



North Shore Veterinary Hospital

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They say "time flies when you are having fun" so it was with some surprise that I realised I have now been with the clinic for 10 years.

We have had the inevitable sad times where we have had to say "goodbye" to our beloved pets, either due to ageing, to chronic disease, to incurable cancers, or other inoperable conditons. These are however all

part of the cycle of life and overall my time at the clinic has been a very happy and memorable one.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank my band of nurses who have worked so well, often beyond the call of duty, to support our clients, their pets and me.

I certainly have a dedicated core of animal owners with some real characters for pets which

make it fun to come into work each day. The surprise and variety is endless and keeps me coming back for more.

To all of you have enquired throughout the year as to the health of my ageing "Gabby" I am happy to report she has had her 20th birthday and is patiently waiting for her mum's return in July.

Merial has recently introduced a new product to complement their Frontline range of flea control. Billed as "the most comprehensive parasite for cats" it effectively treats, not only fleas, but also roundworm, hookworm and tapeworm. This means that defleaing and deworming our cats has just become a whole lot easier. Because it is necessary to treat for tapeworm only once every 3 months or so, the product is sold individually with the recommendation to use Frontline in the intervening months.

Another topical product which does cover all three worm types is Profender; this is one we have used for those hard-to-pill cats. For those still preferring flea collars to topical products, a relatively

new product Seresto(R) by Bayer is available. This complete flea and tick collar provides protection for 8 months. The collar is odourless and water resistant and very well tolerated by owners and pets. For cats and small dogs the collars

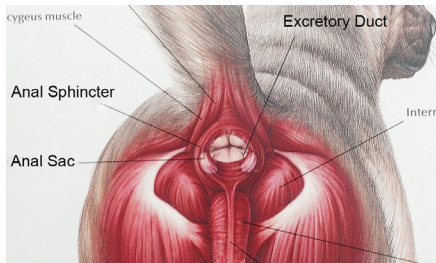
feature a double safety system to ensure that, in the event of them becoming trapped, their own strength will trigger a quick release.



**"I'm advertising my new business on the Web.
For \$25 an hour, I'll come to your house,
lick your face, listen intently, wag my tail
and be your best friend."**

Anal sac problems in dogs

Dogs have two roughly grape-sized anal sacs, sometimes referred to as anal glands, either side of the anus. The sacs contain glands that produce a liquid substance, which travels down a duct and empties close to the anus.



The function of the anal sacs is thought to be related to communication. Dogs use them to mark their territory and also to identify other dogs. The glands normally empty when the dog passes solid faeces, so if a dog passes soft faeces for a period of time the glands may become overfull and have to be emptied.

Anal sacs are also present in cats and many other species but it is mainly dogs that tend to have problems with them.

Most conditions of the anal sacs cause the area to be itchy and sore so the dog will show discomfort in the area. "Scooting" is probably the most common sign - this is where dogs rub their bum along the floor. They can also lick and chew at the area, may sit uncomfortably, and sometimes chase their tail.

A quick trip to see us can solve these problems. Emptying the sacs often causes instant relief!

However, there can also be other reasons for perianal itch including intestinal parasites, dermatitis and very commonly, fleas.

The most common problem we see however is impaction, where the sacs do not drain properly through the duct. The exact cause of this is not known but it may involve production of fluid that is too thick, too narrow a duct, or problems with the muscles surrounding the sac.

Sometimes impaction can lead to infection and even abscess formation, which can cause pain on top of the symptoms mentioned above. The dog can also cause trauma to the skin around the anus from rubbing the area, leading to infection of the surrounding skin. Tumours can also occur but they are rare in neutered animals.

Treatment involves emptying the anal sacs. This can be done in two ways - externally or internally via a gloved finger into the anus depending on the size of the pet.

In the case of an infection or abscess, we will most likely prescribe a course of antibiotic tablets and may want to see your dog again to check it has cleared up. Occasionally it may be necessary to instil an

antibiotic/steroid solution directly into the sacs, which may require sedation or anaesthesia. This can also provide longer periods of relief for those pets requiring frequent gland expression.

Unfortunately anal sac problems do tend to recur. If your dog gets regular impactions, then depending on your dog, you may be able to express the sacs yourself. Speak to us if you would like to be shown how.

If it is something more than an impaction (if it seems painful or you see blood or pus in the area) then you will need to return to us for diagnosis and treatment once again.

For recurring problems we may recommend surgical removal of the anal sacs. There is a slight risk of incontinence following the surgery, so it probably won't be something that is recommended unless your dog has regular problems.

As mentioned above, the glands may also develop tumours. The most common type of tumour of the anal sac is an adenocarcinoma. You might notice a small lump either side of the anus, but often the only sign will be increased thirst caused by a hormone produced by the tumour. Scooting and other signs similar to impactions can also occur.

So if you are concerned about your dog in this regard, don't hesitate to contact us.



Aural haematomata in dogs

Not all dog owners will recognise the name of this condition, but I expect more will recognise it when I describe it.

“Haematoma” is the medical term for a blood blister. “Aural” relates to the ear. So, “aural haematoma” describes the condition where the earflap fills with blood.

The ear consists of hard cartilage sandwiched on either side by skin. Blood vessels run through this cartilage, and aural haematomata occur when the blood vessels are damaged, causing the potential space between the cartilage and the skin (usually on the underside of the ear) to fill with blood.

The blood vessels usually become damaged due to severe headshaking caused by intense irritation of the ear, often due to otitis externa (outer ear infection). Treatment will vary depending on

the size of the swelling. Draining the haematoma with a needle and syringe in the clinic, sometimes followed by the injection of drugs into the space left behind, is one way if the swelling is small. The benefits of this are that it is quick, easy and cheap. The downside is that recurrence is common.

If the swelling is larger, and most are fairly big, surgery will be required. My personal preference is to treat any underlying cause first and delay the surgery for 7-10 days to allow the blood vessels to clot and heal over. Surgery involves draining the blood from the earflap. Stitches are then placed all the way through the ear, thus preventing another haematoma from forming by stopping the skin from separating from the cartilage once again.

If the underlying cause is an ear infection, and it has not resolved with treatment, then during the surgery

we have the opportunity to have a really good look inside the ear, wash it out, and apply medication, which you will then have to continue for a few days after the op.

Other causes are possible, including: foreign bodies in the ear. Sometimes we may spot a grass seed that has worked its way down your dog's ear canal, and which we haven't seen before because your dog has been so sore that he wouldn't let us have a good look while he was awake. Sometimes generalised allergic skin diseases can cause itchy ears, in which case we will recommend a series of steps to diagnose and treat any condition present.

The stitches that go through the ear will normally have to stay in place for a good few weeks, by which time enough scar tissue will have built to hopefully prevent recurrence.



Interesting Cat Facts

Cats "paw" or "knead" (repeatedly treading on a spot - sometimes their owner) to mark their territory. Cats sweat through the bottom of their paws and rub off the sweat as a marking mechanism.

Cat urine glows in the dark when a UV light shines on it. If you think your cat or kitten has had an accident in your home, use a UV light to find the mishap.

The print on a cat's nose has a unique ridged pattern, like a human fingerprint.

If your cat is near you, and her tail is quivering, this is the greatest expression of love your cat can give you.

During her productive life, one female cat could have more than 100 kittens. A single pair of cats and their kittens can produce as many as 420,000 kittens in just 7 years.

The more you talk to your cat, the more it will speak to you.

Cats spend 30% of their waking hours grooming themselves.

Cats can make over 100 vocal sounds, while dogs can only make 10.

Cats have been used to deliver mail: In Belgium in 1879, 37 cats were used to deliver mail to villages. However they found that the cats were not disciplined enough to keep it up.

In a lifetime, the average house cat spends approximately 10,950 hours purring.

A cat's jaws cannot move sideways.

Cats rarely meow at other cats.

When cats are happy, they may squeeze their eyes shut.

Cats see so well in the dark because their eyes actually reflect light. Light goes in their eyes, and is reflected back out. This means that their eyes actually work almost like built-in flashlights.

Cat Tail Speak



Cats and their sleeping habits.

Cats sure know how to sleep- depending on the cat's age and personality, felines spend an average of 13 to 16 hours each day curled up in slumber. Only the opossum and the bat sleep more - napping away almost 20 hours a day.

Cats evolved from a long line of hunters and predators - and their sleep patterns reflect that. For one thing, they are crepuscular (most active at dawn and dusk), since most of their prey is active at these times. This gives them plenty of time to sleep during the middle of the day.

The cat's diet may play an important role in its sleep patterns. The protein-rich diet of the cat allows it to get its nourishment in a short space of time allowing plenty of time for napping.

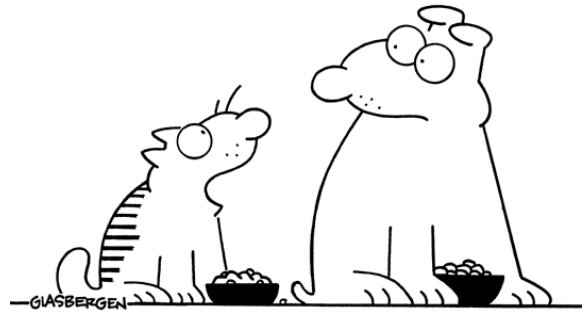
Boredom can also be a contributing factor. If he has plenty to do during the day, he may prefer to stay awake then, and sleep more during the night when you do.

Sleep consists of two basic phases: Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep, when dreams occur, and Non-REM (NREM) or deep sleep. If a cat is deprived of either sort of sleep, it becomes confused and irritable.

During NREM sleep, your cat's body repairs and regenerates itself. Kittens build their muscles and bones and the immune system strengthens and revitalizes. Kittens need more NREM

sleep than adults and with advancing years the amount of NREM sleep required diminishes.

During REM sleep, your cat's eyes move behind the eyelids, limbs twitch, and whiskers move around. Up to 60% of your cat's sleep is REM sleep, three times more than we have when we are asleep.



"The vet says i need a hobby. I thought eating and sleeping were my hobbies!"

Cats in the wild must be on the alert in order to survive. When your domestic cat sleeps, his finely tuned senses are still active and ready to spring into action.

Watch your cat while he's napping. His ears rotate as he stays in touch with his environment, and if he hears a noise or senses that someone is approaching, he will open his eyes to assess the situation before falling back to sleep.

If you try to wake a sleeping cat, he can transform from a deeply sleeping cat to one that's fully alert in a matter of seconds - and then back again.



"In retrospect, I could have done more with my lives."

Shaun, Shelley, Debbie and Lyn would like to wish you all a safe and happy Christmas, success for the New Year and we look forward to seeing you all again in 2014.

Christmas and New Year Hours

| | |
|-------------|------------|
| Dec 24 Tue | 8am - 4pm |
| Dec 25 Wed | Closed |
| Dec 26 Thur | Closed |
| Dec 27 Fri | 8am - 5pm |
| Dec 28 Sat | 9am - Noon |
| Dec 29 Sun | Closed |
| Dec 30 Mon | 8am - 7pm |
| Dec 31 Tue | 8am - 4pm |
| Jan 1 Wed | Closed |
| Jan 2 Thu | Closed |
| Jan 3 Fri | 8am - 5pm |
| Jan 4 Sat | 9am - Noon |

Our usual hours will apply on other days.

The North Shore Veterinary Hospital is open from 8am to 7pm weekdays and 9am to noon on Saturdays. Our receptionists will be happy to assist you during those times, and are qualified to advise you on pet nutrition and flea control.

For a veterinary consultation, please telephone first (Phone 4899759) to make an appointment, as a vet may not always be immediately available.

When we are closed, please contact either the After Hours Veterinary Clinic in Glenfield (Phone 443 5640) or the Animal Emergency Centre in Carrington Road, Mt Albert (Phone 849 2121) and they will be happy to assist in any emergency.