

The Seaforth Howler

Editorial

By Dr Rob Miller (Veterinarian)

We bid a fond farewell to our clinic cat Tiki Boomsticks who died in April this year from renal disease. He was well loved by all and such an individual. He is very much missed. Read more about Tiki in Rachel's article on *Waifs and Strays*.

There are so many anti-arthritis drugs on the market today it makes your head spin! I have written an article trying to make sense out of all this so you know why your veterinarian has given your pet a particular medication rather than another.

Kath comes up with *Believe It Or Not* cat and dog facts (or fiction? Damn the Internet!)

Belinda says goodbye to her faithful old Gertie in a poem on page 3.

Hendrika gets all excited about dental work in her article "August is Dental Month!"

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Too Much Choice in the Osteoarthritis Market!?!?

By Dr Rob Miller (Veterinarian)

The plethora of new drugs for this common disease of old age makes treatment choice increasingly difficult rather than easier. This article is aimed at clarifying what are the main players in the medical treatment of osteoarthritis (OA).

Arthrodeses are joints. Arthritis refers to joint inflammation. Arthritis is a common disease in the older dog and cat.

Inflamed joints are often painful and can feel swollen and hot with limited pain free movement.

We can do one of two things to help the arthritic joint.

1. Offer pain relief and reduce the inflammation
2. Slow or reverse the degeneration within the joint

Keeping this division in mind allows us to more easily understand the drugs available, and when and where they are best used.

As long as these drugs are compatible you can see it makes sense to try to use them in combination for the most effective approach.

In what follows NSAID's is a common abbreviation for None Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs

Pain Relievers / Anti-inflammatory Drugs

Steroids

Are particularly useful for bad backs (NSAID's not being very useful for such pain). They are also the number 1 choice for polyarthropathies (ie multiple joint disease involvement)

Gossip Column

- We welcome little Benny to the Staff of SVH. Benny is our new white fluff ball in training to step into the shoes of erstwhile Tiki. Angel (the resident Queen of Sheba) is not too sure she wants another man in her life at this stage.



especially in immune mediated disease.

We try to avoid long term steroid use, especially in dogs as it interferes significantly with the adrenal glands and therefore has may side effects. However when indicated steroids are a very effective anti-inflammatory, and to a lesser extent a pain reliever.

Steroids should never be used concurrently with Conventional NSAID's (see below).

Conventional NSAID's

Zubrin, Metacam, Previcox, Rimadyl and Tolfedine are the NSAID's most commonly used at Seaforth Vets. These are basically pain relievers / anti-inflammatories of a none steroidal nature.

Think of aspirin as the original NSAID. Aspirin is not very effective, can be toxic in cats, is too short acting in dogs and has poor safety margins when used long term with respect to ulceration of the GI (Gastrointestinal) tract.

All the newer NSAID's are aimed at convenience (once daily dosing, more palatable), are far more effective pain relievers and the most recent push is to have greater safety margins for long term use, Previcox having the best safety margin to date (for dogs).

Tolfedine is the number one product for cats, but Metacam at low doses has proved safe and effective for long term use (despite not being specifically licensed for use in cats).

Conventional NSAID's should never be used concurrently with steroids.

None conventional NSAID's

Essential Fatty Acids / EFA's (Hill's new J/D diet, Waltham's Mobility Support, Benelox, and green lipped mussel extract)

Essential Fatty Acids have been around for years and have been variably successful in helping alleviate chronic skin allergies, but rarely produce outstanding results in practice. A newer use is in the treatment of OA.

High omega -3 fatty acids and a low ratio of omega 6 to omega 3 are claimed to be the key. Omega 3 fatty acids interfere with the production of inflammatory intermediates that can contribute to the destruction of cartilage.

Recent research suggests that 50% of patients showed improved mobility in as a little as 3 weeks after Hill's j/d diet.

There is no problem using EFA's in conjunction with any other form of OA drugs. They are a nice safe, if mild alternative and probably most useful in low grade / early OA.

Joint modifying drugs

Once we have offered our patients pain relief it makes good sense to try produce a more positive outcome for the affected joint. In other words effect a treatment rather than just mask the signs of pain and inflammation. Joint modifying drugs are slow in onset, while pain relievers will work within 1-2 hours of the first dose. Hence it makes sense to start with both medications and *if possible* wean off the pain relievers when joint improvements are under way. Many times this is not possible and both medications are used in conjunction.

There are several forms of these drugs.

Pentosan Polysulphate: (Cartrophen)

By injection or available as capsules. This drug was the original alternative medicine for arthritis. Produced originally for veterinary use it has also since proved useful in the human field. This drug inhibits enzymes involved in cartilage destruction and stimulates cartilage renewal and repair. In other words it attempts to reverse / slow the chronic

degenerative changes seen in the arthritic joint. It is our number one choice as an adjunct to pain relievers and is safe to use in conjunction with any of the above. In many instances it is used as a stand-alone treatment for OA in cats and especially dogs.

Glycosaminoglycans (GAG)

Glycosaminoglycans are long chained molecules, which are involved in the formation and repair of cartilage. Glucosamine and chondroitin are precursors that help go to make up these molecules. It is argued that they can help promote long-term protection in preventing degeneration of cartilage. The idea is to provide the *components* for cartilage formation. The long chain GAG's themselves will not absorb intact through the gut wall. The general feeling in the veterinary field is that these drugs do help.

Glucosamine / chondroitin sulphate (Cosequin, Sharks cartilage and also in Sasha's blend)

Nutritional supplement for cartilage support in dogs.

Glucosamine is a modified sugar that occurs naturally in the body. Chondroitin is also a simple molecule that occurs naturally in the body. Both major components of cartilage -- the tough, connective tissue that cushions the joints.

Chondroitin helps to keep cartilage resilient by absorbing fluid (particularly water) into the connective tissue. It is also believed to block enzymes that break down cartilage and it provides the building blocks needed for cartilage to repair itself.

New Zealand Green lipped mussel extract (In Sasha's blend)

The Green Lipped Mussel is most commonly found growing in the sea off the coast of Australia and New Zealand. It is the flesh of the Green Lipped Mussel that is processed into a powdered form and then into tablets or capsules.

Green Lipped Mussel is a source of chondroitin and other glycosaminoglycans. Green Lipped Mussel also has anti-inflammatory properties that may be due to the essential fatty acids and natural antioxidants found in the Mussel flesh.

Physio and Acupuncture

Acupuncture may occasionally prove useful, but is generally a treatment mode used when all else fails due to the variability of its effectiveness.

Physio can be a good adjunct to any of the above medicines. These days Australia has people trained specifically in animal physio. To become an animal physiotherapist one must first be a fully qualified human physiotherapist, so these people do have a lot of experience! However they are not trained veterinarians, they have to work under direction from a qualified veterinarian.

At Seaforth Vets we occasionally invite Khristine Edwards of Leichhardt to carry out physio on a number of our patients. If you wish to know more about this approach you can contact Khristine at ke13@netspace.net.au.

I hope this article gives you a clearer picture of what is happening in the rapidly developing field of anti arthritic medicines.

But remember! 50% OF THE TREATMENT of OA in overweight animals is weight loss and in all cases the cessation of any vigorous exercise is recommended. More short walks than single long walks are the way to go. Do not over exercise the OA animal.

Cat and Dog Facts!

By Kath Salier (Veterinary Nurse + Receptionist)

Cat Facts

- Cats see the world in greens, blues and reds.
- All tortoise shell coloured cats are female.
- Sir Isaac Newton is not only credited with the laws of gravity but is also credited with inventing the cat flap.
- Cats see six times better in the dark and at night than humans.
- Purring does not always indicate that a cat is happy. Cats will also purr loudly when they are distressed or in pain
- Cats should be kept in at night to help stop them roaming. This will reduce their tendency to hunt, get into fights with other cats as well as the risk of getting run over by cars.

"Cats seem to go on the principle that it never does any harm to ask for what you want." Joseph Wood Krutch

Dog Facts

- The only animals with prostates are dogs and humans.
- Two dogs survived the sinking of the Titanic, a Pomeranian and a Pekinese.
- The Poodle haircut was originally meant to improve the dog's swimming abilities as a retriever, with the pom-poms left in place to warm their joints.
- One of the world's oldest breeds of dog is the Saluki. It is thought to have been developed in ancient Mesopotamia around 3000 BC



The oldest reliable age recorded for a dog is 29 years, 5 months for a Queensland "heeler" called Bluey in Victoria, Australia. The average dog lives to around 15 years of age.

Poem for Gertie

By Belinda Yardley (Receptionist)

My dog Gertie died last August and I feel compelled to commemorate her passing in a poem I came across. I wish to dedicate this poem to her and all the other brave little souls that have passed but live on forever in our memories and feelings.

Do Not Stand At My Grave and Weep

Do not stand at my grave and weep.

I am not there. I do not sleep.

I am the diamond glints on snow.

I am a thousand winds that blow.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain.

I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush,

I am the swift uplifting rush of quiet birds in

circled flight.

I am the soft stars that shine at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry;

I am not there.

I did not die.

Anonymous

Waifs and Strays

By Rachel Jackson (Veterinary Nurse)

We have the pleasure of seeing each day many animals that are well loved and valued members of their families. This makes it so very difficult to come to terms with the suffering and neglect that is the plight of some. Many strays, or animals who through some misfortune need re-homing, arrive at Seaforth Veterinary Hospital and of course, a number of our staff have taken a fair few of them home. One of our vets, Dr Hendrika, has recently taken on a rather large and delightful though destructive malamute and husky cross. Not so strangely, despite the fact that a number of them were re-homed themselves, it has taken a little while

to sweeten her cats to the deal. Sam our head nurse has taken home any number of cats while Wendy and Kath two of our receptionists have made homes for a number of wayward rabbits between them.

This article was to begin with a eulogy for Tiki, who was one of our two unfathomable and much beloved practice cats. Tiki is greatly missed as the grey and white streak with the distinctive meowwl who always knew how to be in the way. It is most disheartening that now we can read any newspaper or document without his pushy self leaping upon it to lap up your attention.

However, although we will never forget him we have Trouble to occupy us. Trouble, or Benny as he is known when he is being good (less often), is a little ball of white fluff with big blue eyes and a naughty streak. He arrived at virtually the same time as a little cattle dog cross we named Honey. The trouble with Trouble is that he is deaf (not uncommon in blue-eyed white cats). So Of COURSE we had to keep him so he'd be safe from the road (it had nothing to do with his cute ways or amazing character). Angel (our other white practice cat) wasn't so sure about the new addition but has slowly come around and will even wash his face. Speaking of Honey (another special case) she was found on the side of the road after being hit by a car on Wakehurst Parkway. Her badly fractured leg was pinned and the most wonderful home was found for her where she has a play mate and acres to run on. And the four week old kitten found wandering on Seaforth Oval....?! Needless to say our staff will continue to take home various vagabond waifs. When that isn't possible we are delighted to know there are a great many clients with big hearts who come to the rescue.

Seaforth Veterinary Hospital

Our Web Page

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Lost and Found on the Web!

Over the last month or so our web page has undergone a major upgrade.

One of its new features is a daily upload of the Seaforth vets **Lost and Found** database.

Make it a first port of call if you have lost your pet. Be sure to tell your friends, as it is not limited to Seaforth Veterinary Hospital's clients. Anyone can have their lost pet's details added free of charge.

Dental Health Month is August!

by Dr Hendrika Tegelaar (Veterinarian)

In view of our continuing policy at SVH to provide the best care for your pet we are focusing on dental health, especially during the next 3 months, incorporating Dental Month in August.

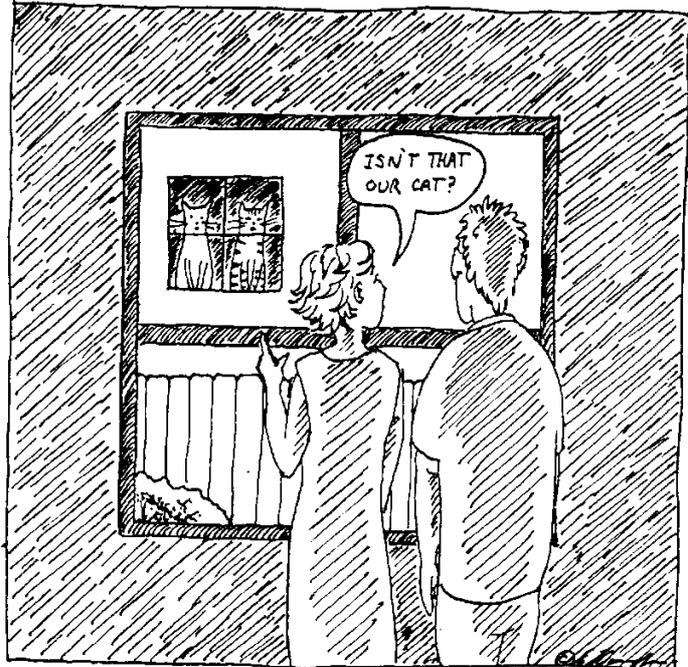
Dental disease is insidious and often goes without notice until there is an obvious problem e.g. bad breath, discoloured teeth, inflamed gums, pain and root abscessation.

An infected mouth causes more than just local inflammation and discomfort but affects the whole body, and as such is extremely important to look at long term prophylaxis. With this in mind we have slashed our prices to encourage **routine** cleaning and dental hygiene, and hence a healthier pet. But be confident our first class care has not been compromised. Dental prophylaxis for a dog is \$163 and cat \$155 which includes the day in hospital, a full gaseous anaesthetic with close monitoring and detailed scale and polish.

If a pre anaesthetic blood assessment is necessary or if a difficult extraction is required these will be charged for in addition to the above. Most animals will also benefit from the application of an dental sealant (Oravet) that replaces the need to brush your pets teeth daily essentially doubling the period between consecutive dentals.

During the next 3 months any dental booking will also be sent home with a free Greenie! Wonderful treats for your dog that also help to keep those teeth clean.

Between professional cleanings at the vet you can also start a dental care program at home by giving your dogs Greenies® which have proven benefits in



FELINE DEFECATION

(Cartoon Courtesy of Dr Libby Thompson)

plaque and tartar removal.

Greenies® are a multi-functional dog treat loaded with health benefits. It serves as a treat, a chew, greatly reduces dental plaque and calculus, helps reduce odour, freshens breath, improves digestibility of dry dog foods and provides nutrition. For optimum dental health, one Greenies® fed daily is recommended. Greenies® come in different sizes according to the size of your dog; Jumbo, Large, Regular and Petite. Greenies® are distinguishable by their green colour and their shape. They are in the shape of a bone at one end and the shape of a toothbrush at the other!

Greenies® are the first and only treat to be awarded the Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) Seal of Acceptance for controlling both plaque and tartar in dogs. The VOHC Seal is an international certification, endorsed by the Australian Veterinary Dental Society.



Greenies® primary ingredients are specially processed wheat gluten, natural flavours, unique teeth cleaning ingredients and chlorophyll, which gives Greenies® their natural green colour! Therefore, Greenies® do not contain any dyes, which will result in stained carpet or furniture (or teeth!). Also Greenies® will leave no grease spots or crumbs.



**Free Greenie
with each dental
in July-Sept!**