



First-rate theatre facilities

“TAH has invested in the most technologically advanced equipment”



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BULLDOG OF THE CAT WORLD

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When your pets are admitted to TAH's Bellville branch for a procedure, you can rest assured that they're in a top-notch surgical theatre. Standards at this theatre are equal to many human theatres to minimise risk to your pet, because all pets deserve the same level of facilities as those that humans expect when they're admitted to hospital.

With filtered positive pressure air flow to prevent cross-contamination to or from other areas in the hospital, the theatres are self-contained. At the heart of the surgical facilities are state-of-the-art machines to deliver anaesthetic to pets and monitor their vital signs during an operation. This facilitates early detection of a potential problem and consequent swift reaction. The monitors record heart rate and rhythm, respiration and rhythm, oxygen levels, the amount of anaesthetic in their blood, blood pressure and ECG. TAH believes the additional monitoring is critical to ensure the best outcome for pets, particularly senior animals. All theatre equipment is covered by Uninterruptible Power Supply to ensure completion of an operation in the event of a power outage.

For added comfort the Bellville theatres are equipped with warm air blankets, called Bair Huggers, to keep a pet's temperature stable during surgery.



The emphasis in the theatres is on optimal sterility. Clean and dirty equipment don't ever cross paths. There's also minimal people movement - the greatest source of contamination - through the clean air spaces of the theatre wing.

Veterinary surgery entails some complex procedures such as tumour removal, damaged cruciate ligament repair, gastrointestinal surgery or pinning a badly broken bone. While there are always risks associated with any surgical procedure, you want confirmation that your pet's surgery is as safe as possible. That's why TAH has invested in the most technologically advanced equipment to ensure that even during the most arduous and complicated surgery, your furry friend will have the best possible chance of a successful result.

Beware too much holiday partying!

Nevermind all the fun, ensure that you keep your pet safe from holiday hazards. First up, it may be tempting to give your dog those leftovers, but this may cause gastrointestinal upset, resulting in vomiting and diarrhoea. Pets aren't used to the high fat foods commonly used for picnics and parties. Mayonnaise and other dairy-based items are particularly bad. Dogs and cats don't have the enzymes to digest dairy products.



Even if you feed your dog chicken or boerewors, they could get pancreatitis, abdominal pain, anorexia and vomiting.

The ideal weather for picnics and outdoor parties is a warm sunny day. Keep in mind that

your dog isn't able to dissipate heat. So, always exercise your dogs when it's cool, unless they're used to extreme conditions. And always provide enough water and shade.

Although water activities are fun, tragedy can occur without proper caution. Don't overdo playing fetch in the water. Older dogs weaken more quickly; thus swimming and keeping their heads above water become more difficult. If your dog has access to your pool, make sure he can in fact swim and get out of the pool easily if he falls into the water. If getting out is difficult, cover your pool with a safety cover.

Don't use fireworks near pets. If there are fireworks in your area, keep your pets indoors and give your pets veterinary-prescribed tranquillisers when you expect fireworks or thunderstorms.

When fishing, remember that dogs and cats eat bait - and may do so along with the hook and line. If your pet has swallowed a hook, don't pull the line. Tie the line to his collar to prevent him swallowing more of the line and contact your vet.



Causes of death in kittens

It's always sad to see a young life end. Young kittens are extremely vulnerable to trauma and this is a prevalent cause of death. External injuries may not be obvious, but trauma may become evident on post-mortem examination.

Neonatal isoerythrolysis involves an incompatibility in the blood group of kittens and their mother and is more frequent in breeds with a high prevalence of group B individuals – eg British Shorthairs, Birmans, and Devon Rex. It can occur if a group B queen has group A kittens. Some such queens have potent antibodies against group B blood. These antibodies are present in the colostrum and will be absorbed during the first 24 hours after birth. They destroy red blood cells, leading to anaemia. Affected kittens may die in the first two to three days.

Many congenital abnormalities may become apparent during the first few months of life and some may cause death in kittens. A few might be seen on casual examination, but mostly a post-mortem will be required. Inborn metabolism errors are recognised in man and other species and these can only be diagnosed in life, often requiring sophisticated laboratory investigation. A few congenital metabolism defects have been recognised in cats, but they've received little consideration. It's likely that they may account for occasional losses of young kittens.

Viruses can be a major cause of disease in young kittens in shelters and rescue organisations, but not usually until later. Kittens are most vulnerable between age four to six weeks when maternally derived immunity is waning. The respiratory viruses and Chlamydia are generally the most important infections in kittens.

Even though your dog might not always understand what on earth you're talking about, rest assured that he reads every movement of your body language 100%. As pack members, dogs communicate through conscious and subliminal signing or gesturing, watching for the reactions of the other individual.

I beg yours? Dog body language

For instance, you say, "Do you want to go outside?" walking towards the door. The dog might hear the word "outside" and read your body language to construe that you want to know whether he wants to go outside.



Eye contact

It's natural instinct for a dog to look away from another dog's eyes to avoid challenging him. A stare is a rude challenge. Therefore, dogs tend to look away from us, unless they're challenging us or we've trained them to do so. If we stare at them, the signal we transmit is one of confrontation. A dominant dog will stare back, growl, and escalate aggressive behaviour until the other party backs down, but a submissive dog will squat or roll in deference.

Head and neck position

If a dog holds his head up high, he's confident

or maybe challenging. If he holds his head low, he's deferring, fearful or depressed. A dog will read our head and neck carriage in the same manner. If you approach a dog with your head bowed, he'll recognise your body language as submissive, or soliciting play.

The muzzle and nape of the neck are sensitive areas because the dog's mother used these sites to deliver messages of admonishment and leadership. That's why children should be taught never to grab a dog by the muzzle or scruff.

Height from the ground

A dominant, in-charge dog will rise to his full height to show seniority. He then may rest his head or paw on the other dog's back. Acceptance of this action is viewed as concession.

When people tower over a dog or rest a hand on him the message is similar. Fearful dogs are less afraid of seated people. Sitting down on the floor can cause an anxious dog to approach you whereas previously he wouldn't have done so.



Pets in history

The Prophet Mohammed loved cats so much that he once cut the sleeve from his robe to avoid disturbing his cat which had gone to sleep in his arms.

Perhaps the most powerful universal belief associated with dogs is that they possess the ability of second sight. It's said that a dog can sense if death is imminent. This may be because we now know that the

dog can sense chemical changes in the air and the human body undergoes such changes close to death. Evidence abounds that supports this with dogs howling when the owner is ill. It's understandable then that hearing a dog howling has long been considered to be a death omen. The actual moment of death was thought to be marked by a dog howling three times and then ceasing.



Pampered Pets

The most common ailment affecting a cat's eye is inflammation or infection of the conjunctiva, the tissue lining the eyelids and attaching to the eyeball near the cornea. This is known as conjunctivitis. Allergies caused by pollens, grasses, etc or infections caused by viruses, bacteria or fungi can irritate the conjunctiva. If the white portion of the eyeball is also inflamed, this condition is occasionally referred to as 'pink eye'.

Depending on the cause, symptoms vary. Typically, both allergies and infections cause severe redness or a 'meaty' appearance of the conjunctiva. This is caused by oedema or fluid build-up and an increase in the size and number of blood vessels within the tissue. Either allergies or infections cause the eye to discharge.

The discharge consistency often helps determine its cause. Usually infections caused by bacteria, fungi, etc create a thick yellow or greenish eye discharge. When held shut the eyelids may stick together. This is because of a white blood cell accumulation or 'pus' excreted into the area so as to fight the infection. Allergies generally cause a clear or watery discharge. Regardless of the cause, a patient with conjunctivitis will often squint and/or keep the third eyelid partially covering the eyeball. Conjunctivitis is often painful, causing a cat to paw at or rub the eye against objects.

Although conjunctivitis isn't life threatening, in advanced infection cases the organisms can spread and affect other eye structures. Vision could become impaired. In addition, foreign

Conjunctivitis



Treatment for eye conditions is very specialised and needs veterinary attention as soon as possible

body infections may cause corneal ulcers which are extremely serious conditions. Conjunctivitis also may be a symptom of a more serious disease such as feline immunodeficiency virus infection. As in humans, some infections can be transmitted to other individuals. But allergies aren't contagious and thus pose no threat to other cats.

Treatment for eye conditions is very specialised

and needs veterinary attention as soon as possible. Certain eye drops or ointment can do more harm than good and it's crucial that the vet sees the affected eye prior to treatment.

A culture and sensitivity test may be necessary to determine if bacteria are the cause, and if so, what medication should be used for treatment. Scrapings of the conjunctiva can be made and examined to test for various viral infections. Eye drops or ointments are usually the drugs of choice. Eye drops are applied every few hours, while ointments usually are applied two to three times per day.

If the cause is suspected to be allergy, then various medications containing anti-inflammatories are available. If the cause is an infection, then bactericidal or fungicidal ointments or solutions may be applied. In severe cases, oral antibiotics are used in addition to topical preparations. Most cases will respond to treatment. However, it may take one to two weeks for full recovery. Generally treatment is continued for several days after the eye regains its normal appearance.

Many eye ointments containing hydrocortisones and antibiotics are frequently used when the exact cause of the problem is unknown. But under no circumstances should hydrocortisone-containing agents be used if a corneal ulcer is present. Although it's great in minimising eye inflammation, it may actually hinder the healing or worsen an ulcerated cornea.

Ref: Drs Foster & Smith Inc

Smarty pants

YOUR BIRD IS SMARTER THAN YOU THINK

Researchers are finding that birds can solve problems by insight and even learn by example, as do human children. Therefore, pet birds require intellectual stimulation and this can only be derived from play and training. Today, 'tool user', is also applied to birds. So, keep an eye on how your bird uses his toys, ropes and chew sticks. The items just might be put to new uses.

Considered the smartest of birds, parrots can be taught to distinguish colours, shapes, objects and even people. At one time parrots were thought to only mimic speech, but according to research there are parrots with a 100-word vocabulary who can identify 50 different objects, recognise quantities up to six, distinguish seven colours and five shapes, and

understand the difference between big and small, same and different, and over and under. Inspired to stimulate your bird with speech training? Check out a variety of educational CDs, tapes and books.

Exceptional memory - Wild birds can collect and bury thousands of seeds across hundreds of square kilometers, then retrieve more than 90%.

Birds enjoy intelligent play - Provided it's the right interactive toy, birds will invest hours in play to satisfy their curiosity and possibly earn intellectual reward.

Birds may display emotions - Scientists say birds have the right equipment for emotion. They have a limbic system, a specialised portion of the brain, necessary for true emotional behaviour. Other than birds, this system is found only in higher vertebrates - man and other mammals. Bird owners have



long felt they can tell whether their pets are happy or sad, fearful or content. Now research is underway to determine whether birds are aware of their own emotions and the impact this awareness may have on their individual behaviour.

Most bird owners already know what research is proving now - a bird is a smart companion!

CAT BREEDS:
British Shorthair

Bulldog of the cat world

A medium to large cat, the British Shorthair has a sturdy and muscular body, often described as 'cobby'. While the coat is short, dense and plush, the legs are short and heavy-boned with round paws. The tail is short to medium in length. Its massive head is rounded with a broad skull and the small ears are set wide apart. Large, round eyes complete the picture. Males weigh on average 5-10 kg, whereas a female weighs 5-7 kg. Due to its bulk and muscle, this cat is often referred to as the bulldog of the cat world.



Although the kittens are playful, adult British Shorthairs tend to be less active than other breeds. But they're good-natured and amiable. Being fairly independent, they're happy to amuse themselves – albeit often by snoozing. This is not a vocal cat.

British Shorthairs come in many colours. For many years, the more popular blue variant was common enough to have a breed name of its own: the British Blue. It remains one of the most popular colours. Other colours include black, white, red, cream, chocolate, lilac, cinnamon and fawn - in 'self' or 'solid', in addition to colourpoint, tabby, shaded and bicour patterns.

These felines like attention and enjoy being petted. They have a tendency to follow people from room to room, as they like seeing what's up. Some don't mind cuddles, but most prefer to keep four paws on the ground and be patted. They're known for learning small tricks spontaneously.

References
Wikipedia; www.cat-world.com.au/
Photo Tamila Aspen, Wikimedia Commons

Baker extraordinaire



Although Dr Margaret Haddow enjoys animals, it was her love for the science of medicine that propelled her into a veterinary career. "Intervening in a disease process using the correct drugs and surgical procedures is what motivates me," she explained.

Haddow grew up in Monte Vista and matriculated from Fairbairn High School in 1984. From there she went on to qualifying from Onderstepoort in 1991. For two years she worked at a large practice in Aberdeen, Scotland and on returning to South Africa, joined a small northern suburb practice for a year. After a few months of doing locums in the UK, Haddow started working at TAH in 1995 and took over the Kenridge branch from Dr Brook the following year. She was based there until leaving for the birth of her son seven years later. During the next few years she did locums for AAFL and TAH, but started working part-time for TAH again in 2010.

Enjoying most aspects of veterinary medicine and soft tissue surgery, Haddow added, "I strive to do what I can to ensure that the human/pet bond is beneficial to both man and pet. Over the years I've realised that pets are part of our lives to such an extent that one needs to spend time discussing options and treatments. This allows owner and family to make an informed decision."

Married to TAH's Dr Stephen Smith life is

quite busy for Haddow with children, Alex (9) and Robyn (7). Passionate about cooking and baking, family outings and creating a true family home, she goes out of her way to ensure the cookie jars are always full. With two vets in the house, the pets are many: Fox Terrier Winston, Rottweiler pup Kira, AAFL canine special Sid, two cats, many fish, five birds, tortoises, a snake and Robyn's frogs.

- Would love to meet:** Any person who shares my passion for good food
- Person who had the biggest influence on your life:** My late mother
- Philosophy:** Make your life count
- Sport (self):** Spinning & gym
- Sport (spectator):** Cricket
- Favourite actors:** John Travolta, Owen Wilson, Johnny Depp, Jack Nicholson
- Best time of day:** Tea time - any chance to put my feet up with the latest *Food and Home* mag
- Hobbies:** baking (especially pastries), cooking, entertaining, crocheting/X-stitching



- Food and drink:** Home-made steak pie with crispy salad & chai latte
- To read:** My cookbooks
- Website:** LOL weather – to plan my life
- TV programme:** Steve Irwin's animal shows
- Favourite holiday destination:** Kruger Park
- Biggest extravagance:** High tea at the Mount Nelson & my Le Creuset casserole dish

WHO'S WHERE **BELLVILLE** Dr Colin Levitan Dr Ian Campbell Dr Frank Kettner Dr Nolan Moss Dr Sam Pillay Dr Michelle Adam Dr Christa Gerber Dr De Wet Barnard Dr Kathryn Knipe Dr Keri Beviss-Challinor **DURBANVILLE** Dr John Adam Dr Izak van der Vyver Dr Bradley Hodgson **GOODWOOD** Dr Paulina Crous **PAROW** Dr Pieter Human **SONSTRAAL** Dr Ater McDonald **KENRIDGE** Dr Stephen Smith Dr Liesl Shaw Dr Margaret Haddow Dr Donna Brook.

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

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