



A healthy dog is a happy dog

“Feed your dog well, take your dog for daily walks, attend to de-worming, annual inoculations and monthly tick and flea control”

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ULTRA DOG ADVERT

If your dog is sick, take it to a vet! Basic health rules to help prevent illness: feed your dog well; pick up the dog faeces daily and put in your wheelie bin; take your dog for daily walks to improve his physical and mental health (and yours!); attend to alternate monthly de-worming, annual inoculations and monthly tick and flea control.

Babesiosis (Biliary) is a tick-borne illness. Always protect your dog from ticks by using vet-recommended products, especially in warm, wet weather. Not every tick that bites your dog makes it sick - but don't become complacent. Some ticks carry a smaller organism which passes into the dog's blood stream causing anaemia, loss of appetite, white gums, swollen stomach and sometimes death.

Bad breath can be caused by tooth decay and gum disease. The bacteria breeding in the dog's mouth can spread to infect his vital organs. Brush your dog's teeth regularly and ask your vet to check his teeth whenever he's there for a consultation.

Bloat A swollen stomach can be caused by a build-up of gases from food fermentation in the stomach and once full the stomach can 'swing' around on itself, thereby cutting off incoming blood supply and also cutting off gases building up. The cause is unknown but feeding several small meals a day instead of one large one can help to prevent bloat. The dog should rest and avoid running and horse-play after meals. A swollen stomach is serious – see your vet immediately.

Cancer is said to be the most common cause of death in dogs. If your dog has a pink skin, apply sunscreen to exposed areas daily throughout the year.

Car sickness Don't feed your dog prior to travelling in the car. Try to get the dog accustomed to the car by taking him for short trips to pleasant places. Vomiting can be triggered by fear.



Canine distemper is a contagious illness, the signs of which are coughing, fever, gagging and runny nose. It can be deadly if not treated promptly by your vet.

Tracheobronchitis, commonly called Kennel Cough, has nothing to do with kennels! It's spread by a germ which the dog can get anywhere. There's a vaccine to prevent kennel cough, so have your dog vaccinated.

Diarrhoea can be a sign of many illnesses or it can be caused by fear or stress. If the diarrhoea persists then see your vet. In the case of a puppy, there's no time to lose.

Heat Stroke Don't leave a dog in a parked car – ever! The heat inside a car can reach 50°C in minutes. Don't exercise your dog in hot weather. Provide shade in the garden. When a dog over-heats, damage to internal organs may occur. Plunge him into cool (not cold) water. Wet the groin. Avoid ice. The dog may lie on a wet towel, but don't cover him with the towel.

Human medicine Never give pets human medicine. An animal's metabolism is different to ours. Throw away medicine that's past the expiry date.

Obesity is a killer. Being overweight puts too much stress on the heart, spine, and legs. Take your dog for invigorating walks each day and cut out table scraps and endless treats. Most dog pellets are completely balanced and the dog doesn't need table food as well.

Photos by Jasper Coetzee



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Although each branch handles all species, Kenridge is our exotics (reptiles, wild animals, etc) branch.



Snake bite DOs and DON'Ts

Old theories on what to do when your dog has suffered a venomous snake bite abound. What not to do:

- Do NOT use a tourniquet – it can restrict the circulation to the area, causing more tissue damage than the bite itself
- Do NOT cut over the wound
- Do NOT try to catch the snake that bit your pet, although a photo will help with identification (but don't get bitten while taking the photo)
- Do NOT cut and suck the venom out of the bite. Human saliva contains bacteria that can cause wound infections.
- Do NOT apply ice to the area.

This is what you should do: limit your pet's activity and keep him/her as calm and quiet as possible to help slow the venom's access through the circulation; get your pet to the nearest veterinary clinic with extreme haste. Even non-venomous bites can cause tissue damage and infection. For venomous bites, the use of antivenin is controversial. A veterinarian will determine if it's recommended for your pet.

Snake bite kits are somewhat impractical for most pet owners. Apart from being very expensive, many antivenin products are effective only for a particular snake species and may not work if a different species bites your pet. It also requires an intravenous injection which isn't easy if you're not medically trained. Administering antivenin can trigger a fatal allergic response, which can only be managed at a clinic. Plus, many antivenin products have a limited shelf life - making them impractical to keep handy.

The relentless march of age happens to every living creature, including your pet canine. And with age comes illness and difficulty. Deciding when your dear pet's life has no more quality is a painful but necessary and kind decision.

Quality of life varies from individual to individual. Although your veterinarian can guide you with objective information about diseases or a personal perspective of a disease condition, you know your pet's ways, habits and nature better than anyone else. The final decision rests with you.

We provide some guidelines on quality of life. Elderly pets or those with chronic or incurable diseases that are given proper medication and care should be able to:

- eat, drink and sleep comfortably without shortness of breath
- have an interest in what's going on around them
- do mild exercise without collapsing or experiencing profound exhaustion
- appear comfortable and free of moderate to severe pain
- have control of their urine and bowel movements - unless the disease affects one of these organs

Whenever there's a chronic condition, some days will be better than others and one should

learn to expect ups and downs. You must determine what balance is acceptable for the sake of your pet. Speak to your veterinarian about any concerns regarding your pet's condition.

Quality of life matters



At some point, your dog's life may not be pleasant to him/her anymore. In such an instance, euthanasia is a gift – freeing your friend of pain, extreme discomfort and loss of dignity.

General guidelines are if your dog:

- becomes exhausted with mild exertion - he can't even walk from one room to the next without collapsing
- is unable to maintain his body weight despite a normal appetite
- isn't eating anything you offer
- cries or howls excessively, which might indicate pain,

confusion, delirium or seizures

- no longer maintains control over his bodily functions and urinates or defecates on himself
- has uncontrollable seizures, breathing distress or there's continual vomiting or diarrhoea

Consult your vet if your dog is experiencing any of these signs. Medication may help or it may be time to consider the gift of euthanasia, thus ensuring that your pet doesn't suffer.

Background info: www.petplace.com

quotable

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." – *Gandhi*

"With their qualities of cleanliness, discretion, affection, patience, dignity and courage, how many of us, I ask you, would be capable of becoming cats?" - *Fernand Mery in Her Majesty the Cat*

"Don't accept your dog's admiration as conclusive evidence that you're wonderful." - *Ann Landers*

"No one appreciates the very special genius of your conversation as the dog does." - *Christopher Morley*

"A cat sees no good reason why it should obey another animal, even if it does stand on two legs."- *Sarah Thompson*

Ahhh!



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We take a look at upper respiratory infections (URI) in cats – better known as snuffles.

A-tish-oo!

Despite widespread vaccination, snuffles is a common disease in cats of all ages but tends to be particularly severe in young and old cats. Several infectious agents cause snuffles, but the majority of cases are caused by either feline herpes virus type 1 (FHV-1) and feline calicivirus (FCV).



Snuffles signs are similar to colds and flu in humans. FHV-1 tends to cause more severe disease with the major signs being inflammation of the lining around the eye (conjunctivitis) and nose (rhinitis). This results in a clear discharge from the nose and eyes which becomes thickened and purulent as the disease progresses due to secondary bacterial infection. Cats tend to be dull and depressed with a raised temperature, sneezing and are reluctant to eat. In some cases coughing also features. The virus rarely causes skin lesions or invades the lungs causing pneumonia. Without treatment, signs usually resolve within 2 - 3 weeks but some cats are left with a chronic, intermittent nasal discharge or eye disease.

FCV tends to cause less serious disease, but clinical signs are dependent on the virus strain. Mouth ulceration can be a prominent feature of the disease resulting in severe inappetence. Sometimes ulcers may occur on the tongue, nose and hard palate. Some FCV strains cause lameness and fever syndrome in young kittens. Deaths following respiratory virus infections are rare, usually occurring in young kittens or old cats that have advanced disease before being taken for treatment.

Diagnosis is made mostly on clinical signs, but in cases with recurrent disease or in vaccinated cats a specific diagnosis may be required. This can be done by swabbing the cat's mouth and sending the swab in viral transport medium to a lab where the virus can be grown in culture and identified.

As is the case with human colds and flu, specific antiviral treatments aren't generally available. Treatment aims to control secondary bacterial infection with antibiotics and stimulating eating and drinking, because dehydration in particular could worsen the disease. L-lysine (an amino acid) may prevent future attacks in some cats.



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To help your cat, encourage him/her to eat and drink using multivitamins and mucolytics. Good nursing plays a crucial role. The eyes and nose should be kept clear of secretions by gently bathing the area with cotton wool. Steaming needs to be undertaken carefully. The cat is placed in the bathroom with the shower running at its hottest and filling the sink with equally hot water. Since the running water sounds may upset the cat, stay in the room, grooming and softly speaking to him to keep him calm. The steam will loosen secretions, making the cat feel better. Your cat can be encouraged to eat by providing highly flavoured foods such as sardines warmed to body temperature. Hand feeding also helps.

Severely ill cats may need to be hospitalised for additional care with intravenous fluids and feeding by naso-esophageal tube.

To prevent and control the disease, take your feline for a snuffles vaccination. Although vaccination won't prevent infection, it will reduce the severity of the disease drastically. In multi-cat households, particularly where new cats are arriving continually, vaccination alone may not be sufficient to control the problem. In this instance, isolation and quarantine are required.

Carrier cats are infected with snuffles but don't show clinical signs. Carriers are only infectious to other animals when shedding the virus. Viral shedding can be continual or intermittent.

Around 80% of cats that have been infected with FHV-1 become carriers. They shed the virus intermittently - usually during stressful periods (eg rehousing, lactation) and remain carriers for life. About 50% of cats infected with FCV still excrete the virus three months after they were originally sick. Some of these cats continue to excrete for up to 18 months.

A swab taken from your cat's mouth will show if he's an FCV carrier. FHV-1 carriers are only diagnosed if they're excreting the virus at the time the swab is taken,

which is unlikely. Even if your cat has had snuffles, vaccinate him, because he'll still be susceptible to infection.

Photos: Lynette Siebert

Facts about cats

The oldest cat on record was Puss from England, who died in 1939 just one day after her 36th birthday.

A cat will almost never meow at another cat. This sound is reserved for humans.

Sir Isaac Newton, discoverer of the principles of gravity, also invented the cat door.

Cats have 290 bones in their bodies and 517 muscles.

Cats wag their tails during internal conflict. It wants to do two things at once, but each impulse blocks the other. For example: if your cat's in the doorway wanting to go outside and you open the door to find it raining, the cat's tail will wag. He wants to go outside, but doesn't want to go into the rain. Once the cat makes a decision, the tail will immediately stop wagging.

The nose pad of a cat is ridged in a unique pattern, just like the human fingerprint.





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