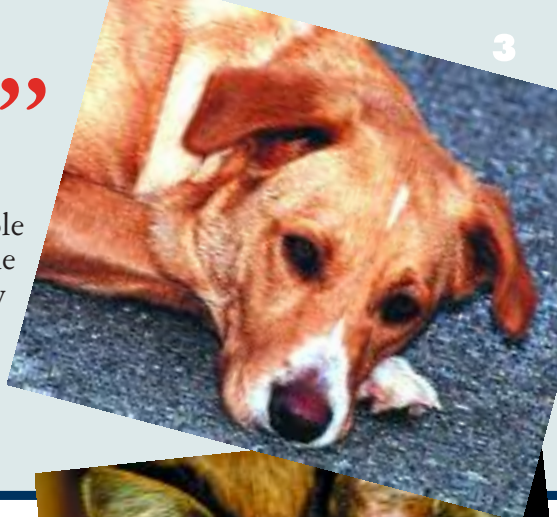


“Winter’s out - new laws are in”

We are well through winter now and Spring is just around the corner. The rest of winter and spring offers the promise of changeable weather and pet care issues that come along with it, including wind and rain - so make sure that your pet’s bedding is clean, comfortable and dry. Spring too brings the onset of the flea season, but remember that fleas can survive in warm homes right through winter, ready to burst out in great numbers as the weather starts to warm up.

The big news for pet owners recently has been the debate over microchipping of dogs. While owners may have mixed feelings about the new law, it is now just that, and as responsible pet owners and veterinary professionals we are obliged to make the law work. The lead story below provides an outline of the facts and we urge all dog owners to familiarise themselves.



At our clinic, every pet gets the X-Care treatment. This is a highly effective examination and follow-up process, tailored to the changing needs of a pet at the different stages in their life, and ensures every pet receives the highest standard of health care.

X Care Microchipping - the facts

As of the 1st July the new Dog Control Amendment Act 2006 became law.

From the 1st July the following dogs must be microchipped:

- X Dogs registered for the first time (mainly puppies).
- X Dogs classified as dangerous or menacing by the local council.
- X Unregistered dogs that are impounded.
- X Registered dogs that are impounded twice after this date.

As this mainly means new puppies being registered for the first time, we can perform this at the same time as their puppy vaccinations or neuter surgery, if you wish. They are only microchipped once in their whole life and there is a one-off charge for this service. You have up to two months to get the microchip inserted after which we provide a certificate for the local council.



Example of the certificate we provide for your local council

When the procedure is completed, dogs required by law to be microchipped will have their information entered onto the National Dog Database that is accessible to local councils, as part of their registration information.

There may be some confusion over the fact that after 1st July 2006 there will be two databases operating and your pet may be on both at the same time. They are:

- 1 The Government-legislated National Dog Database. While it is available to Dog Control Officers, the SPCA and Veterinarians it may not be able to be accessed 24 hours.
- 2 The Australasian Animal Registry, a private database used by vets to keep information on microchipped dogs and cats. When we scan lost pets this is the database we use. In use for many years, it is available 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week to reunite lost pets with their owners.

Our clinic is a NZ Veterinary Association Approved Microchipping Centre, ensuring microchips are correctly implanted and documentation completed. Please feel free to discuss the microchip and implanting technique with any of our suitably qualified staff.

X Care Small animals vs Large animals

We sometimes get asked if we do veterinary work on farm animals and horses (commonly called large animals). The answer is that this practice does no large animal work. Most of our vets have never even treated a horse or cow since leaving vet school. This is because they and this practice are committed to the veterinary medicine and surgery of domestic pets (commonly called small animals).



Farm animals and horses need vets who specialise in large animal care

Just as many doctors work only in specific disciplines, such as paediatrics, cardiology, surgery, etc, so do veterinarians. All the vets in this practice work specifically in small animal medicine and surgery.

Consequently we do not have the expertise to perform large animal work, nor hold the drugs or equipment routinely used to do large animal work. We do not even have routine insurance cover for this type of work.



This means if you own both small and large animals, we can help you with the needs of your domestic pets, but you need to use a practice that does large animal work for your farm animals and horses. Therefore we advise:

- X That you register with a practice that does large animal work, as some in Wellington are no longer taking new clients.
- X That you have good animal-handling skills yourself, as well as good equipment and facilities at hand.
- X If you are grazing a horse, you should consider moving your grazing closer to a practice that still does routine horse work.
- X That you have a plan for any emergency before you need it.

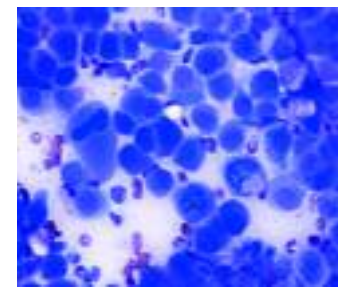
STOP PRESS: Farm working dogs have been made exempt from microchipping. This includes all dogs used primarily for herding and droving.

X Care Cancer: What to look for and how it is treated

Cancer is an unrestrained growth of cells that destroy normal parts of the body. Some cancers are malignant, very aggressive and can spread, whereas others are benign, slow growing and are unlikely to spread through the body. Cancer is very common, particularly in older age pets. Because the cause of cancer is largely unknown, prevention is generally not possible. In veterinary medicine the best strategy is to detect and treat cancer early.

The early signs of cancer are:

- Abnormal swellings or lumps that persist or continue to grow
- Sores that do not heal
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Bleeding or discharge from any body opening
- Offensive odour
- Difficulty eating or swallowing
- Hesitation to exercise or loss of stamina
- Persistent lameness or stiffness
- Difficulty breathing, urinating or defecating



Cancer cells from a prostate. See how they appear to be different shapes and sizes. Normal healthy cells look the same as each other.

If your pet has any of these signs, they need to be seen and the cause diagnosed. For lumps this may be as easy as a “fine needle biopsy and cytology”. This procedure involves a fine needle being inserted into the lump and the cells looked at under the microscope. A more involved workup may be required for the other signs including blood tests, x-rays, ultrasound or surgery to collect a portion of the cancer, otherwise known as a biopsy.

A diagnosis of cancer often brings with it feelings of fear, loss of control and loss of hope. In fact cancer is the most curable of all the chronic diseases. Surgery and chemotherapy are the two most commonly used treatments. Chemotherapy is often used after surgery to ‘mop up any left over cancer cells’. Chemotherapy simply means treating the disease with medication. Chemotherapy drugs can be given orally or by injection.



Kipi has been on chemotherapy for 21 months for lymphoma - a malignant cancer that had spread throughout his body. Except for a slightly thin coat he has been well and active. All going well he will stop chemotherapy in 3 months time.

The side effects seen in veterinary chemotherapy, although not entirely absent, are usually significantly less than those seen in human medicine because lower dosages of medication are used. Many pets show no side effects at all and in fact are much happier because they are well when their cancer is controlled. It is rare for pets to lose their coat when on chemotherapy.



X Care

Senility: Does it affect dogs & cats?

The aging process is associated with progressive and irreversible changes in the body systems. One problem in senior pets is canine cognitive dysfunction. Similar to senility in people, it is a degenerative brain condition characterized by confusion.

Signs may include:

- Decreased interest in food
- Decreased ability to recognise places, people or other animals
- Disinterest in people
- Disruption of the sleep-wake cycle
- Wandering
- Repetitive and compulsive disorders
- Persistent barking or meowing etc
- Increased house soiling particularly in cats

A diagnosis of cognitive dysfunction usually requires one or more of the previous signs in the absence of any physical cause. It is important that medical problems are ruled out prior to a diagnosis of cognitive dysfunction.



Treatment includes medication and therapeutic diets. These treatments can result in significant improvements in the pet’s quality of life.