

# Companion Animal Newsletter Summer 2012



**CLUTHA · V · E · T · S ·**  
**Animal Health Centre**



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## Balclutha Vets

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Download our Puppy & Kitten  
Handbooks completely free from  
our website: [www.cluthavets.co.nz](http://www.cluthavets.co.nz)  
under the downloads page

## Summer Holidays

Summer has just started at the time of writing and the first few days of December have been very warm. Predictions are for a hot and dry La Nina summer but recent rain means the countryside is looking very green, even up in Central Otago. The start of warm weather always turns my mind to Summer Holidays and now is a good time to be getting your pets organised for their holidays. If you haven't already booked a kennel or cattery you may be too late. If you have booked make sure your pet has its vaccinations up to date.

What this means is that cats need to have been vaccinated for the respiratory virus vaccines in the 12 months before going into a cattery. Respiratory infections are widespread in the cat population and cat immunity is reduced by being in a cattery, making them more susceptible to development of respiratory infection. This vaccine is given as either one or two injections and, like all injectable vaccines, there is a lag between administration of the vaccine and immunity being produced. Don't delay – get this vaccine done now.

Dogs also need to be vaccinated for Kennel Cough within the 12 months prior to entering a kennel.

Kennel Cough is a highly contagious disease of dogs which can cause a whole kennel full of unvaccinated dogs to develop a harsh hacking cough in a very short time. Responsible kennels should insist on Kennel Cough vaccination. The vaccine is delivered as a little squirt of liquid into a nostril. It is quick and painless, and unlike injectable vaccines immunity is produced within 3 days of administration.

Call the Clutha Vets to make an appointment for vaccination if it is due. If you are unsure of the vaccination status of your pet call us and we can check our records.

## **Diabetic Cats**

We have seen some diabetic cats lately. Diabetes in cats is similar to Type 2 diabetes in humans where overweight and sedentary lifestyles make the body resistant to the effects of insulin. The pancreas produces more and more insulin till it is exhausted and fails. Insulin makes blood sugar (glucose) move into the tissues and when Insulin levels drop the blood glucose increases and eventually it appears in the urine.

Diabetic cats typically have a history of drinking a lot, and often have been fat then lost weight recently. This history also fits with kidney failure and hyperthyroidism which are more common. Fortunately it is easy to make a diagnosis of diabetes by measuring a high level of glucose in the blood, or by finding glucose in the urine.

Treatment of diabetes in cats is with insulin injections. We usually use a long-acting human preparation called Lantus twice daily. The tablets used in human Type 2 diabetics have been used in cats, but the results are inconsistent and Insulin is more effective.

Diabetic cats go on a prescription diet with a low glycaemic index which reduces the glucose surge after feeding and reduces the insulin requirement. Overweight cats are four

times more likely to become diabetic and are less responsive to insulin, so their diet should be restricted to reduce their weight.



*Heidi awaits her insulin injection*

Our three most recent cases demonstrate some of the features of diabetes. Heidi, an 8 year old Tabby, was rescued as a starving kitten and she decided never to go hungry again even if that meant stealing the dog's food or hunting. She weighed around 9 kg and was clearly overweight. She started losing weight and drinking more in April this year. Weight loss is good for overweight cats but not if it happens suddenly while still eating the same diet. Her blood glucose level was 25, compared to a normal of 4 to 8.

Buster is a 10 year old Abyssinian who weighed 6.6 kg and dropped to 6.0 kg over 4 weeks with a big increase in thirst. His blood glucose was 28.

Muffy, a 16 year old Moggie, was diagnosed as diabetic and put on Insulin. She initially did not do well and became thin, anorexic and very grumpy. We took a urine sample which revealed a urinary infection. Urinary infections occur in diabetics because of the sugar in their urine. In diabetic cats bladder infections make them unwell and more resistant to insulin.

All three cats are doing well on Lantus Insulin and prescription diets. Heidi is stable on 7 units of insulin twice daily. Her weight is less than 8 kg now but she is still in denial about

her weight problems. Buster is very sensitive to Insulin and was stable on 1 unit. Diabetic cats can go into remission and stop needing insulin. We thought this might be the case with Buster but when we stopped the Insulin his blood glucose went up to 17 so he is back on 1 unit twice daily. After starting Insulin, and a course of antibiotics for her bladder infection, Muffy is much happier and is no longer grumpy.

In summary, diabetes is a treatable condition in cats and if owners are prepared to inject their cats twice a day, and they (the cats) are carefully monitored, they can do very well and have an excellent quality of life.

## Skin Lumps and Bumps

Scooby is a 10-year-old Rhodesian Ridgeback cross. We hadn't seen Scooby for over 5 years when she came in to see us in late November with smelly itchy ears. On examination it was apparent that she had a yeasty ear infection which is common and easily treatable, though these infections do have a tendency to relapse. The owners also pointed out a tag of tissue on the back of the thigh, which had been there for a long time, but wasn't bothering her.

Because we hadn't seen Scooby for so long we did a full clinical examination on her. Looking in her mouth we found a broken back tooth which needed removal. On feeling her belly there was a big hard tumour palpable. The tumour was about the size of a very large fist. Abdominal X-rays showed it most likely originated from the spleen, and chest X-rays showed no sign of it spreading to the lungs. We took blood tests to confirm that her liver and kidneys were functioning normally and then we operated.

We removed the spleen with two lumps on it. The lumps weighed over a kilogram. We had a really good look around the abdomen and found no sign of any spread. We also extracted the broken tooth and removed the small skin lump. The surgery went really well for Scooby and she recovered quickly from the anaesthetic. Scooby ate her dinner that

night and next day was rearing to go home.

Samples sent to the lab showed the growth was benign and Scooby should make a full recovery. Scooby is a good example of finding something unexpected when a thorough clinical examination is done. It is lucky for her she turned up when she did because a swollen spleen can rupture spontaneously and cause an animal to bleed to death quickly. Occasionally we are presented with a dead dog for post-mortem following a sudden unexpected death and we find a ruptured splenic mass.



## Changes In Clinic Hours

We are aware it is sometimes difficult for clients to bring their pets to us because their work hours are the same as ours. Recent staff changes in Balclutha allow us offer **evening consultations on Tuesdays starting** in February 2012.

Also starting in February **we will be keeping some times open for consultations during lunchtimes on Wednesdays and Thursdays**, again at Balclutha.

We hope these changes make things more convenient for some of you.





## Register for this newsletter

These newsletters will be available on our website at [www.cluthavets.co.nz](http://www.cluthavets.co.nz) in the Newsletter section.

You can register to have them posted to you by either:

- Contacting us by email on [pbonini@cluthavets.co.nz](mailto:pbonini@cluthavets.co.nz)
- Calling us on 03 418 1280



## Puppy Preschool

Clutha Vets has been running Puppy Preschool classes for the last four years. The classes are run by Tracy and Michelle who do a great job teaching owners how to train and care for their pups. For the pups it is a great opportunity to learn social skills and make new friends. The classes run on four consecutive Monday evenings, with groups of between four and eight pup per class. This year 32 pups completed the course. The emphasis is on having fun. Speaking as a vet, we find that dogs that have been to Puppy Preschool are very happy to come to the clinic because they associate it with the fun they had at the Puppy Preschool.

If you are getting a puppy I would strongly recommend you enroll them in Puppy Preschool classes. Phone our receptionist for the next starting date.

# Happy Holidays!

## Christmas Opening Hours

Date	Day	Balclutha	Milton
23 Dec	Fri	8.00 - 5.30	8.00 - 5.00
24 Dec	Sat	Closed	
25 Dec	Sun		
26 Dec	Mon		
27 Dec	Tue		
28 Dec	Wed	8.00 - 5.30	8.00 - 5.00
29 Dec	Thu	8.00 - 5.30	8.00 - 5.00
30 Dec	Fri	8.00 - 5.30	8.00 - 5.00
31 Dec	Sat	Closed	
01 Jan	Sun		
02 Jan	Mon		
03 Jan	Tue		
04 Jan	Wed	8.00 - 5.30	8.00 - 5.00

## Last, but not least....



The staff at Clutha Vets wish you and your family – both two legged & four

***Merry Christmas  
and a Happy New  
Year***