

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 Fiona Le Surf

BSc, BVMS, MVS (Murdoch)

Dr Craig Bailey

BVSc (Brisbane)

Dr Hannah McRae

BVSc (Sydney)

OUR SUPPORT STAFF

Reception

Jess

Nursing

Jess, 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
AUTUMN 2020

FREE!!
TAKE ME HOME

Thunder phobia

Large numbers of thunderstorms occur across Australia all year-round and can be terrifying for our dogs. Heavy rain, thunder, wind and lightning can leave them salivating, panting, hiding and trembling with fear.

If your canine family member starts to shake as soon as the skies darken, here are some things you can do to help them.

SECURITY

Your dog will feel more secure if they have a place they can settle in when they're frightened. For some dogs this may be a crate; for others it may be the corner of the room with their favourite blanket. Spray the area with a dog appeasing pheromone, as this can also reduce their anxiety.

DE-SENSITISATION

This involves playing a recording of a thunderstorm, initially at a very low volume while giving your dog treats and affection for staying calm. As they get used to the noise, you can increase the volume so when a real storm occurs, they are less stressed by the sounds. This can work with some dogs but it seems that it's not just noise that frightens dogs; they can become distressed by the flashes of light and the changes in air pressure. You can't expose your dogs to these during training, so de-sensitisation alone may not make a big difference to their storm phobia.

DISTRACTION

Some dogs will enjoy a favourite game when a storm is approaching and be less stressed by the weather. If you're going to try this,

start the game well before the storm arrives because dogs that are panicking are less likely to be distracted. You may want to save their favourite toy just for scary weather; this will teach your dog that storms also bring good times.

WRAP THEM UP

Many people claim that putting a 'thundershirt' – a snug fitting coat that targets various pressure points – on their dog helps with storm-phobia. It's a technique that is worth a try because there are no side effects and it may just make a difference. It is thought that wrapping a dog makes them feel secure, similar to the effect of swaddling newborn babies.

MEDICATION

Anti-anxiety drugs can have a positive effect on the wellbeing of dogs during thunderstorms. Some medications can help with generalised anxiety and are given on an ongoing basis. Others have a very short duration of action and used on an as-needed basis as a storm approaches. They are safe to use and have few, if any side effects. Some dogs will have what is known as a paradoxical reaction to these medications, which means they respond in the opposite way to what's expected – they become more excited than less anxious. That's why it's important to use a drug for the first time when there is no storm just to make sure it has the desired effect.

If your dog suffers from storm anxiety, please talk to us and together we can work out a plan to minimise their distress.

Home alone: dog edition

Have you introduced a new puppy into the family? Is your dog suffering from separation anxiety?

Don't let a social outing become a stressful situation. Here's how to make your dog comfortable in your absence.

It doesn't matter whether you have a puppy, an older dog, or a rescue dog from a pound, you may find that separation anxiety can rear its ugly head at any time. Fortunately, you can begin training immediately, helping them to be less anxious when you leave the house.

STEP 1: LEAVE THE ROOM

Make sure your dog has everything they need to be comfortable. Include a crate or bed, a safe toy, and water. Leave the room while they are distracted with their toy, staying away for at least a few minutes and

increasing it over time. Return only when there is no crying or whining, offering praise before leaving again.

STEP 2: KEEP A ROUTINE

If you routinely leave the house at a particular time, then make sure everything else in your dog's life is also to a schedule. Feed them at the same time, and include walks and fun around the same time as well. Your dog may feel more secure when they know what usually happens in their day.

STEP 3: ACT NORMAL

Your dog will most likely know you're about to leave, but don't make it a big deal. Don't give them huge amounts of attention or create too much chaos in your haste to go. Instead, make it seem like any other time you are at home.

STEP 4: USE TREATS

When you are leaving home, you may find that giving them a treat can have them looking forward to the time you go while distracting them momentarily as well.

STEP 5: EXERCISE

If you want your home to be as you left it upon returning, then exercise and play with your dog to tire them out before you leave them on their own. Because they will have used up a lot of energy, they may be more likely to rest, as opposed to getting into mischief!

While it's crucial not to leave your dog home alone for too long, you may like to consider training them to be okay without you by their side at every waking moment. Consult your local vet if you have any questions or concerns regarding separation anxiety in dogs.

Fanciful feline fables – are they true?

For as long as cats have existed, some mistruths have lived alongside them. From having nine lives to being fiercely independent, the human race might have the ordinary household cat all wrong...

The most common myth is that cats have nine lives. This theory has been around for so long that the saying is commonly applied to people. Saying someone has nine lives means that they keep managing to get out of difficult or dangerous situations unharmed.

An old proverb is believed to have started it off, all because of the way cats can get themselves out of many tricky situations without coming to harm. As they age, however, they tend to stick around the house a lot more, not getting into as much trouble.

Many people also think that you can't train a cat. While you can't train them as you would a dog, there are ways to teach your cats how to do things. The key is to work out what they want and what the most effective methods are.



Some cats prefer treats as incentives, and others want toys. Aside from toilet training, some cats learn how to jump on command, use a human toilet, and ring bells to get food.

Some of the most commonly depicted scenes in children's books involve cats having saucers of milk and playing with balls of wool. Both are supposed to be treats, but both can be harmful.

*"A cat has nine lives.
For three he plays, for
three he strays, and for
the last three he stays."*

Adult cats cannot digest the lactose in cow's milk properly, which can result in an upset stomach. In the case of wool, as it's fibrous and your cat's tongue is rough, they can swallow fibres that may cause them harm if it blocks their digestive tract.

Another all-too-common myth surrounding cat ownership is that it's beneficial to let your female cat have a litter of kittens before you take them to your vet for desexing. Instead of seeing significant changes in your cat, you end up contributing to the ever-growing



population of cats in Australia, while increasing your cat's chance of illnesses. Desexing your female cat can reduce the risk of reproductive organ cancers, mammary cancers, and unwanted behaviour when she is in heat.

Then there are the safety concerns around cats and pregnant women. While it's true that toxoplasmosis is a disease stemming from cat faeces that can be dangerous for your unborn baby, it doesn't mean you need to get rid of your cat. Toxoplasmosis is also found in raw eggs, meat, some unpasteurised dairy products, and soil. However, if you take all precautions, don't handle the litter box and always wash your hands after handling your cat, you and your cat can continue living together!

There are many myths out there waiting to be debunked, and the ones above are only scratching the surface. If you have questions about your cat and their care, consult your local veterinarian.

Being chewy with **chew toys**

Not every chew toy is going to be suitable for every dog. So, what can your dog have?



While chewing is a natural behaviour for dogs, there are various reasons for it that should be investigated before you decide on a chew toy. Are they bored or anxious? Are they playful and inquisitive? Are they young, and therefore teething or exploring their new environment?

Being aware of why they chew can help you determine whether a chew toy is the right answer.

Every dog is different, which means that chew toys have to be as well. Some dogs take pleasure in destroying their toys quickly, while others enjoy nibbling playfully and keeping their toys intact.

Due to the sheer volume of chew toys available it's not easy to find the best one, so it helps to factor in a few different considerations.

The toy should have a little bit of 'give' when you press it in with your fingernail. If it doesn't, then it's too hard and could break your dog's teeth.

There are many reasons why your dog might be chewing

We can help identify why and give advice on how to manage the behaviour.

WORD SEARCH

C R K E R U O J J C E O O K S R X R N Q A U V V C D H U K Z C
 J B C P U S T W E Q P H I F E L I N E S O T C A L S S W G G
 I T C I M I Q R T Y E W N G O P C N P A R A D O X I C A L O
 F W R A T S K V M K B Y O O Q Q W B I B N D B L Z X Q O Q F
 Z U W Z A O J A E M N M L A A Q X M V A D D B A V D O Z T B
 V O P E G M X Y J S F Y R I R H W H N Y B I F C Q I V J A C
 Q Y S Y Z S P Q I V U S F L T Q Z R Q H P K O T Y S Q C G C
 J Z T O T A L F I R Q S S E R T S I D J R K O I R E E X T T C
 X R T T X L V G S F V Z E J S L E W S T Q F F M A A Y T N A
 K E E Q L P S F J C Z D A Z G O S R D Q Y B R Y N S R U O O
 A F W P R O B J G E D P W F B R E V O R P O Y M I E F G X N
 E X O S X X E M Y P Z S E E L B A R U D F W C A R Y X C Z A
 C V A I Y O T G I C U L D R E D N U H T Q L S G E H K Q G J
 U W P H A T N G J O G S E F G D M C V E I A W N T Z T W K Y
 G Z T Y O I L V R N Y K H C V Y N V U K G K R E O R Y D V
 O C D U X Z H B I Z U I F E N H O A X N N G G T V T D Z M Z
 F F Q E F Q I L I O K L U E C C U R Q B I A F I B E E L A S
 U U S F M F B A Y W E A V Q X R R Z L D W X X C C Z T X U M
 X E I A C M E F V M K W D A P A B X S I E L M X C O D Y Y I
 D O N D E A Q N L V T H O J I R N U M Z H F K Y P P S R I C
 H H A R L O V C O J U Z Z Q O E Z X A E C Y X V O U A D B R
 Q C T F V Y J O X M P B B C N I M L K A I R B A K M S I X O
 B I J K L K A M Y W O U U C Z H Z M I N D R I S M G T T Y C
 L X G O B C A N I N E R I M D Q D R T F W U F A R E O V E H
 X O D G U C F C E J J C E Q X D H T T X X F M M H F Z L L I
 J T A B R C L M E P B N E H Q Y Y H E H K M W Q K J O J B P
 E E S Y V T P W S S Z U S T P O E H N U H G D U D K K Q I M
 W G Z N Z N A Y F O Z U Q K E M N L S Q P Y A I B O H P D F
 J N C H V F B W W R G M P S A N X I E T Y D M R O T S A E J
 J O N E W Z C O Y R F B Q R N E K V R A C E D N O D H L G Y

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|----------|-------------|---------------|
| ANXIETY | FURRY | PHEROMONE |
| CANINE | HIERARCHY | PHOBIA |
| CHEWING | KITTEN | PROVERB |
| DESEXING | LACTOSE | STORM |
| DISEASE | LITTER | THUNDER |
| DISTRESS | MAGNETIC | TOXIC |
| DURABLE | MAMMARY | TOXOPLASMOSIS |
| EDIBLE | MICROCHIP | TOY |
| FELINE | MYTH | TREMBLING |
| FIBROUS | PARADOXICAL | VETERINARY |

It should provide hours of entertainment, rather than a few minutes, and be of a decent shape and size to suit the size of your dog. It should not be so small that your dog could choke on it, but it also shouldn't be too big for them, or they could strain or injure their jaw.

Chew toys should also be durable, non-toxic, and not have small parts that pose a choking hazard. Avoid purchasing toys that aren't intended for dogs as these may contain unsafe materials or components.

It can be tempting to offer your dog a stick as a low-cost form of entertainment, but this is not recommended. Your dog can suffer eye or mouth injuries when running or playing with sticks, or intestinal damage from ingesting wooden fragments.

No chew toy will ever be 100 percent safe; they should be regularly evaluated for deterioration and replaced when necessary. You should not leave your dog unsupervised with any toy.

Chew toys are just one solution for a dog that loves to chew. If you're concerned about the reasons your dog is chewing, talk to your vet. Once you've determined your pet's need, you can then choose vet-approved toys that will suit your dog, but will also be safe.



An animal's grief

The loss of a family pet can be devastating, but it's often not only you mourning the loss.

Everyone knows how hard it is to lose a beloved family pet, but while you try to come to terms with your loss, don't forget to look out for your other pets. They can be grieving too.

Signs of grief in pets can vary from one animal to the next, depending on their connection. Some animals may not have gotten along, but had a hierarchy system which is now no longer in place.

The new format and routine in your life can make any dog or cat feel lost. Even something simple such as removing the deceased pet's food bowl or bed can cause a significant upset. They didn't have to be best friends for the remaining pet to struggle to adjust to life without them.

Other pets who had a close relationship with the deceased one might take the loss a little harder. They may lose their appetite, try to find their friend, and distance themselves from you as they try to figure out what has happened.

Your pet may also be restless; some dogs pant and pace, or are not interested in playing. Toileting problems can be common. Owners who adopt another pet soon after their loss can notice further confusion and stress in their other pets.

An animal's grief is something to be aware of, but the signs of loss could also be symptoms of a medical condition. If you notice any changes in their toileting, eating, or general behaviour, seek veterinary advice. You can rule out anything serious and learn how to help your pets through this tough time.

Ins and outs of a cat door

If you're tired of being your cat's personal doorman, then consider whether it might be time for a pet door.

Most people know that cats aren't the most decisive species in the animal kingdom. Often, you let your cat outside, only for it to return through another door or window immediately after. If you're tired of opening doors and windows for your furry friend, then a cat door could be worth your consideration.

TWO-WAY

Two-way cat doors are the most common and are often all a pet owner needs to satisfy their cat. You can leave them open for your cat to come and go, or close them so they can't exit or enter. They are also one of the more affordable cat doors for sale.

FOUR-WAY

If you want more options this door may suit both you and your cat more. With a four-way cat door, you can keep it closed, open, or with restricted access either in or out. These are excellent for owners who want to allow cats to leave during the night, but not to come back in and disturb them.

MAGNETIC

Many pet owners don't like the idea of a cat door because it encourages every cat to come in with yours. Before long, you're feeding the entire feline neighbourhood. A magnetic pet door works with your cat's collar, providing access for your pet and yours alone.

MICROCHIP

Cats are notorious for losing collars, so this is where the microchip cat door proves most popular. It reads your cat's unique microchip to provide access only for your cat and not for their friends.

You'll be amazed at the advancements that have been made in the world of pet access. Talk to your local vet about the best cat door for your needs.



Disclaimer: The information provided in this newsletter is for educational purposes only, and is not intended as a substitute for sound health care advice. We are not liable for any adverse effects or consequences resulting from the use of any information, suggestions, or procedures presented. Always consult a qualified professional in all matters pertaining to your pet health.



PRACTICE UPDATE

PUPPY PRE-SCHOOL

Puppy Preschool has recommenced at North Hill Vets with Cath, one of our senior nurses, running a 4-week program every month. Pups are given basic skills and focus training, as well as play time and socialising with other pups. The groups are usually 3-5 pups at a time and so far all appear to be having a lot of fun. It also helps them to become acquainted with the vet clinic and reduces fear of future visits.

Contact the clinic for further information.



Nail Clipping charges at the clinic continue to be a donation. We have mainly supported Buy-a-Bale and Bush Heritage Australia.

Bush Heritage Australia is an independent not-for-profit group that buys and manages land, and also partners with Aboriginal People, to conserve our magnificent landscapes and irreplaceable native animal and bird species forever. We love the work they do, and if you want to learn more look them up on www.bushheritage.org.au



"Since just before Christmas the local area has been blessed with some regular showers – I think most places in the New England have had some rainfall, which has helped the countryside regenerate slightly.

The heat and winds and fires over the last few months have truly been soul destroying and our thoughts are still with all those trying to recover.

While we are enjoying the grass growth in many areas please be aware stock and horses can still have major gut upsets from this flush.

We are seeing Grass Tetany in cattle and sheep, as well as Spasmodic Colics in horses – sometimes with disastrous results. This is because the rapid new grass growth is lacking in some essential trace elements (such as Magnesium) and has very little fibre content (ie too rich). The big take home message is to continue to provide hay /roughage access for another month, even though there is green grass for eating and let the animals decide when they no longer need the roughage (as the grass starts to harden off). Any concerns please call the clinic to discuss further."