



See us at The Dogs Day Out! 8th August Clontarf Reserve.

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# The Seaforth Howler

## Editorial

Welcome to the Winter 2010 Howler. In this edition Hendrika begins a new Question and Answers column. If you have any questions that you have always wanted answered by a vet then here is your opportunity! The more difficult the better.

August is Dental month for our furry friends. We have two articles on dental issues by nurses Kath and Rachel. We are also advertising our next mini lecture on dental disease. If you would like to attend, see page 3 for details.

Our client Mrs J Edison has kindly allowed us to reprint her article, wherein she names a star after her cat Dolly, particularly poignant as Dolly recently passed away in July just shy of her 18th birthday. Our condolences.

I know it is not the time of year for fleas, but you are probably already wondering what

you are going to do with the approaching flea season, change your product yet again?

Before you consider that read my review. It explains why your chosen product actually does work, but why it may seem not to work!

Finally I wind it all up with another Media Snippets. The purpose of Snippets is to present both funny and uplifting articles.

Enjoy your read!



## Nothing I buy works for fleas!



**By Dr Robert Miller (Practice Partner)**

Last summer and well into autumn fleas were a real hassle for many clients. How many times did I hear a client pronounce that,

*“My flea product does not work, give me something different!”*

However a recent review of all popular flea products (Advantage/ Advantix, Frontline, Revolution, Comfortis) reveals they all do an equally good job. Some are more appropriate for one dog rather than another, eg the heavy swimmer or frequently groomed dog may be better off with oral Comfortis rather than the topspot preparations. What was clear was that cheap supermarket brands are cheap for a reason! They often have reduced / poor efficacy, poor residual activity and poor safety profiles.

*“That’s great but I do not see my product working! How can that be?”*

If you have a look at the flea life cycle in a little detail it is clear why this happens. It also suggests areas that must also be considered.

Adult fleas emerge from a cocoon (pupa) and populate the host. They can feed within 5 min. 97% have fed by 1 hr. so you can see that to have no flea bites at all would require a product that kills fleas in less than 5 min! Most spot on products take 24-36 hours, so they do allow many fleabites before they die. Oral products such as Capstar start killing within 15 min at

**News Column**

- **Nurse India is off to Greece for 6 weeks.**  
Our congratulations to her on passing her nursing cert 4 exams!
- **Dr Libby is having a well earned rest!**  
She will be away from mid July to mid Aug in Norway no less

best but take up to 6 hours to reach 95% kill.

I often say to clients if you paint all today's fleas yellow then by tomorrow they will all be brown again, ie they (the yellow) have died but have been replaced by new fleas (the brown).

*"But what about repelling fleas?"*

No such product exists. Unlike sprays that repel mozzies or flies, fleas are resistant to being put off their task!



This is not to say it is therefore a waste of time trying to control fleas, you can effectively keep their numbers down by using the above products, but it is clear you must do more.

*"What more?"*

Look further into the life cycle. The adult flea produces 10-50 eggs a day. Each egg could hatch and result in another feeding reproducing adult within 2 weeks in summer! This is why it seems you are losing the battle in the height of summer.

Adult → Egg (non-sticky and roll off host easily into home) → larva stage 1 (moves deep into carpets) → larva stage 2 (migrate to even more inaccessible areas) → larva stage 3 (creates the cocoon) → pupa (flea bomb resistant) → Adult (vibration / CO<sub>2</sub> / Warmth for emergence)

So just attacking adult fleas leaves all the army reserves intact, ready to marshal their forces and continue the attack! These other stages are in the environment. So you need to treat the environment as well as your pet. This is harder work and so harder to get client compliance on the issue, hence the apparent breakdown.

*What can I do to control the pet's environment?*

Avoid areas where you think your pet is picking up fleas. Eg under the house, a suspect friends house crawling with fleas etc. An area isolated long enough will become clear of fleas, but this can take months.

Use products that help interfere with the lifecycle. Frontline and Advantage /tix contain insect growth regulators, they do exactly that. During the 24 hours the adults are dying and producing eggs, those eggs are mainly sterile and will not hatch!

Keep things clean. Eggs congregate mainly where the pet sleeps and rests. Launder their bedding regularly, vacuum these areas. You will mainly pick up eggs and flea dirt and less so, flea larvae (they like to head deep and out of the way). Research shows that a single pass may only pick up 25% of stage 1 larvae but persistent and regular vacuuming the pets areas can pick up 90%. You must dispose of the vacuum bag as the bugs can come crawling back out! Flea bombs may help when infestations are heavy.

So the message is:

**Fleas control = Treat animal (easy) + Treat environment (more difficult)**

And yes, your products do work! But only by visiting your veterinary clinic will you get the correct advice on the most suitable product for *your* pet. We only stock effective products. Superstores may be cheap but they lack the professional knowledge required in this difficult fight against fleas.

## *This Starry Life\**

**By Joan Edison (Seaforth Client)**

*\*Reproduced with kind permission of the author and Weekend Australian (April 2010)*

OUR cat is a star. No, not the usual family personality — that goes without saying — but a true star in the sky. Otherwise known as No 600217 in the Sydney Southern Star Catalogue, or No 232165 in the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory Catalogue, it has been named Dolly, thanks to the Sydney Observatory's Name a Star program. We wanted to honour our little puss on her 17th birthday and thought a star was a great way to do it. The observatory said most people chose stars for birthdays, anniversaries and deaths. We were apparently the first people to name a star after a live pet. Friends and family thought we'd gone a bit crackers. "I hear title plots on the moon are going for a song," one emailed. Have you heard about this nice little bridge? It's in Brooklyn." For \$300 you name a date and the observatory chooses a star that is visible for seven weeks either side of that date. They then send you its exact location, its brightness level and the co-ordinates for viewing with the naked eye, binoculars or telescope. For an extra \$50 you can have a private viewing through the observatory's telescopes for four people. You also get a dedication certificate in which you can write a few words. We naturally chose *The Owl and the Pussycat*. "The owl looked up to the stars above, and sang to a small guitar, what a beautiful pussy you are, you are, what a beautiful pussy you are." The money from naming stars helps fund the observatory's work.

An amateur astronomer friend has discovered that our star— In the constellation of Phoenix — was first recorded nearly a century ago. He tells us it's a singular star and a little-known fact is half the visible stars are multiple star systems orbiting each other. It is also in a catalogue used to position the Hubble space telescope.

It's been a long journey from the gutter to the universe for our old lady. We found her badly injured one wet winter's night in a Sydney laneway. She'd been run over. Her internal organs had been pushed through her chest cavity into her throat, so she could barely breathe. The nerve had been crushed in one leg and she would always walk with a limp. Did we want to spend the money to save her, the vet asked. A gentle lick on the hand and a purr said it all.

A friend was staying with us when we got the vet's bill. What do you think we should call her, I asked. "Dollars," was the reply. We shortened it to Dolly.

Dolly has repaid us a thousand times over by being a loving, friendly cat. Despite her limp, she runs and jumps, especially

when she spots an available lap. She has given us years of pleasure. The least we could do was buy her a star.



## Keeping Pearly Whites White

By **Kath Salier (Nurse and Receptionist)**

- Like humans, both cats and dogs can accumulate plaque and tartar on their teeth, which can cause gum problems. If left untreated this may contribute to heart, kidney and liver disease.
- Periodontal disease in the tissues and bone that surround and support the teeth affects up to 95% of dogs and cats worldwide.
- Signs that may indicate your pet needs dental attention include: bad breath, drooling, swelling on side of the muzzle, runny eyes, aversion to chewing biscuits or even eating soft foods.

If your pet is exhibiting any of these symptoms, make an appointment for us to check their teeth.

- Did you know that we have the latest dental equipment? It is very similar to the one your dentist uses and allows us to scale, polish and rinse the teeth.
- Yes you can brush your pet's teeth – its best to start when they're young but its never too late to try.
- To help look after your pet's teeth ...
  - ⇒ choose foods that help clean the teeth – select a dry food with a larger biscuit or purchase a specially formulated tooth diet that physically assists in the removal of plaque.
  - ⇒ choose foods that contain enzymes to help breakdown the plaque before it turns into tartar (such as Eukanuba)
  - ⇒ Use a toothbrush & pet toothpaste to clean your pet's teeth (comes in delicious beef, cheese and poultry flavour)!
  - ⇒ Add Aquadent to your pets drinking water to help maintain healthy gums after dental work and oral sprays to break down plaque (eg Petzlife Oral Spray)
  - ⇒ Provide your pet with dental chews, chew toys, chicken necks, chicken wings (raw) or large, non splintering, raw thigh bones. And remember never feed cooked bones.
  - ⇒ Have your pet's teeth checked regularly by the vet. Certain breeds are predisposed to dental problems

## Free catered Information Session

For Seaforth Veterinary Hospital Clients

### On the Tooth

**Time** 6.00pm

**Date:** Thurs 2nd Sept

**Venue:** Seaforth Veterinary Hospital

**Speaker:** Dr Rob Miller

To Register your interest and assist in catering please e-mail Jane on:

[Jane@svh55.com](mailto:Jane@svh55.com)

and will require twice yearly check ups. Your vet will help you identify if your pet is at greater risk.

As with anything, prevention is better than cure and to this end in August we will be running a *free* dental clinic by our experienced nursing staff where they will assess your pets teeth and offer advice on how to optimize their oral health. See you there!

## Dental nursing, an experience

By **Rachel Jackson (Head Nurse)**

Dentals are amongst my favourite procedures. It is so satisfying to be able to make an extreme difference to an animal's quality of life. Since I was a girl I have consistently owned cats and dogs but it was only on becoming a nurse that I became aware of how often our loved pets suffer quietly from unimaginable dental pain. Happily, modern vet care and advanced understanding of dietary requirements enable our pets to live longer than ever before, yet dental health is often overlooked. As a sad and unnecessary consequence of this many older animal need multiple tooth extractions. Certain breeds are more at risk, and I should know, with a maltese that hates to chew and a shih tsu with a distorted and irregular dental pattern. I brush their teeth regularly thus monitoring their state, bribe them to eat a number of special diet biscuits a day and still they need an annual dental. I'm luckier with my border collie cross, though her tendency to gnaw and gnaw has in fact worn her teeth down, a different problem!

That all dogs and cats normally have bad breath is a common misconception. Instead it should be taken as a warning that their mouths need attention. One poor dog sticks in my memory. His owners believed that as he was 'still eating' he must be

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well, but the stench from his mouth made me gag. If only they had looked in his mouth they would have seen more tartar than teeth. Much of his jaw was diseased and he had to lose all of his teeth. An extreme case? Yes, but a cruel lesson. Many owners are horrified to learn that their pet's dental health is worse than they think it is. Just imagine what our teeth would be like if we never brushed, never flossed and never had a professional dental treatment. A regular scale and polish at the vets combined with mindful day to day care will keep your pet's teeth and gums strong and healthy and pain free.

## Questions and Answers

**By Dr Hendrika Tegelaar (Practice Partner)**

We recently initiated a Question and Answers column for the Howler. Here are my responses to your initial questions. If you have a question needing an answer let us know! The answer may also be very useful to other clients.

**Q:** *How do I tell the difference between regurgitation and vomiting and why is it important?*

**A:** Regurgitation of food occurs soon after its ingestion. It indicates a problem with the oesophagus (food pipe) or a problem within the chest. Signs that may also suggest regurgitation are that the food is undigested, no bile (yellow staining and there is little effort involved (ie no abdominal straining). Cats and dogs that eat too quickly may commonly exhibit regurgitation. In tick season regurgitation is a major feature of tick poisoning.

Vomiting may occur at variable times following ingestion. The problem will be located either in the stomach, the small intestine, the colon or may be due to organ dysfunction (eg kidney disease). Vomit may be bile stained and exhibit varying degrees of digestion. When a cat or dog vomits it is accompanied by abdominal muscle contractions (straining).

**Q:** *How can I improve my dogs manners?*

**A:** Training and more training! Start early. Puppy classes are an ideal start and are run at Seaforth Veterinary Hospital by a Delta Accredited Trainer, Virginia Pennefather. Learn the Sit Stay program, Come When Called. We only use positive reinforcement (give treats for correct response) to achieve desired goals. After puppy classes continue your dogs education with Obedience training or Agility classes. Keep it fun for them. Reward a dog for the behavior you want to see. Eg. If your dog is barking then call the dog away and get it to sit-stay or go to its mat. When it does so offer a food reward. If your dog reacts to other dogs then get it to sit and look at you/ make eye contact. This draws the focus away from the undesired behaviour. You reward the desired response with a

treat.

What about bad behaviour? Ignore it. Try not to react as it tends to reinforce the bad behaviour. Interrupt the bad behaviour with sit-stay, then reward.

Dogs have a short memory so do not scold them for something you find later. Dogs will react to your voice but is unlikely to be fully aware of why you are yelling at a destroyed cushion! Be clear and specific in your demands. Eg "sit!" dog hears a command to sit. "Drop!" dog hears a command to lay down. "Down" dog hears a command to get off couch. You do not use "down" to mean both get off the couch and lay down, you cannot expect a dog to know the difference. Confusion will lead to anxiety and the anxious dog will be problematic. This is your fault not the dogs!

## Media Snippets

**By Dr Rob Miller (Practice Partner)**

**Bumper Cat**

A policeman braked to avoid a cat dashing across the road. All seemed OK, no bump, no flat cat on the road so he drove on to set up for an RBT. At this stage he heard a faint meow which he realised was coming from his bumper! The bumper of the ford turbo was removed to reveal a tiny black kitten with a most worried face! It seems he must have scooped it up at the earlier encounter! 8 lives to go.

**Man marries cat!**

This is a good one! A 38 year old single East German man so loved his 15 yo cat he decided to marry her. On the big day he turned up in top hat and tails and Cecillia (his cat) in a white dress. His brother acted as best man for the big day. Honeymoon? Well lets not go there.

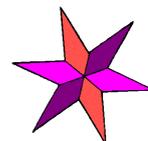
**Drunk as a parrot**

Mr Hubbell of London, UK, was as sick as a parrot when Reggie (his parrot) ran away from home.

Mr Hubbell knowing Reggie's predilection for red wine and crackers thought he would lay an offering of the same and sure enough Reggie could not resist and returned home within 24 hours. Which shows that alcohol dependency can sometimes have a good outcome!

**Pigeon arrested for spying!**

A Pakistani pigeon strayed into Indian airspace and was arrested by a vigilant and enthusiastic local policeman. He had noticed a ring about the foot of the dastardly sneaky pigeon in addition to a telephone number stamped on its body. On high alert he suspected it was used to convey state secrets across the boarder! We hope the police did not give it too much of a grilling.



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