

# Happy Tails Vet Newsletter



## Happy Tails Veterinary Hospital and Boarding

February marks the 6 months anniversary since the opening of Happy Tails Veterinary Hospital.

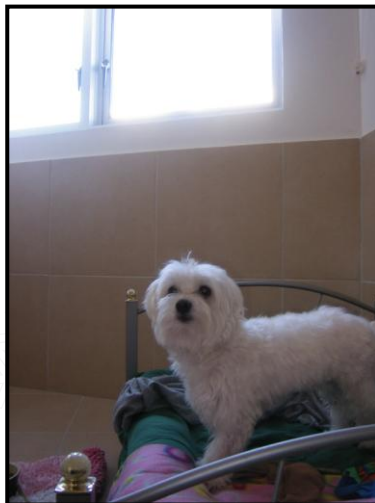
At Happy Tails we believe pets are part of the family and aim to provide top quality service. All staff at Happy Tails are fully qualified and provide a caring and personalised service to all our clients. We are open 7 days a week and close at 8pm on weekdays.

Happy Tails Vet offers a wide range of services; Consultation, Surgery, Acupuncture, Dentistry, Microchipping, X-ray, Puppy School, Grooming and VIP Boarding.



Our upper Level VIP Boarding consists of VIP spacious dog bedrooms with a view. All have four poster beds and trampolines.

Our cat guests are provided with Cat Condos- a playground for cats; they



contain tunnels, scratching posts, hidey holes and comfy platforms.

All dogs are walked twice daily and cats are given twice daily playtime before meals.

At happy Tails Boarding we believe our pets deserve a holiday away from home. Our boarding facilities are air conditioned and only premium food is fed. We also specialize in boarding those pets with special needs or those that need regular medication or medical attention.

Call to book your pet in: (02) 8753 1300

Autumn /Winter 08

### Special events at Happy Tails:

- **SENIOR PET INFO NIGHT 2008**

At Happy Tails Vet Hospital. Book in for a fun filled information night on how to care for our older pets.

All guests will receive a voucher for a **free** urine health check up!

For more info. Call:  
(02) 8753 1300

***"Animals are such agreeable friends-they ask no questions, they pass no criticism."***

George Elliot

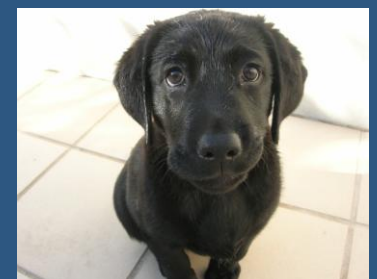
***"A Dog wags its tail with its heart"***

Martin Buxbaum

## HAPPY TAILS VETERINARY HOSPITAL

140 Great North Road  
Five Dock, NSW 2046  
Ph: 02 8753 1300

Email: [mail@happytails-vet.com](mailto:mail@happytails-vet.com)  
[www.happytails-vet.com](http://www.happytails-vet.com)



# Arthritis in Pets



**Arthritis** (also called osteoarthritis or degenerative joint disease) is a common disease affecting cats and dogs, especially those senior pets. It can greatly affect your pet's quality of life. Younger pets may also be at a higher risk of developing arthritis due to injuries, infections, poor nutrition or developmental disorders.

Arthritis occurs as a result of wear and tear on the joints, especially if the joint has been injured previously or has instability. Cartilage acts like joint shock absorbers. As the cartilage erodes, the ends of the bones rub against each other causing pain, inflammation and further degeneration. Arthritis does not have to be such a devastating disease especially if early diagnosis, intervention and treatment are instituted.

If arthritis is suspected, based on your pet's symptoms and the vet's clinical examination, the next step in diagnosis is x-rays and possibly blood testing. Other diseases may mimic arthritis thus x-rays are very useful to not only confirm the presence of arthritis and its severity, but also to help identify any other possible problems. Blood testing is also important to help rule out other less common causes of arthritis (e.g. infections and auto-immune disease) and to check your pet's overall general health, especially prior to recommending certain arthritis medications.

Surgery may be useful in some patients with arthritis, especially those which have conditions affecting the stability of the joint (eg. cruciate ligament disease, luxating patella). However it is important to remember that most cases of arthritis in our pets are managed rather than cured.

There are many signs or symptoms of arthritis that include:

- limping, lameness and stiffness, especially after exercise
- difficulty or stiffness rising from a resting position
- difficulty climbing stairs, getting in the car and jumping onto or off the lounge or bed
- reluctance to be patted or touched or play games
- personality changes e.g. acting aggressive or withdrawn
- altered gait
- muscle atrophy and weakness

In cats it may be more difficult to tell if they have arthritis as they tend to hide their pain and distress. Signs of arthritis in cats may also include:

- decreased grooming especially over the lower back and tail
- decreased general activity and movement,
- growling when picked up or being patted in the arthritic area.

There are many things you and your veterinarian can do to prevent or minimize the development, pain and progression of arthritis.

**1: Exercise-** Regular, low impact and short periods of daily exercise (that does not leave your pet sore the next day) are recommended. This form of exercise helps keep muscles strong for support, reduces excess weight and keeps the joints flexible. Walking and swimming are excellent forms of exercise. Avoid repetitive high impact activities and very long exercise sessions.

**2: Weight control-** Encourage puppies to be an ideal weight as they grow, limit lots of jumping and very boisterous exercise, especially in growing large breed pups. Avoid obesity as carrying excess body weight will contribute to joint damage and exacerbate the discomfort and pressures of arthritis.

**3: Supplements-** Nutritional supplements such as glucosamine and chondroitin help to slow the

progression of arthritis, rebuild damaged cartilage and decrease the pain of arthritis. Green-lipped sea mussel or Perna mussel help to ease pain, increase mobility and decrease inflammation. Omega 3 and 6 fatty acids have anti-inflammatory properties. Vitamins C and E may also be of benefit as they have antioxidant qualities. These supplements complement and are often used in conjunction with other treatments and medications, they may even allow a lower dose of other medications to be used. These supplements alone do not generally provide rapid relief; it may take several weeks or months before improvement is seen.

**4: Drug therapy-** Drugs such as Cartrophen (Pentosan Polysulfate) help provide pain relief, reduce inflammation and improve joint mobility. Cartrophen is administered by injection, with one injection given weekly for 4 weeks and then if further treatment is needed an injection once every 3-6 months. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as Rimadyl, Metacam and Previcox provide more rapid pain relief and anti-inflammatory activity. Blood testing prior to giving these medications is recommended to check your pet's health. It is also very important to NEVER give human medications and NEVER give medications designed for your pet to other pets.

**5: Other treatments** that may benefit your pet include acupuncture, chiropractic, massage and trigger point therapy, and homeopathy. It is also beneficial to keep your pet warm in winter and provide soft bedding off the floor for example, a cushion or a trampoline bed.



## SOME COMMON DANGERS IN THE HOME TO AVOID..

| SUBSTANCES TO AVOID                              | REASONS   |
|--|---|
| Avocados   | Contains a toxin called persin- found in all parts of the avocado. Causes gastrointestinal irritation, vomiting, diarrhoea, respiratory distress, congestion, fluid accumulation around the heart and death.        |
| Alcohol/Cigarettes                               | Causes intoxication, gastrointestinal irritation, respiratory distress, coma and death  |
| <b>Chocolate</b> and coffee                      | Contains theobromine and caffeine. These chemical acts as a diuretic and cardiac stimulant, loss of body fluid, vomiting, diarrhoea, hyperactivity and dangerous effects on the heart.                              |
| Cooked Bones                                     | Cooked bones can splinter and cause an obstruction along the gut.   |
| Macadamia Nuts                                   | Can cause tremors, muscle weakness or paralysis   |
| Milk and Other Dairy Products                    | Can cause diarrhoea, most dogs and cats are lactose intolerant  |
| Mouldy Foods                                     | Can contain a wide variety of toxins  |
| Onions and Garlic                                | Contain thiosulphate. Onions are more of a danger. Develop haemolytic anaemia- the pet's red blood cells burst while circulating in its body.   |
| Raisins/Grapes                                   | Can cause kidney damage   |
| Salt   | Large quantities can cause an electrolyte imbalance   |
| Yeast Dough                                      | When ingested it can expand in the stomach causing bloat. May cause rupture of gut/stomach.   |
| Xylitol sweetened products                       | A sweetener, can cause sudden drop in blood glucose, resulting in depression, in coordination and seizures.   |
| Painkillers /Aspirin/Cold medicine/Vitamins/Iron | Non Steroidal Anti inflammatory medications. Can cause liver, kidney and gut damage. Can see vomiting, diarrhoea, lethargy, blood in urine /faeces, dehydration and pallor. Don't give human vitamins to your pets. |
| Antifreeze                                       | Contains Ethylene Glycol. Can cause neurological signs, anorexia, lethargy, vomiting, diarrhoea, seizures. Can lead to kidney disease.  |
| Rat/Mouse Bait                                   | Contain anticoagulants- stops blood clotting properly. Potentially fatal. Can see depression, weakness, pallor, blood in urine or faeces, bruises, prolonged bleeding.  |
| Snail Bait                                       | Contains Metaldehyde or Methiocarb. Can cause weakness, tremors, drooling, vomiting, diarrhoea, breathing difficulties, seizures and possibly death.  |
| String/Ribbon/Tinsel                             | Especially in cats, can become lodged and twisted in the intestines, causing obstructions.  |
| Lead (paint, batteries, sinkers, pipes)          | Gut irritation- vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, anorexia, neurological signs- seizures, weakness, circling, head pressing, and spasms.   |
| Sago Palm  | All parts are poisonous, but the seeds contain the most toxin. Ingestion of a seed can cause serious effects; vomiting, diarrhoea, seizures, depression, liver failure.   |
| Marijuana  | Can result in Central Nervous System signs (eg in coordination, seizures, coma) as well as vomiting, diarrhoea, drooling.   |
| Lilies   | Highly toxic especially to cats. Ingestion of small amounts can result in kidney damage.  |
| Tulips   | Can cause gut irritation, loss of appetite, drooling, convulsion, central nervous system depression and hear problems.  |
| Rhododendron                                     | Contain grayantoxins. Can cause drooling, vomiting, diarrhoea, weakness, central nervous system depression, coma and death.   |
| Oleander   | All parts are toxic- contain cardiac glycosides. Can cause gut irritation, heart problems, hypothermia and even death.  |
| Castor Bean                                      | Contains a toxic protein called Ricin. Can cause abdominal pain, drooling, vomiting, diarrhoea, thirst, weakness, loss of appetite, dehydration, twitching, seizures, coma and death.                               |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Cyclamen  | Contains a toxin called cyclamine- mostly in the roots. Can cause gut irritation, intense vomiting and sometimes death.                      |
| Yew   | Contains a toxin called Taxine. May cause trembling, incoordination, breathing difficulties, gut irritation, heart problems and death.       |
| Jasmine   | Can cause convulsions and death  |
| Pips/pits of apricot, cherry, peaches, apples and almond nuts | Contain cyanogenic glycosides- results in cyanide poisoning. Affects the bloods ability to release oxygen into tissues, causing suffocation. |
| 'Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow' Plant (Brunfelsia)               | Can cause drooling, gagging, anxiety, seizures and death.  |



Some common potentially toxic household items to your pet

## VET OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

Mon – Fri 8am-8pm  
Sat 9am-6pm  
Sun 10am-2pm

Phone: 02 8753 1300

### Happy Tails Veterinary Hospital

140 Great North Rd  
Five Dock  
NSW, 2046

Phone:  
(02) 8753 1300

Fax:  
(02) 8753 1322

E-Mail:  
mail@happytails-vet.com

Web Site:  
[www.happytails-vet.com](http://www.happytails-vet.com)

Mon-Fri 8am-8pm  
Sat 9am-6pm  
Sun 10am-2pm

**OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK**

## PUPPY SCHOOL

Happy Tails Vet Hospital is pleased to announce the commencement of Puppy School at our brand new, state of the art hospital in Five Dock.

Our Puppy School Teacher, Katharina, is Delta Society accredited, highly experienced and has a strong background in animal training – she works for Taronga Zoo and is a keeper/trainer for the Free Flight Bird Show and elephants.

Some of the topics that will be covered include;

**Week 1:** Socialisation, Bite Inhibition, How to Set Rules, 'Sit' and 'Come', Toilet Training and Playtime

**Week 2:** Spending Time Alone, 'Lie Down', Food Guarding, Basic Handling, Revision of Commands

**Week 3:** 'Stay', Walking On a Lead, Giving up Objects

**Week 4:** Mat Training, Noise

Desensitisation, Barking, Environmental Enrichment and Graduation.

In addition, our Veterinarians will be hosting a brief discussion on Puppy Care, including Vaccination, Worming, Diet, Desexing and Microchipping and also answering any of your questions.



While Puppy School may seem like a lot of fun, it is also a good way to introduce your new puppy to other dogs, strangers and different situations in a relaxed and non-threatening **environment**.

At Happy Tails, we believe that socialisation is an integral part of raising a happy and well adjusted dog.

To ensure the protection of all our puppies, we ask that your puppy be fully up to date with their appropriate vaccinations and that you bring in their vaccination record to be sighted during the first class.

**School runs for 4 weeks- Tues 6:30-7:30pm**  
**Call us to book 02 8753 1300**