

# Seaforth Howler

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It's Summer again and welcome to this edition of the Howler. In this edition we'll touch on a few things that relate to the elderly pet - laboratory tests and keeping the pearly whites, pearly white.

Also we couldn't let this edition go by without a farewell and BIG thank you to Jane, our manager, who after 18 years of employment here, decided to spread her wings and seek new challenges.

We wish her well and hope she enjoys her new job.

Thank you for all your help and diligence over the last 18 years, Jane.

From everyone at Seaforth Vets (No photos as per Jane's request!!)

## Is your pet over the age of 7 years?

Then you should consider booking in for an examination and blood screen for your pet. The concept of preventative healthcare is simple: to detect early disease. Not only does this reduce the cost of treatment for you, but it also increases the success rate of treatment, and potentially increases the length of and quality of life for your pet.

For example, 23% of senior dogs and 18% of older cats that appear healthy upon physical examination, have an underlying disease. A blood screen and wellness check could help to pick up a disease before it makes your pet appear ill.

A senior pet screen can provide an opportunity to develop a more comprehensive picture of your pet's health, establish a base line of what is 'normal' for your pet, and also to help monitor the effects of certain medications.



Seaforth Vets have a full range of blood analysers on site to ensure there is no delay in running your pet's wellness check. Ask one of our friendly staff today about booking in a '7+ health screen' for your pet. This would include a physical examination by one of our Vets, a comprehensive blood screen, possible diet advice and a great opportunity to answer any other questions you may have.

## Website:

[www.svh55.com.au](http://www.svh55.com.au)

## Consultations by Appointment

Mon - Friday  
9am - 12pm & 4pm - 7pm

Saturday  
9am - 12pm & 2pm - 4pm

Sunday & Public Holidays  
9am - 11am

Open 365 days

# Dental surgery in elderly pets...

by Caroline Pankhurst

You may have been advised by the Vet that your pet needs dental surgery and you have questions!!

For instance:-

'Are they too old for surgery?'

'Do I want to put them through an anaesthetic at their age?'

'Is it worth the expense at their age?'

Or

'Are they embarrassed by their smile at the local park?'

Ok, so probably not so much the last one! But you may wonder why is the Vet concerned by your pet's teeth as they age?

There are some good answers.

Vets are concerned about the condition of your pet's teeth because an unhealthy mouth will often lead to an unhealthy body!

Plaque contains bacteria and that bacteria hardens with food and minerals to form tartar. So essentially the yellow substance found on your pet's teeth is a build up of bacteria. When your pet eats, swallows, chews or even licks, minute pieces of this bacteria break off and are swallowed by your pet. As you can imagine, swallowing yucky bacteria every day is not good for your pet!

These bacteria find their way to your pet's kidneys, and as with any organ, if you overload it, especially on a regular basis, you are going to damage it. Unfortunately, any damage done to the kidneys is permanent - unlike the liver which is capable of regeneration.

Kidney damage is a leading cause of death in elderly animals - especially cats!

What dental surgery does is remove the tartar from the teeth, taking the surface of the tooth back to a smooth enamel. This also prevents more tartar build up as tartar sticks very well to itself, but has trouble holding on to nice, shiny teeth! This is also why your Vet recommended a dental, as tartar build up leads to more tartar build up and so the cycle goes!

Why an anaesthetic? And is it safe for my elderly animal?

Unfortunately animals don't open their mouths and say 'ahhh!' We need them asleep so that we can do a full examination of their mouth, check for any loose teeth, which you know if you have ever had them yourself, can be extremely painful! We need to check the root of each tooth, check that the gum is healthy and that no little pockets of bacteria are going to be able to form in tooth cavities leading to infections and abscesses.

Here at Seaforth Veterinary Hospital, we often recommend a prophylactic (or prophy) dental to prevent the further build up of tartar, prevent gum disease and future damage to the kidneys. These are highly recommended and can save you money in the long term, as well as ensuring your pet's future health.

Once there is significant tartar build up, however, dental surgery becomes more expensive, takes longer and can mean your pet may lose some or even all of their teeth.

Your Vet will explain to you the risk of anaesthesia with your elderly pet and also advise ways that we can minimise the risk to your pet. These include a pre-anaesthetic blood screen to ensure your pet's organs are functioning as they should and intravenous fluids during surgery to help maintain blood pressure and help with recovery. Your Vet will take into account your pet's overall health and advise you if dental surgery would be beneficial to your animal's continuing health.

# Diagnostics and "Stevie"

## Laboratory Tests

Just as with humans, a physical examination doesn't tell us the whole story about what's going on in your pet's body, so sometimes we need to do some laboratory tests to try to figure out what's going on.

Laboratory tests can be helpful in various ways...they can help us to:-

- diagnose a disease
- monitor a disease
- monitor response to treatment
- monitor drug levels
- determine when to cease therapy
- pick up disease early before clinical signs appear
- eliminate certain diseases from a list of differential diagnoses

Laboratory tests may consist of blood tests, urine tests, cytology, culture and sensitivity, histopathology, electrophoresis and faecal tests to name a few. The tests we perform most often are haematology and biochemistry blood tests and urinalysis. The haematology checks red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets, while biochemistry checks for electrolytes, kidney function, liver function, pancreas function, acid-base balance, protein level and globulins.

The various parameters can change rapidly from day to day and even minute to minute and this is why on one day a blood test may be normal and another day abnormal.

Laboratory tests give us a much fuller picture as to what is going on and then we as Vets, can give you better ongoing advice.

## Stevie



< This is Stevie!  
He and his owner  
recently shared  
a photo shoot.  
Here he's doing  
his Harry Potter  
impersonation!



And this is Stevie  
in thinking mode! >

# Wildlife Report!

## Update on wildlife

- 
- 02.09.16 - Lorikeet - possibly hit by car -> carer
  - 06.09.16 - Budgie -> home
  - 06.09.16 - Lorikeet - released
  - 09.09.16 - Ringtail possum - fell out of tree -> SMWS (Sydney Metropolitan Wildlife Service)
  - 12.09.16 - Lorikeet - not flying ->SMWS
  - 12.09.16 - Raven -broken wing -> carer.
  - 16.09.16 - Baby Ringtail possum ->carer
  - 16.09.16 - Blue tongue lizard - lost tail -> carer
  - 17.09.16 - Ringtail possum - possibly hit by car ->WIRES
  - 18.09.16 - Ringtail possum - found on driveway -> WIRES
  - 21.09.16 - Lorikeet - flew into deck -> released
  - 22.09.16 - 2 Bandicoots - bite marks on baby ->WIRES
  - 27.09.12 - Baby Ringtail possum - found by back door ->WIRES
  - 27.09.16 - Ringtail possum - tail tip injury -> WIRES
  - 10.10.16 - Plover - fell down drain ->carer
  - 10.10.16 - Water dragon - wounds -> carer
  - 12.10.16 - Baby Brushtail - jaw deformity? -> WIRES
  - 13.10.16 - Baby Butcher bird - attacked by Minor birds -> SMWS
  - 13.10.16 - Brushtail possum and joey - hit by car - WIRES
  - 15.10.16 - Tawny Frogmouth - not flying -> Taronga Zoo
  - 17.10.16 - Juvenile Magpie - diarrhoea and gapeworm -> SMWS
  - 18.10.16 - Juvenile Magpie - sore foot -> WIRES
  - 19.10.16 - Butcher bird - found on the ground -> SMWS
  - 20.10.19 - Crested Pigeon - cat attack -> SMWS
  - 23.10.16 - Ringtail possum - burns -> carer
  - 24.10.16 - Noisy Minor - fell from tree near cat ->carer
  - 25.10.16 - Bandicoot - found in pool ->SMWS
  - 26.10.16 - Bandicoot - bitten by cat -> SMWS
  - 26.10.16 - Currawong -baby abandoned by parents -> carer
  - 01.11.16 - Baby Bandicoot - abandoned -> WIRES
  - 01.11.16 - Lorikeet - concussion -> released
  - 02.11.16 - Flycatcher - brought in by cat ->SMWS
  - 02.11.16 - Ringtail Possum - dragging right hind leg -> carer
  - 02.11.16 - Magpie - swollen feet -> SMWS
  - 04.11.16 - Baby Brushtail possum - attacked by crows ->SMWS
  - 04.11.16 - Ringtail possum - attacked by magpies -> SMWS
  - 05.11.16 - Magpie - on ground ->WIRES
  - 07.11.16 - Lorikeet - weak -> SMWS
  - 08.11.16 - Ringtail Possum - traumatized -> WIRES
  - 12.11.16 - Lorikeet - concussed? -> released
  - 14.11.16 - Ringtail - bite wounds -> WIRES
  - 16.11.16 - Blue Tongue Lizard - dog attack -> carer
  - 17.11.16 - Brush Turkey - harassed by cats ->carer.
  - 19.11.16 - Ringtail Possum - head trauma -> WIRES
  - 21.11.16 - Cuckoo - fell from nest ->WIRES
  - 22.11.16 - Kookaburra - wing wound -> SMWS
  - 23.11.16 - Baby Ringtail Possum - mother died ->WIRES
  - 24.11.16 - Ringtail Possum - swollen paws -> WIRES

During this time period there have been 63 other cases of sick and/or injured native animals that either had to be euthanised or died despite treatment. If we had to euthanise them it was because their injuries or illness prevented them from making a recovery or being able to survive in the wild.

Unfortunately there is not enough room to detail the treatment received by these animals that went on to a carer - the Sydney Metropolitan Wildlife Service, WIRES or Taronga Zoo.

Thank you to all those people that took the time to help our wildlife.