



4 Paws Vet

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2014 /2015

Staff News!

- Very exciting news to report in this issue of the 4 Paws Vet newsletter. Our wonderful receptionist **Rachel** has given birth to a gorgeous little girl named Freya. They are both going really well and we wish Rachel and Mike all the best with their adventure as new parents.
- Please welcome our new receptionist **Alex**. Alex joins us after many years experience in veterinary practice and we are thrilled that she has joined our team.
- Our amazing veterinary nurse, **Amy** also has exciting news! She has announced her engagement to her long time partner Scott. We wish them both luck and happiness in planning their impending nuptials!

Summer Fun for your Furry Friends?

Summer is here and it's time to get outside and have fun in the sun and enjoy the beautiful warm weather! This year, instead of leaving your beloved pets at home, try incorporating them into your summer activities so that they can spend some quality time with you. There are plenty of fun, safe activities you can do with your dog, for example:

- Going for walk along a dog-friendly beach or at the local park
- Swimming is an excellent activity for dogs, either at the beach, lake or other dog-friendly water spot (but

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don't forget to rinse them off with fresh water afterwards!). Take a ball or other floating toy for them to fetch in the water (no sticks!)

- Go for a picnic in the park with your pet
- Take your dog with you to your local cafe or markets

Cats are a little trickier to take with you when you go out, but you can give them some exercise by:

- Teaching them to use a harness so that you can take them for short walks, visits to the park (keeping them away from dogs of course) and to visit friends
- Investing in an outdoor cat park or enclosure, where they can spend time with you outdoors

No matter what you do, please always ensure that you avoid the heat in the middle of the day, do not over-exercise your pet in hot weather, NEVER leave your pet in the car unattended and ALWAYS ensure they have access to plenty of cool fresh water.



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Noise Phobia

'Tis the season to be jolly! This time of year brings celebratory parties, fireworks and regular afternoon thunderstorms to Sydney. This can be a terrifying time for pets as their hearing is much more sensitive than humans. Vets, councils and rescue groups are flooded with frightened stray animals during this period. In the past, the RSPCA nationwide has prepared for a 400% increase in the number of animals arriving at their shelters from New Year's Eve into the first couple of days of the New Year following the fireworks. About 20% of pet dogs are affected by noise phobia (reports in cats are less common likely due to them hiding rather than owner-seeking behaviour when distressed), so pet parents need to be informed this silly season!

Owners most commonly recognise something is wrong by the reaction of their pet upon hearing or during a noise event. The obvious **signs of a noise phobia** include:

- Pacing, hiding, trembling and seeking out the owner
- Licking lips, loss of appetite, vomiting and salivation
- Low tail carriage and crouching to the ground
- Excessive grooming and self-trauma
- Continuous yawning and vocalisation
- Property damage (house soiling, chewing), trying to escape and running onto the road
- Diarrhoea, frequent urination and expressing anal glands.

However, pets may show more signs in the anticipation of an event, which is less easily recognised. Additionally, less obvious signs include your pet becoming very quiet or the physiological response to the phobia, such as dilation of the pupils, increased blink frequency, an increased or decreased heart rate, sweaty paws and tense muscles.

Treatment and management:

- Exercise your pet prior to the noise event to tire them out, such as a brisk walk with a dog or a game with a cat.

- During the noise event, pets should be kept secured inside in an isolated area, to limit damage they may cause.
- Secure hiding places can be created, such as a cupboard lined by pillows to reduce noise volume, that your pet can seek out when scared, particularly if the owner is not home or if there is a party occurring at the house.
- Owners should not reinforce the behaviour by comforting their pet, but instead be unresponsive to the noise to show that noise is not a concern.
- A Thunder Shirt® can make pets feel secure, without owner engagement, or alternatively a pheromone calming collar or infuser.
- Alternatively, owners can engage their pet in their favourite game during the noise event as a distraction and to make it a positive experience.
- Distracting noises, such as turning on the radio or the TV, can be of value.
- Outside of the immediate noise event, pets should be gradually desensitised to the noise, using noises that resemble the noise initially and then moving on to the problem noise, such as on a recording or identical noises from the internet.
- Medications may be required in the short-term for some cases during the noise event, but should NOT replace behavioural therapy and modification.
- Ensure microchip and collar details are current in case your pet does escape.
- Please call us at 4 Paws Vet if you have any questions or concerns.

New SMS Reminder system at 4 Paws Vet

Keep a look out for our new sms reminder system at 4 Paws Vet. We will be sending you an sms to remind you to give your pet their flea or tick prevention or their worming tablet. This will help keep those nasty parasite infestations at bay! Please call us if you'd like to be added this new reminder system.