sleeps next to the back door or in a kennel, the area you select should have a sturdy roof to protect them from rain. A covered back patio or deck is fine, but make sure there is also protection from the wind.

If you're shopping for a kennel, make sure to carefully choose the right size. Your dog must be able to stand up, lie down and turn around in their kennel, but don't be tempted to buy a larger kennel than necessary. A smaller sleeping space will keep them cosier than a spacious kennel because it's easier for their body heat to warm the area inside.

Ideally, the kennel should have short legs to keep the bottom off the ground. Many

kennels are made of timber, but a sturdy plastic or metal one may be easier to clean and disinfect. Remember that position is important, and your pooch will appreciate being close to your home and family rather than isolated in a far corner of the back yard.

Your dog will also appreciate something soft and warm to sleep on. This could be a padded bed or cushion, on the patio or in the kennel. A thick pile of newspaper in the kennel will insulate against the cold and can be easily replaced when it gets dirty. Some dogs enjoy burrowing in a blanket to stay warm, but be sure to check the blanket regularly to make sure it hasn't become wet and uncomfortable.

When you choose a snoozing spot for your four-legged family member, make sure it meets these requirements, so your pet can spend their nights being cosy, warm and comfortable.

## Feeding puzzles for your pets

Both cats and dogs require mental stimulation and exercise, but it's not something every pet owner knows how to provide.

A cat's natural inclination is to work for its food, while dogs benefit from increased activity. A responsible pet owner will cater to those needs, and a feeding puzzle may be an ideal place to start.

Feeding puzzles, while initially designed to deliver enrichment for zoo and laboratory animals, consist of anything that can hold wet or dry pet food. The aim is for your pet to work to retrieve the treats from the object, by forcing them through the available holes. Using feeding puzzles, according to a study in the Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery, may stimulate your pet, reduce its levels of boredom, and may even account for fewer behavioural problems in dogs. In cats, the puzzles may help with weight loss and reduce signs of stress.

Feeding puzzles can be homemade – such as a paper towel roll with cut out holes, or

can be purchased. Feeding puzzles come in many varieties: some are stationary, requiring your pet to move around them, while others are mobile and can be moved and rolled around by your pet.

If you've considered using a feeding puzzle, or you currently do so, it may be a good idea to keep an eye on the level of challenge. If your cat or dog is completing the task with relative ease, you may find they will begin to show signs of boredom. To prevent this, the Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery recommends adjusting the difficulty level. Try a new type of food puzzle, add obstacles to make it more difficult to remove treats, remove holes or make holes smaller, and offer fewer visual cues.

Problem-solving feeding puzzles may frustrate some animals initially, but by matching the level of challenge to their skill level, you may notice physical, behavioural and cognitive benefits in your beloved pet.