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Introducing
our first Pet
Of The Month!
- page 2



Little Beans on
rescuing cats
and kittens!
- page 3

The Better Pet Gazette

part
1

*dermatological
conditions in dogs*

Itchy & Scratchy



Did you know that bacteria are normal residents on the surface of the skin and in the hair follicle of dogs?

Usually, dogs with normal, healthy skin and immune responses are able to control this bacteria and prevent them from overgrowing and establishing infection on the skin and in the hair follicle. However, sometimes triggers like allergic skin disease, hormonal diseases, parasitic diseases, and fungal diseases can cause secondary bacterial skin infections.

Allergic skin disease is the most common trigger for secondary bacterial infections in dogs and can include hypersensitivity to environmental allergens, food proteins, or parasites. These triggers can be accompanied by defective barriers of the outer layers of the skin that allow for bacteria to cross this protective barrier and cause infection.

Bacterial skin infections can actually look quite different in dogs with various coat types. Classic bacterial infections are characterised by lesions in the active inflammatory phase. However, as the infection progresses lesions can expand and rupture, resulting in crusting, hair loss and epidermal collarettes. Scaling and hyperpigmentation may occur as the infection moves across the trunk. Sometimes, bacterial infections can be non-inflammatory and only result in scaling and/or a waxy, greasy discharge on the surface of the skin.

In cases of allergies, simply managing secondary bacterial infections with oral and topical antimicrobial therapies can reduce the overall levels of itching and allow for therapy for allergic skin disease to be more effective in managing the primary disorder.

If you notice your pet has been scratching more frequently or seems "itchier" than usual, contact us at 4872 1144 to make an appointment for an evaluation.



The Better Pet Gazette is a monthly newsletter full of informative articles and tips on pet health as well as updates on what's happening at the practice. We hope you enjoy the read!



Have you met Virtual Vet Nurses Julie and Sophie yet?

Virtual Vet Nurses Julie and Sophie are ready to help you with anything that you may need regarding your pets. We invite you to have a chat with Julie or Sophie on **our website** and give us your feedback!



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Pet of the Mönth

July 2022



Meet our July Pet of the Month!

Introducing the very handsome Xander...

Xander is a 5 year-old German Shepherd and is the gorgeous furkid of Jodie Carroll. His favourite activity is going for long walks around the Southern Highlands and meeting new people. "He loves to jump on his quad and stay on it til we go for a run!" said Jodie.

If you would like your pet to be in the running for *Pet of the Month*, just upload your favourite pet pic to our website [here](#). Your photo will then be entered into a random drawing each month for *Pet of the Month*!

If your name is drawn, you will win fame and fortune (okay, maybe not fortune...) by featuring on our reception display, social media, newsletter, and website. Plus, you will be entitled to a FREE health check (worth \$85)!

Don't forget to fill out the upload form and include those important details like your pet's most funny/unusual habit and your pet's favourite activity. We look forward to seeing your pets in all their glory - it really makes our day, and our month!



no more
ouch!

New breakthrough treatment now available for cats suffering from osteoarthritis (OA).

Studies show that feline OA is one of the most prevalent and under-diagnosed conditions that affect our feline friends.

Cats are the masters at hiding their illness, a response that comes from their wild ancestors, who quickly learned that showing a weakness such as pain could lead to their demise.

Enter Solensia® - a breakthrough in osteoarthritis (OA) pain treatment, just for cats. It's the FIRST and ONLY antibody therapy for cats with OA pain, and it's only a once-monthly injection!

There is now an easy, safe way to manage the pain associated with OA. It addresses stiffness in movement and pain during bed rest, resulting in greater quality of life for your cat. During clinical trials, Solensia® demonstrated positive results. 76% of cat owners noticed sustained improvement in their pet's movement as well as a marked difference in their attitude to life.

Solensia® offers a solution that will enable your cat to enjoy its senior years without excruciating joint pain and with greater freedom of movement.

As in most treatments, some cats will have an almost perfect response, whereas other cats may not enjoy the same level of pain relief. A lot depends on your cat, its health and condition, and how advanced the level of pain has become.

But now we can offer Solensia® as a conscious health choice for cat owners that offers relief from the onslaught of OA. You can learn about feline arthritis and how Solensia® works by viewing **this video**

featuring Dr. Duncan Lascelles, Professor in Small Animal Surgery and Pain Management at North Carolina State University.

We are proud to be offering this new, effective - and life changing - treatment to help cats who suffer from chronic OA pain.

For more information on Solensia® for cats or to book an appointment, please give us a call at 4872 1144 or book online [here](#).





Little Beans Cat & Kitten Rescue was started in April 2021 by Tahlia and Kelly. Both these amazing ladies had been fostering previously for another local rescue group when they made the brave decision to start their own. HIGHlands has been donating our services toward the veterinary care of the Little Beans rescue kitties since April 2021.

What is the main focus of your organisation?

We want to better help our communities understand the importance of desexing cats and kittens. When a cat or kitten has come to us from a horrible situation - whether it be the environment or their health - we aim to find it a forever home where it is loved, safe, warm and healthy.

How do you fund your operation?

Initially, we were using our own finances to run Little Beans. We then created a Foundation. The fair and manageable adoption price for our cats and kittens covers their vet work and some supplies. We also receive many donations from our community with regards to litter, food, bedding, etc. We are so very grateful for our supporting communities!

Recent research shows that feral cats kill an estimated 1.4 billion native animals each year. What is your advice to the public?

We are HUGE advocates for sterilisation - please desex your

cats and kittens! The ongoing cycle of breeding for cats is astronomical. This poses a massive risk to the native wildlife. We also encourage our adopters to keep their furcats indoors, unless they are supervised for short periods of time outside. Or, have a secure and safe cat enclosure set up.

What diseases do you encounter most with the feral kittens that you rescue?

Unfortunately, we see a LOT of cats and kittens come to us from the streets in awful condition. Some kittens are born with their internal organs on the outside, others with flea infestations, ringworm, mange, flu, broken limbs, severely underweight and malnourished; the list goes on. It's extremely heartbreaking. We have lost many lives to the poor conditions these babies live in.

How can people help?

There are many ways the community can help! If you have the space and love in your heart and home, adopt a rescue. Otherwise, donations can be made toward our vet bills or resources, such as litter, food, bedding, and toys.

If you would like to donate, please visit Little Beans Go Fund Me page [here](#). Also, check out the adorable fur babies currently up for adoption on Little Beans' [Facebook page](#).



Do you have a burning question about your pet that you would love to know the answer to? Are you confused about some aspect of pet welfare and would like an expert's opinion on it?

If so, tune in to Highlands FM Radio 107.1 every second Thursday at 2pm. Our own vet extraordinaire, Dr Diederik, will be answering questions and talking about what he knows best - pet healthcare and well-being. His next guest spot on this seriously fun segment will be on Thursday, 11 Aug.

If you have a particular question you would like answered, you can email it directly to us [here](#). Or, go online and send your question through to Highlands FM Radio. It is as easy as going to [this link](#). Fill in the online form with your details and your question for Dr Diederik, hit the Submit button and you are done! Then just tune in to the show, as Dr. Diederik answers all of the burning questions sent in by listeners!

upcoming

f LIVE TALK



pet insurance

is it really necessary?

Join us on your lunch break:

03.08.22 @ 12:30pm

f LIVE Highlands Veterinary Hospital
03 - AUG - 2022 - 12:30PM

Veterinarian Dr Diederik Gelderman explains how pet insurance can be a lifesaver if your pet unexpectedly becomes injured or ill.



Many pet owners ask about the necessity of pet insurance. With the cost of living going up, it is a very relevant question.

Sadly, accidents do happen and it can be heartbreaking to have to decide between the cost and whether you can afford the treatment for your pet. Insurance smooths that all out and lets you be in control of your pet's health care. Pet insurance is flexible, so you can tailor it to suit your pet and your financial situation.

Insurance goes a long way to cover the medical costs of a pet, giving you peace of mind. Just knowing that you won't have to dip into the household budget is a relief. Dr Diederik will explain the 'must-haves' for pet insurance and what to look for in a policy.

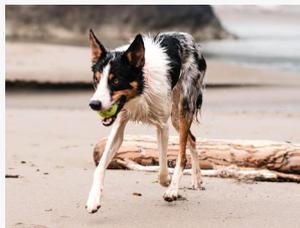
Please listen in on Wednesday, 3 August at 12.30pm on our Facebook page [here](#). If you can't make it, we will be recording it so you can listen to it later.

JULY FACEBOOK LIVE TALK RECAP

“Why is My Dog Limping: Dislocating Kneecaps and Cruciate Disease”

Last month, Dr Diederik explained how cruciate disease is a common orthopaedic condition. It is when the cranial cruciate ligament within the dog's kneecap degenerates over time and ruptures, causing your dog pain and the inability to move freely. Another condition is luxating patella, when your dog's kneecap dislocates sideways or away from the kneecap. Treatments vary for each situation, ranging from conservative medical management to surgery. Smaller or younger dogs are often prone to this condition.

If your dog is limping, please don't ignore this - as it will only get worse. Come in so we can check your dog over and offer a course of action for recovery. If you missed this talk, click on [this link](#) for a replay of this interesting subject.



HERO

OF THE MONTH

AUGUST 2022



Jasper is a beautiful Kelpie who was brought into HIGHHands by his owners, as he was suffering from a swelling in his neck.

After an extensive check-up, Jasper was put on antibiotics and it seemed to work. But the moment Jasper finished the course, the problem returned.

Dr Diederik then booked him in for surgery. As we suspected, a grass seed was causing the problem. Grass seeds can burrow themselves into the body, causing an abscess. Dr Helen conducted the surgery and found not one, but three, chronic abscesses! Each one was filled with fluid, but none of the abscesses contained a seed.

After draining each abscess, Jasper went home to recover. But only a couple of days after surgery, a new abscess popped up. Back he came to HIGHHands, and we put him straight into surgery again. As we drained the abscess, we finally found that deplorable seed. It was buried deep into the tissue of the new abscess.

At last, we were able to remove the seed. Now Jasper is feeling great! If we had not found it during the second surgery, we were getting prepared to refer him for an MRI scan. Luckily, that was not needed!

Jasper was a great patient and the relief from the pain gave him a new lease on life. Gotta love a happy ending!



What can we do as breeders, buyers, owners and vets to consider health in these breeds?

Breeders need to educate buyers on these health considerations and owners need to visit their veterinarians for advice early on. Veterinarians need to support owners, breeders and most of all, the patients, to ensure a healthy life going forward. Let's keep their weights in check, their nostrils open, their backs strong and their tails straight!

Here are some links breeders can access to start the journey on breeding for health:

- 1. Chondrodystrophy (CDDY and IVDD Risk) and Chondrodysplasia (CDPA)**
- UC Davis Veterinary Medicine
- 2. Epidemiological Study of Congenital Malformations of The Vertebral Column In French Bulldogs, English Bulldogs and Pugs**
- British Veterinary Association
- 3. Breeding French Bulldogs So That They Breathe Well: a Long Way to Go**
- National Library of Medicine
- 4. Conformational Risk Factors of Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome (BOAS) in Pugs, French Bulldogs, and Bulldogs**
- Various collaborators



Last month, we spoke about the health considerations of Brachycephalia. This month, we move away from the head to discuss Screw Tail, Vertebral Malformation and Intervertebral Disc Disease.

What is a screw tail?

A screw tail is a short, kinked tail. The tail has fewer vertebrae and many of the vertebrae are malformed and fused. Affected breeds include English Bulldogs, French Bulldogs and Boston Terriers. Although Pugs have curly tails, few have the caudal vertebral malformations seen in the other screw tail breeds.

So why is this a problem?

The tail can be so kinked that deep skin folds appear at the base of the tail. This can lead to infection and skin fold dermatitis.

More importantly, however, is pathology in the rest of the spine. The vertebral malformations causing the kink in the tail commonly occur simultaneously in the thoracic vertebrae. This can cause various abnormal curvatures of the spine (Kyphosis, Lordosis or Scoliosis). Some of these malformations may predispose these dogs to Intervertebral Disk Disease (IVDD).

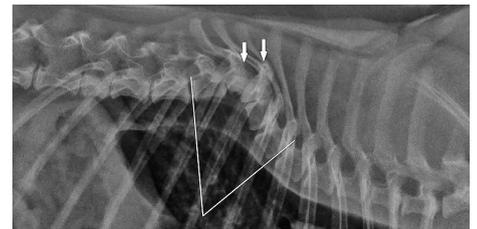
What is IVDD?

The intervertebral disk is a disk that sits between two vertebral bodies. Intervertebral disk disease occurs when a disk ruptures, herniates, bulges or slips.

What causes IVDD?

As mentioned, certain vertebral

malformations can predispose dogs to IVDD. More commonly, IVDD is linked to Chondrodystrophy, a disease that causes an abnormal premature degeneration of intervertebral discs. It's common in our short-legged dogs, including Dachshund, Corgis and Bulldogs.



What are the symptoms?

This depends on a few factors: which disk is affected, which direction the disk has moved/bulged, and the severity of the compression. Symptoms can include: mild to severe acute pain with vocalisation, shivering, low head carriage, limb weakness, knuckling and even limb paralysis.

What is the treatment?

Treatment depends on severity and ranges from strict cage rest and anti-inflammatories to spinal surgery.

What is the outlook?

We need to work together! Breeders should carefully select breeding stock. The research on this is ongoing and it is important to follow the science and not Dr Google! Dogs can be DNA tested to see if they carry the gene for Chondrodystrophy.

If you would like your dog to be tested or have any concerns about IVDD, please contact us at the clinic.