

OUR VETS

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OUR SUPPORT STAFF

Reception

Lisa and Jess.

Nursing

Jess, Lucy, Zoe, Eddie & Cath

All qualified and experienced to advise you on flea treatment plans, worming regimes, food supplies as well as any other questions you may have about the care and welfare of your pet.

CLINIC HOURS

Opening hours are 8.00am to 5.30pm weekdays, and 9am to 11am on Saturdays.

Consultations are by appointment, so please call the clinic to book in.

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



Meet and greet the right way

Annually, more than 100,000 Australians are victims of dog attacks or harassment. Could not knowing how to approach a dog be a contributing factor?

When you find yourself face to face with a cute dog, it can often be hard to resist running up to them and enveloping them in a hug. While you may do this with your dog at home – a dog who knows you, it's not safe nor appropriate to do this to dogs you don't know, or who don't know you.

Dogs can be wary of strangers, especially those who encroach on their personal space. Therefore, if you rush into the meet and greet session expecting them to adore the attention immediately, you may find yourself in a dangerous situation. The best way to approach a dog is in the same way you would approach a strange human – without getting into their space, touching them, or showing too much affection.

Don't rush

Many children and even adults don't realise that it can be terrifying for a dog when someone rushes up to them. The dog may get a fright, find themselves in an uncomfortable situation, and react as a result. To give the dog the best chance of meeting you safely, approach them at a slow pace. Let them see you and know you're not a risk to them or their space.

Ask first

If you're out in public and see someone with a dog, don't assume the dog is stranger-friendly. If you want to pat it, ask the owner if it's okay. Not every dog is comfortable with a lot of attention.

Personal space

Just as you wouldn't like a stranger getting close to you on your first interaction, avoid doing the same with a strange dog. What's more, rather than approach them with your hand out, let them come to you. Walk up slowly, crouch down, then wait.

Pat properly

Children and even some adults like to rough and tumble with their dogs at home – giving them cuddles and pats. While a strange dog might like this attention from their owner, they may not appreciate it from a stranger – at least not right away. Rather than run up to hug a dog, pat them nicely and only when permitted to do so.

Know the signs

Not everyone is familiar with the signs dogs show to let them know they're not comfortable. However, they can be crucial.

- Avoiding eye contact, licking their lips, frequent yawning – the dog may be anxious or unsettled.
- Teeth baring, growling, snapping – the dog may be ready to bite.
- Rigid body, unwilling to move, frozen in place – uneasy, uncertain.
- Raised fur – uncomfortable or unsure with something happening around them.

Thirty-eight percent of Australian households have a dog, which may contribute to the complacency of how some people act around strange dogs. If you do wish to approach an unfamiliar dog, do so with caution and the knowledge that this new situation may not be a comfortable one right away.

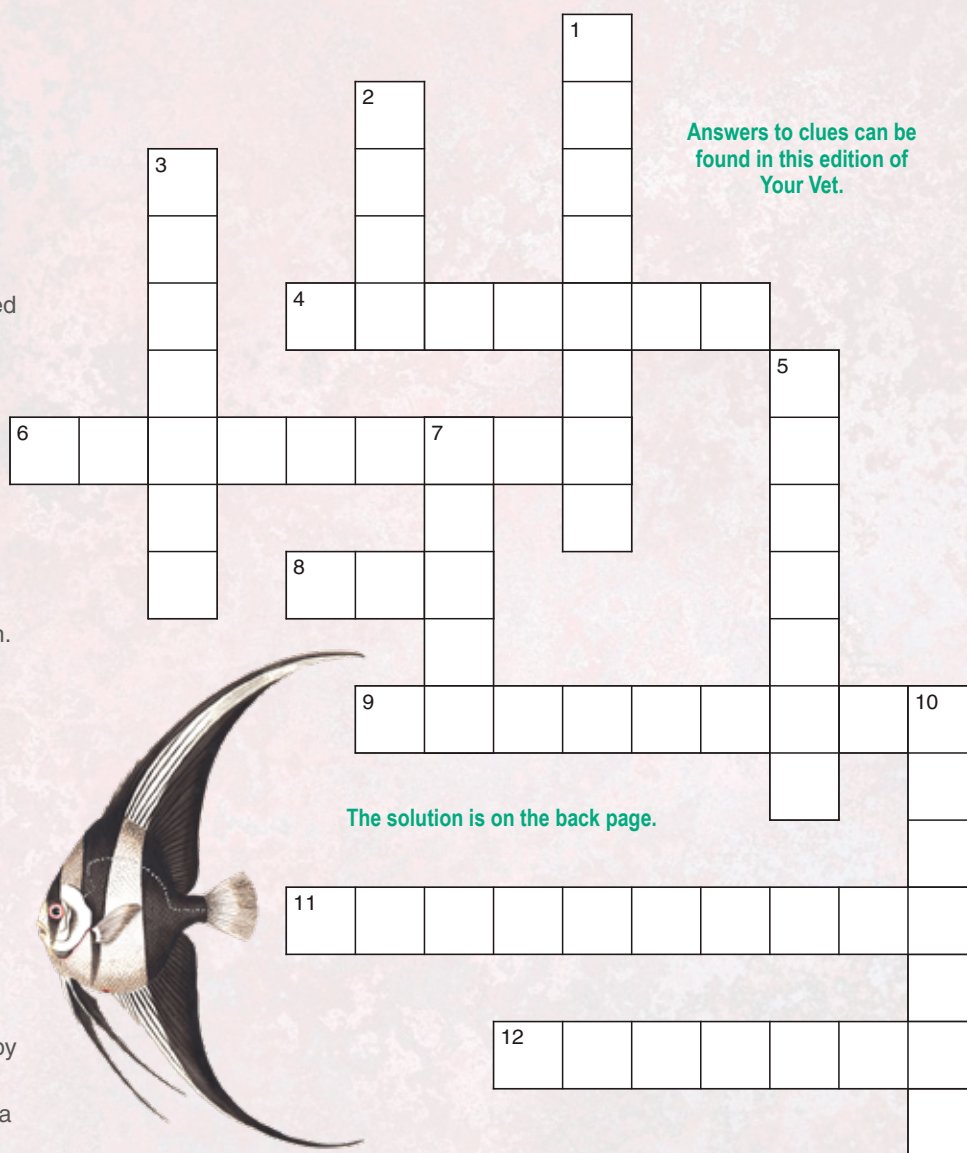
Clever Crossword

ACROSS

4. A sagging _____ can be a sign that your dog is overweight. (7)
6. Type of medication a cat may need monthly. (9)
8. Raised ____ : a sign that a dog is not comfortable. (3)
9. Animal at the beach that can be potentially fatal to your dog. (9)
11. Overweight dogs may have trouble with body temperature _____. (10)
12. Some fish breeds swim in these and don't feel secure on their own. (7)

DOWN

1. What you should do before choosing a fish. (8)
2. When meeting a new dog, you should walk up slowly to them, crouch down and what? (4)
3. Fleas can survive for a _____ days or longer without a host. (7)
5. Severe infestations of fleas can cause this in your pet. (7)
7. Number of vaccinations required by a kitten from six weeks of age. (5)
10. Something a dog should wear on a boat - for safety. (7)



Is it time for a diet?

If your pampered pooch is beginning to look a little podgy after one too many treats, it might be time for a diet.

While helping your overweight dog to lose weight at any time of the year is essential, it's even more so in summer. An overweight dog has an additional layer of

insulation which can be troublesome for body temperature regulation. This, coupled with health problems such as bone and ligament damage, heart issues, and decreased quality of life, makes putting your dog on a diet all the more critical.

How do I know my dog is overweight?

Overlooking your dog's growing stomach can be easy. After all, every dog breed differs in size. However, there are ways to ascertain whether your dog is carrying a little extra than they should be.

Run your hands over their ribs and backbone. If you can't feel their bones easily, it may be a sign that your dog is overweight. A sagging stomach can also be a tell-tale sign, as is the lack of curves between their hips and rib cage. If you're not sure what the ideal weight is for your dog, book in for a check-up with your vet.

How can I help my dog to lose weight?

There are several ways you can help your dog to shed a few kilos and

get their summer bod. Firstly, always remember to include regular exercise in their routine. Just like in humans, exercise burns calories. If you already take them for walks, try to extend the length, or include fun activities at home such as fetch.

Alongside exercise, be aware of food intake. If your furry friend indulges in table scraps regularly, it might be time to stop. Instead, try vet-approved dog food. Treats should also only be an "occasional" food, rather than a regular part of their mealtime. If your pampered pooch still likes a tidbit every now and again, consider natural alternatives such as frozen sardines or sweet potato.

Some people may also find it beneficial to consult their vet about how much they need to feed their dog. If you're feeding them kibble, pay attention to the recommended portion size and use a measuring cup as opposed to guesswork.

Putting your pet on a diet can be hard work, but it's worth it for a happy and healthy dog. Consult your vet if you require help or advice.



Safe summer fun

When the summer holidays finally arrive, families and their dogs love nothing more than heading out to the beaches and lakes for fun in the sun. However, are you aware of the dangers and potential risks in these areas – not only for you but also for your beloved family pet?

There's no denying that you and your loved ones – furry friends included – will have the time of your lives at beaches, lakes, rivers, and even local swimming pools. After all, summer has arrived, the kids eagerly await Santa, and everyone is in the festive spirit. While your dog will be equally as excited to be outdoors and enjoying time with you, it's also all too easy to let them wander off, or not provide them with the essentials such as shelter and water.

While the aim is to do as little as possible, relax, and enjoy the company of your friends and family, you still need to make sure you prepare your dog for any new experiences they may face, take care of their daily needs, and minimise risks – especially in public areas.

When you go to the beach with your dog, there are several things that may not be hazardous to you, but can be potentially fatal for your dog. For example, jellyfish, snakes, and stingers are all prevalent in Australia and are something that can pique the curiosity of your pooch with disastrous results.

What's more, stagnant pools of water can pose a severe health risk to your dog, as can any chemically-treated water or items that wash up on the beach. When you plan on spending the day at the beach, make sure you can see what your dog is doing at all times and ensure they have clean, fresh drinking water.

If you've decided to make the most of the warmer weather and head out boating, choosing to take your dog along should be a decision you don't make lightly. Dogs who aren't familiar with watercraft, or who have nervous temperaments, may not enjoy the experience. Therefore, before you begin planning your boat journey, think about how your dog will cope. Would it be safer for them to spend a day at a dog daycare facility instead?

If you are sure that your dog will be more than confident with boats, be sure to think about their health and safety for the duration of the trip. Harness them into the boat to ensure they don't jump or fall off and provide plenty of shade and fresh water as well. You may even find it helpful to invest in dog sunscreen to protect their noses and sensitive skin.

The summer holidays can be a fun time for all, but if you plan on including your dog in on your festivities, make sure you cater to their daily requirements and supervise them adequately. Consult your vet for help and advice on how best to prepare your dog for the warmer months and outdoor activities.



Free kittens? Not quite

When you see a kitten being advertised as "free" either online or in your local newspaper, it's important to understand that free doesn't actually mean free.

While you may pay nothing to receive your new adorable little kitten, you may need to spend hundreds of dollars in the first days and weeks, and thousands over their lifetime. So, before you go and answer that ad for a 'free' furry companion, ask yourself if you can really afford the commitment.

In their first weeks of life, kittens require three vaccinations from six weeks of age, and there are also desexing costs to consider. Microchipping, which is a legal requirement in some states, can cost approximately \$50 as well.

Ongoing costs, while more affordable and easier to spread out, can still be something worth considering. Parasitic medication is a monthly to three-monthly cost, while

annual vaccinations and boosters can be around \$70 per year as well.

Food, toys, and bedding are equally as necessary for your furry friend too. Toys can help to keep them active and entertained, while quality food is crucial for maintaining their health. For nervous cats, having their own bed may be an investment you make early on.

A 'free' kitten can also end up costing more than one you can purchase from a shelter, which has already had a health check, vaccinations, flea and worming treatment, and desexing. Adoption gives these kittens a second chance, so check in with the RSPCA or a similar local establishment.



Most importantly, make sure you are ready for the responsibility and commitment of owning a cat. They don't stay cute and cuddly kittens for long, and while they can be your best friend for life, they also rely on you to make the right decisions for their health and day-to-day needs for many years to come.

Bringing your fish out of its shell

Fish ownership, while declining in Australia, can be rewarding, but it can also be frustrating. A common problem is shy fish, but you may not know what to do about it. Find out below some hints for bringing your fish out of its shell.

Sometimes, there is more to the perfect aquarium setup than just making sure the pH levels are correct, the water temperature is just so, and the filtration system is working how it should. Sometimes, your décor and choice of species are why you have a shy fish on your hands.

Before you bring your fish home from the pet shop, it's always a good idea to do a little research on the breed and its preferences. Some fish swim in schools, so when separated and kept on their own, they don't feel safe in their surroundings. If you realised too late that you don't have a large enough school or one at all, then you may need to head back to the shop for more fish.

If you're tired of your fish hiding in every nook and cranny, then you can combat the problem with more hiding spaces. It might seem like it's adding fuel to the fire, but the more safe places you can provide your fish, the more likely they are to venture out and swim around for your viewing pleasure.

If you love decorating, then flexing your creative muscles can benefit your shy scaly friend. If you put them into a big tank with minimal coverage, they will feel entirely exposed – just like if you don't put blinds on your windows in a busy neighbourhood. Fish feel vulnerable, and it can end up compromising their immune system.

Shy fish are unhappy fish, but it can often be an easy fix. Decorate your tank and notice the difference to their wellbeing.



Fleeing the fleas

Fleas tend to enter your home in the warmer months courtesy of your dogs and cats. If you're tired of battling endless flea infestations in summer, it's time to act now.

Spending what should generally be a luxurious summer holiday trying to rid your home of fleas can be a nightmare. If your pet has brought them inside, there is no quick-fix solution.

These tiny pests can survive without a host for 100 days or longer, and they infest your carpet, bedding, rugs, and even your furniture.

As a result, both your furry friends and your family can fall victim to endless itching and scratching courtesy of hungry flea visitors. If you want a comfortable and relaxing summer without fleas interrupting it, there's no time like the present to begin your flea removal process.

Firstly, if you find that your dog or cat is suffering from fleas as much as your home is, seeing a vet is crucial. Long-term or severe infestations can cause anaemia, tapeworm, and other problems for your pet, and setting up a treatment plan can benefit both your pet and your home.

However, once you've had a vet administer flea treatment and you're continuing regular treatment at home, that's not the end of your battle. Because fleas can lie dormant for such a long time, any slight noise or vibration can wake them from their slumber to begin reproduction once more. So, while your flea treatment is working wonders for your pet's health, it's not helping to remove any fleas that may now be in your carpet, bedding, or any other part of your home.

You can remove up to 80 percent of flea eggs through vacuuming, as well as up to 95 percent of mature fleas. However, remember to remove the bags from the house after each clean. What's more, steam cleaning your home can be an effective method of removal, as well as cleaning bedding, skirting boards, and washing your pet's bedding in warm or hot water. It may also be helpful to block your dog's access to long grass and "hidey holes" such as under your house or deck.

Over time, and by making sure you regularly treat your pets, you will be able to get rid of your flea problem and begin your summer months on the right foot.



ACROSS: 4. STOMACH 6. PARASITIC 8. FUR 9. JELLYFISH
11. REGULATION 12. SCHOOLS
DOWN: 1. RESEARCH 2. WAIT 3. HUNDRED 5. ANAEMIA 7. THREE
10. HARNESS

CROSSWORD SOLUTION



PRACTICE UPDATE

SO, WHAT DOES THE NORTH HILL VET TEAM DO WHEN THEY'RE NOT VETTING?

We'd like to share a little bit about ourselves after we've taken our work scrubs off, and need to recharge our batteries.

Dr Fiona most enjoys getting out into the bush, preferably on an orienteering course, or exercising the dogs. Time alone in nature, or with a good book is essential, and a game of hockey for the Servies in winter is also a great stress relief.

Dr Sarah is loving having a bit more free time, and thoroughly enjoys escaping in a caravan, with husband Michael, to national parks / the great outback and heading north to visit children (all now living in QLD). Being at home in the garden (there's a lot to be tamed), listening to good music, and catching up with friends are also high on the list of fun things to do.

Dr Craig and his wife have taken on a small farm at Kelly's Plains and are enjoying the labour of love to transform it back to its former glory. Sporting fun is varied and involves a Squash Comp at Uralla all year round, weekend Park Runs in summer and refereeing the New England and Central North rugby union comp in winter. With two children also involved in sport, there is always a lot of driving both for Sophie's tennis and Charlie's swimming.

Dr Hannah never has enough hours in the day. If there is any spare time she is mostly running to train for trail races. Home cooking and eating with friends is a good way to relax, and she also plays touch football in summer.

Watch out in the next newsletter for the Nurses – what makes them tick outside of work ...!

INTRODUCTION TO A NEW TEAM MEMBER

Cath Shayler joined our practice earlier this year and has settled in well. She was originally a Sydney girl, and has worked in many places and jobs over the years until her passion for animals changed her direction. Cath started her Veterinary Nursing in 2007, in Coffs Harbour and worked in several varied practices until joining us. She enjoys all aspects of surgery as well as a special interest in rehabilitation. Cath also breeds, trains and shows German Shepherds and is involved in dogs sports. We welcome her to the team.

To contact your vet, keep me in a handy place at home.