

Companion Animal Newsletter Winter 2012



CLUTHA VETS
Animal Health Centre



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**Download our Puppy & Kitten
Handbooks free from our website:**

www.cluthavets.co.nz
under the downloads page

Welcome

Welcome to our 2012 midyear Newsletter. The last 12 months have seen some significant changes in the small animal area at Clutha Vets.

For a start we now offer **Saturday morning consultations, and have a late night on Tuesdays at our Balclutha clinic.**

Monday	8.00am	to	5.30pm
Tuesday	8.00am	to	7.00pm
Wednesday	8.00am	to	5.30pm
Thursday	8.00am	to	5.30pm
Friday	8.00am	to	5.30pm
Saturday	9.30am	to	12.30pm
Sunday	Closed		

Balclutha Only

We have just upgraded some of our major equipment including a new Ultrasound Scanner specifically for small animals and a new Orthopaedic Air Drill at Balclutha, while the Milton Clinic has just taken possession of a new Dental Base Unit including a dental drill, ultrasonic scaler and polisher.

Our policy is to continually upgrade our equipment and facilities and combine this with continuing education of our staff, in order to provide the best service we can to our patients and clients.

Retained Temporary Teeth

We ran the 'Flip the Lip' Promotion for dental health in July. We saw a lot of older pets and some needed dentistry. Dental disease is common and important in older animals but often overlooked are dental issues in young growing animals. Just like their owners our pets have temporary or baby teeth, which they lose between four and six months of age. Generally this happens by itself, but occasionally the temporary teeth are retained.

Retained temporary teeth can be a major problem usually in small breeds of dog like Poodles, Maltese and Chihuahua. If the temporary teeth fail to fall out when the permanent teeth emerge the permanent teeth are displaced and this is particularly important for the fangs or canine teeth (the fangs are called canines even in cats).

Retained lower canines push the permanent teeth towards the midline and result in a condition called base narrow. This often causes the teeth to poke into the roof of the mouth rather than fitting into the gap between the upper canines and incisors.

Retained upper canines push the permanent teeth forward so they hit the lower canines and prevent proper jaw closure.

Displaced canines are not just cosmetic defects – they can cause major orthodontic problems that can be difficult to treat. Mal-aligned permanent teeth causing problems can be shifted by specialist treatment with the use of wires or acrylic plates or more usually extracted. Prevention is easy and effective. Any temporary tooth is extracted once the permanent tooth is through.

The rule of thumb is no mouth should have a permanent canine fully through while the temporary canine is still present. Because many dogs are neutered at about six months of age we routinely find retained temporary teeth and remove them at the time of neutering.



Figure 1: Holly has retained temporary canines and upper premolars. The small temporary canines are pushing the permanent teeth out of position.



Figure 2: The temporary teeth have been removed which will allow the permanent teeth to drift back to a normal position.

Ash's Hernia

Routine procedures form the bulk of our workload but being a rural practice we get more variety and more major surgeries than most of our urban colleagues. Below are a couple of the more unusual recent cases.

A hernia results from movement of organs in the abdomen through a defect in the abdominal wall. By far the most common hernias we see are umbilical hernias in pups. These occur where a hole in the muscle at the belly button allows a little fat to squeeze through and form a lump under the skin of the belly. We also see inguinal hernias quite commonly in bitches. These occur when fat or intestine move down the inguinal canal into the groin. The inguinal canal is the route by which the testicles move into the scrotum in the male embryo but also exists as a vestigial canal in the female. Why some bitches get an inguinal hernia is unknown. It occurs most commonly in Huntaways. Hernias usually appear as a soft painless mass in the groin of an otherwise well bitch. Treatment is by surgery to replace the hernias contents into the abdomen and stitch the canal closed.

Ash, a 6 year old Huntaway presented to us at 5.30 one evening. She came in with vomiting and depression that had recently developed along with firm swelling in her groin. The swelling was painful to handle and had a firm, sausage shaped tubular lump in the centre.

An Xray taken of the area showed the lump in the groin contained a segment of bowel filled with ground up pieces of bone. This is typical of a strangulated hernia. The intestine was squashed in the inguinal canal and the bowel was obstructed. Ash needed immediate surgery to relieve the obstruction.

We opened the area, replaced the bowel and closed the sac. The bowel in the hernia had sustained significant injury so we had to open the abdomen and remove approximately 15 cm of the small intestine. Ash made a rapid recovery and is now back at work.

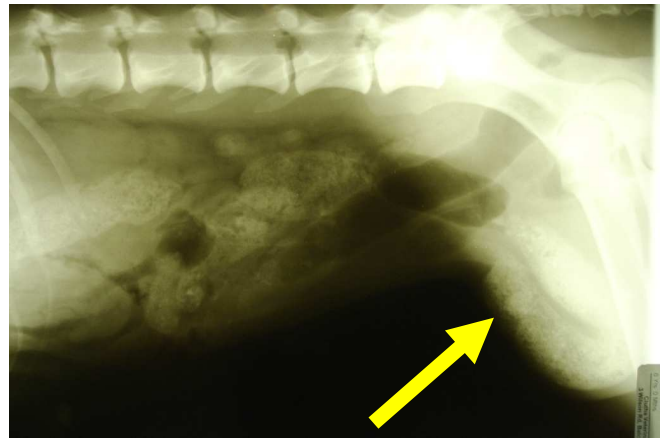


Figure 3: The arrow points to a large loop of intestine filled with bone which is visible in the hernia just in front of the back leg.

Strangulated hernias are rare but are always a surgical emergency. If a piece of bowel has its blood supply cut off it becomes gangrenous, ruptures and causes a fatal peritonitis. Most hernias don't strangulate but a few do. For this reason repair of any large hernia should not be delayed. Small umbilical hernias in pups only let fat through and rarely cause a serious problem so are safe to leave and repair at the time of neutering.

CK's Pelvis

Calvin Klein (CK) is a re-homed kitten who went missing one Sunday in June and was found injured two days later. He was bright and eating but very lame on his right hind leg with a lot of pain in his hip area. The X-ray below shows a fracture through the socket of his hip joint.



A fracture through any joint must be repaired perfectly or severe arthritis will follow. Repair of a fracture of the hip socket is impossible in a kitten because of the small size and softness of the bone. It is one of the most challenging of all pelvic surgeries even in a big dog. **Since the fracture was irreparable the only alternative was a salvage procedure called a femoral head osteotomy (FHO).** This involves removing and discarding the ball of the hip joint so that the leg is held against the body by muscles. The use of the hind leg after FHO in cats is excellent in the majority of cases.

CK had his surgery and stayed in the hospital for three days. He has made a very good recovery after surgery and has excellent mobility and pain free locomotion. With most orthopaedic surgeries strict rest is important to allow pieces of bone to fuse solid. FHO is the exception to this rule as movement is encouraged in order to keep the hip area mobile.



Figure 4: CK back for his sutures out says hello to Sharron (our small animal receptionist in Balclutha)

Washing Dishes in Coldwater

John went to visit his 90 year old grandfather in the backblocks of Saskatchewan. They spent the evening chatting and in the morning John's grandfather prepared breakfast of bacon and eggs. John couldn't help noticing a film over the plate and asked his grandfather "Are these plates clean?" His grandfather replied they're as clean as cold water can get them. Just eat your breakfast Sonny".

For lunch the old man made hamburgers. This time John noticed specks of egg around the edge of the plate and asked, "Are you sure these plates are clean Grandad?" His grandfather replied "I told you before they are as clean as cold water can get them. Don't fret and I don't want to hear another word about it".

Later that day John was leaving to go home but his grandfather's dog started growling and wouldn't let him pass. John yelled out "Grandad your dog won't let me pass". Without looking up the old man yelled "Coldwater stop that now yah hear me!"

Worming Program

The CDC runs a mail out to supply Droncit to dog owners for control of tapeworms and especially the sheep measles tapeworm. In their Newsletter to Dog Owners in July this year they advised that they are having ongoing problems with drug and administrative costs and are reviewing the scheme with a view to discontinuing it. **Clutha Vets has a scheme for the supply of tapeworm and routine worming pills, which has been running for over 20 years.** We face the same issues as the CDC but intend to continue with the scheme as we believe it is of great benefit to our clients. If you are interested in having worm pills mailed out to you please contact reception at either Balclutha or Milton.

Equine Dentals

Just a reminder for those of you who also own a horse, (or pony or donkey) that they, like cats and dogs, also require dental treatment from time to time. Horses have molar teeth that continue to emerge from the gums all their lives, and are kept ground down because they spend so much of the day chewing fibrous grass. However, if some of the teeth don't contact the opposite teeth then certain points won't be worn down and will continue to get longer until they are actually digging into the opposite gum. This can cause extreme pain when eating, and subsequent avoidance of this, resulting in weight loss. Or it may be the cause of general irritable behaviour.

A dental examination can be done to help correct this and other problems and involves light sedation, placement of a gag to open the mouth, and rasping to remove abnormalities. If done regularly this is usually a fairly quick procedure. If you're interested in hearing more about this, or booking in your horse, then feel free to phone the clinic.