

Cat Water Fountains

You may have seen Rumpelteazer drinking out of his water fountain on the front desk. After initially being scared of it, he has taken to it... well, like a cat to water.

The cat drinking fountain was designed by a veterinarian, in response to the need to get cats to drink more. Latest research on lower urinary tract disease and kidney disease in cats indicates that drinking may be the most important factor in reducing symptoms.

The simple design is based around the fact that cats enjoy moving water - this stimulates their curiosity, so entices them to drink more.

A carbon filter absorbs odours and tastes, and the water movement results in aeration - this combination of water aeration and filtration may also be a more pleasant taste for the cat. The bowl is plugged into an electrical source, and a quiet pump recirculates water from the bowl, releasing it as a fountain over the bowl.

The downside in some pet families is that everyone wanted to use the cat fountain! They are now available in a range of sizes, big enough for several cats and even the family dog.



Rumpelteazer showing off his new water fountain

To vaccinate or not to vaccinate? - FIV in our cats

The newspapers recently gave information about a new vaccination available to protect cats against Feline Immunodeficiency Virus, or FIV.

FIV is in the same family as human immunodeficiency virus, the cause of human AIDs, but FIV is not transmissible to humans. The virus is transmitted cat-to-cat, usually by bite wounds and causes a variety of illnesses in affected cats, often as a result of depressing the immune system. A warning sign of infection may be a pet that has chronically bad gum disease

or other illnesses that do not respond well to treatment.

Recent data suggests that the prevalence of FIV infection in New Zealand cats is relatively high, indicating that many cats, especially those that fight frequently, should be blood screened for infection.

Current vaccination recommendations are made on the cat's lifestyle, but most cats should be annually protected against respiratory viruses (or snuffles), and Panleucopenia, or cat flu. These are highly contagious, especially in cats that have close

contact, such as at a cattery. Some cats in a multicat situation will also be vaccinated against feline leukaemia virus.

However, the decision whether to also vaccinate against FIV is very complex, with issues such as different strains of infection, and vaccination making diagnosis of illness difficult. The Kelburn Vet Centre is waiting for more New Zealand research before making recommendations about this vaccine. In the meantime, if you would like more information about FIV please talk to one of our staff.

Kelburn Vet Centre's staff training

Some of you may have tried to ring, or come into the clinic on Thursday mornings to find that we are closed for staff training. We have had a veterinary practice consultant work with all our staff, and are continuing in-house nurse training and setting up new clinic protocols. This will be followed later in the year by building alterations to allow this new system to work, with a view to offering excellent service to our clients, and the best care to the pets that we see. We do apologise for the inconvenience to you in the short term.



Left to right: Our nurses Serena Johnston, Rachael McErlain, Hannah Cook and Sue Brown our Office Manager

Junami animal relief work

The Commonwealth Veterinary Association has an active team of veterinarians that respond to situations around the world where animal care is needed. People in the developing countries hit by the tsunami rely on their livestock for income and transport, so veterinary teams are working at a local level to help both the animals that have been affected by this disaster, and the communities they belong to.

The Kelburn Vet Centre, on behalf of our clients, has donated \$500 towards the CVA tsunami relief.

Canine Mast Cell tumours

These neoplasms are the fourth most common tumour and the most common potentially malignant tumour of canine skin. Canine mast cell tumours more commonly develop in Labradors, Boxers, Shar Peis, Boston Terriers and Pugs.

You may remember from our last newsletter that Vicki and Seton's Boxer Hannah, recently had five growths surgically removed. We're sure she wouldn't mind us

telling you that the one on her bottom was a mast cell tumour.

Any strange growth or swelling on your dog's skin should always be assessed by one of our veterinarians. If we are concerned by the growth a simple fine needle aspirate can be performed - a needle is inserted into the growth, and cells that are collected are sent to the laboratory. If the diagnosis is a Mast Cell tumour or cannot be made from

the cells, surgery to remove the growth is performed.

The very good news is that recent studies suggest that mast cell tumours may be less dangerous than previously thought, and that in many cases prompt surgical removal is all that is required. However, many dogs that have one tumour may have others appear elsewhere on the body, and these pets must be monitored carefully in the future.