



North Shore Veterinary Hospital

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Welcome to our 2017 end of year newsletter. Yet another reminder of how quickly time seems to pass.

Having endured a quiet summer last year without pets the Seaman family took the plunge and ventured out to the SPCA once again. There we chose one of a litter of pups who had been abandoned, in a box, next to the motorway. Christened Maude by the SPCA staff we have renamed her Molly. She was initially very afraid of any road noise and had to be carried to and from the car.

Thankfully this has now passed and, although still quite skittish with unfamiliar sounds and sights, she will now quite happily ignore road noise. Molly is now a regular at the clinic always ready to welcome you and your pets - albeit a little too enthusiastically at times. Although of very mixed heritage, including some Rottweiler and American Staffie, she has the gentlest of natures.

We also adopted an older adult cat Max. He took some time to settle in, even disappearing for 5-6 weeks, before finding his own way home and settling in to regular meals and lots of love. He has now

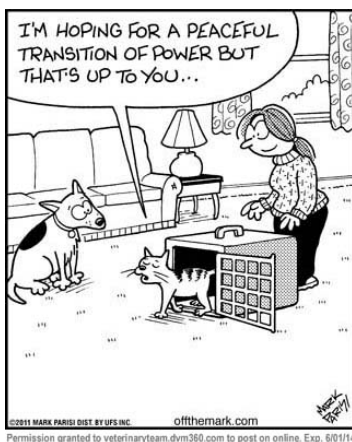
come to accept Molly as being part of the family and no longer a threat.

Then just when we thought our menagerie was complete a roadworker arrived with a kitten he had found. He had seen a pillowcase, lying next to the road, move and on looking closer, found it contained a small fluffy ginger kitten. The poor kitten, with its long coat, had soiled itself and had a large lump of faeces stuck to its rear region. A haircut, numerous washes and some cream for the faecal scald soon sorted his ailments.

His delightful nature saw him coming home with me the next day. I must add that if my daughter had her way he would have come home the first night and I was berated for leaving him on his own at the clinic.

Being long haired and initially having a big lion-like mane earned him the name Simba.

He is a friend to both Molly and Max and is actually encouraging Max to be more playful and outgoing.



Atopy (Environmental Allergies)

As a follow up to my last article on skin itches and allergies (past newsletters can be found at nsvet.co.nz) I thought I would mention some of the newer thoughts and ideas on treatments.

Before we even begin to try to control atopy, it is crucial that any other contributors to the itching are treated first. This means rigorous flea and tick prevention and treating any other skin parasites such as Demodex or Scabies. Bacterial and yeast infections are also major triggers of itchiness which need to be treated. Food allergies should also be excluded by doing food trials with a hypoallergenic food for 10-12 weeks.

Sometimes a hormonal problem such as a low thyroid level (dogs) can make the skin barriers weak and lead to infection and itching.

It is important to understand that atopy is a chronic disease and our goal is to improve your pet's quality of life by decreasing the itching. It is a disease that is controlled, rather than "cured". Flare-ups will occur from time to time.

Supportive care is an area receiving much attention at the moment, as a result of the growing awareness of the role of "Barrier Dysfunction" in the development of skin allergies (atopic dermatitis).

Supportive care consists of:

- essential fatty acids
- bathing
- restoring the skin barrier
- control of secondary infections
- topical anti-inflammatory products
- antihistamines.

These treatments are relatively inexpensive but labour intensive.

Bathing is critical. This will physically remove the allergens, reduce the bacteria and yeast populations, repair the skin barrier defects, and the tepid/cool water will help cool hot, inflamed skin. We recommend the use of a veterinary prescription shampoo that contains moisturizers or barrier repair ingredients, once or twice weekly. A shampoo released recently which does all this is Allermyl® from Virbac.

Despite the widespread belief that frequent baths will dry out the skin, most dermatologists agree that you cannot over bathe an allergic dog provided you use a conditioner / moisturizer after bathing.

Moisturisers recommended by dermatologists include Paws Nutriderm, Alpha-Keri or QV cream diluted with water and used as a rinse or spray.

Remember if your pet has atopy, you should choose a flea/tick preventative that is not susceptible to being washed away from repeated bathing.

While antihistamines may help some dogs they may not help if your pet is having an acute or intense flare. The main value of these drugs is to try to decrease the amount of other, more expensive and potent, drugs required to stop itching.

Essential fatty acids (EFA) are recommended by most dermatologists, as there is some evidence that they help with the skin barrier. A popular one used is Dermoscent's Essential 6 which is applied topically each week. Hill's Derm Defence, a new Prescription Diet, is another recently released food designed to improve skin barrier function. As with antihistamines, EFAs are not adequate as a single therapy, except in mildly affected patients.

Reduce allergens on the coat by wiping down your pet's coat at least once daily to try to remove the allergens. Some people wipe down the coats and feet after walks or playing outside. Keep the hair coat short to reduce the "dust mop" effect of a longer coat.

When symptomatic therapy is not enough, we must resort to medications. As with any drug, it's important to look at the risk vs. benefit to the pet.

Corticosteroids (prednisone/prednisolone/dexamethasone) are inexpensive and work very well to reduce itching. If finances are limited or if the dog has seasonal symptoms without infection, they can help quickly.

They are the only drug that works well to decrease swelling in ear canals. However, they have numerous short term side effects including excessive drinking, urinating, eating and panting. Long term effects include liver and endocrine changes as well as having a negative effect on the skin barrier.

Cyclosporine (Atopica) can help many allergic pets, but can be one of the more expensive therapies to maintain except in very small patients. It is also often associated with vomiting or diarrhoea, an increased susceptibility to infections, gingival hyperplasia and perhaps increased incidence of cancer.

Oclacitinib (Apoquel) is a relatively new drug which works very well to quickly stop itching with few side effects. It is more expensive, especially for larger dogs that need a higher dose. As with other options for treating atopy, it doesn't work to control all itching in all patients, so other additional therapies might be needed.

Cytopoint is the latest anti-itch product we have. Given by injection once a month it is a dog specific antibody used to decrease inflammatory responses in dogs. Because this is a normal antibody that the dog already has, it is safe to use with other drugs and has no side effects.

Atopy is a frustrating disease for clients, veterinarians, and above all for the dog. With medical therapy tailored to your dog, it can however be managed and greatly improve your dog's quality of life.



"I'll be glad to discuss Pal's itchy skin in my office tomorrow morning, Mrs Allan!"

Arthritis in cats

Arthritis (sometimes called osteoarthritis) is the inflammation within the joints and tissues surrounding them.

It is very much under-diagnosed in cats increasing in frequency with age.

One study showed that 90% of cats over 12 years of age showed evidence of arthritis.

The signs of arthritis come on slowly and are often missed or are incorrectly attributed to aging. Signs include: Inappropriate toileting (outside the litter box), decreased grooming, reluctance to be combed, reluctance to jump up/down, sleeping more, moving less, withdrawing from interaction with the owner, and hiding.

X-rays can hint at arthritis, but the degree of change on the x-ray doesn't always correlate with the degree of pain. For instance, a cat may have very mild changes apparent on an

x-ray, but may be very painful. The reverse is also true. Cats, in general, are much less willing in the exam room, to have their joints palpated and gait analyzed, so often we rely on the owner's observation, x-rays, and blood work (to rule out any underlying medical issues).

There are many ways to slow the progression of arthritis and treat the associated pain:

Environmental control. There are many easy ways to alter your cat's home to help reduce arthritis pain. Cut a low opening in the litter box so your cat doesn't have to jump in/out. Make or buy a set of steps for your cat to get to their favourite spot. Some owners will simply move boxes or small pieces of furniture to create some steps to their favourite spots. Your cats may not use the steps every time, but if they're having a bad day, they will. Provide soft well-padded beds where your cat likes to sleep. In general, older arthritic cats

LOVE heating pads, set on low with a blanket covering them. Remember that leaving them on unattended can be a fire risk. You can also buy a disc-like "SnuggleSafe" which can be put in the microwave and heated up to provide heat for 6–8 hours.

Pain medication. There are now some safe pain medications available through us which can be given at low daily doses, which will make your cat more comfortable.

Joint supplements. These are believed to have a positive influence on cartilage health by altering cartilage repair and maintenance in the joints. While joint supplements such as glucosamine and chondroitin are "nutraceuticals" and not as well studied as in dogs, many cats benefit from them.

Essential Fatty Acids (DHA and EPA), the omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids have been shown to have marked anti-inflammatory effects in dogs and cats.

If your cat is overweight, it stresses the arthritic joints even more and contributes to the pain. Talk to us and together we can work with you to come up with a plan for weight loss for your cat.



Interesting cat facts

While it is commonly thought that the ancient Egyptians were the first to domesticate cats, the oldest known pet cat was recently found in a 9,500-year-old grave on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus. This grave predates early Egyptian art depicting cats by 4,000 years or more. The Egyptian Mau is probably the oldest breed of cat. In fact, the breed is so ancient that its name is the Egyptian word for "cat."

Smuggling a cat out of ancient Egypt was punishable by death. Phoenician traders eventually

succeeded in smuggling felines, which they sold to rich people in Athens and other important cities.

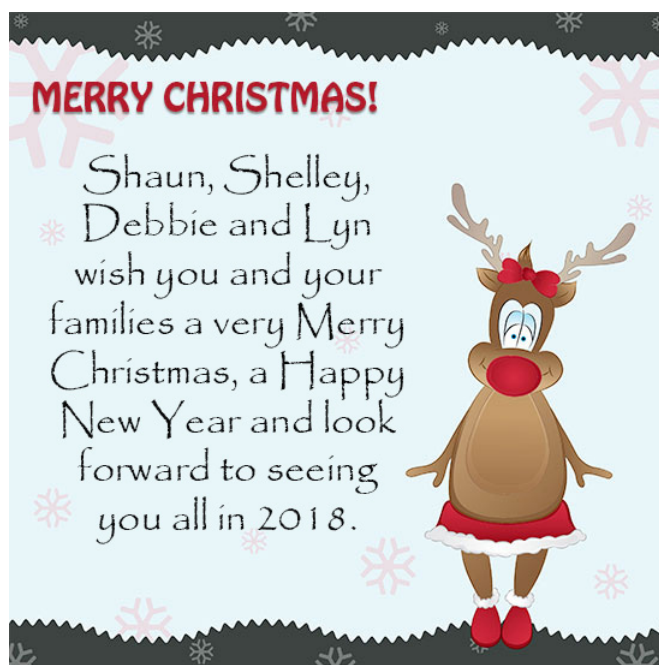
According to Hebrew legend, Noah prayed to God for help to protect all the food he stored on the ark from being eaten by rats. In reply, God made the lion sneeze, and out popped a cat.

A cat's hearing is better than a dog's. And a cat can hear high-frequency sounds up to two octaves higher than a human.

A cat's brain is biologically more similar to a human brain than it is to a dog's. Both humans and cats have identical regions in their brains that are responsible for emotions.



"I'm not bald. I'm hairless.
There's a difference."



New Products

Allermyl Shampoo is a new shampoo designed to restore skin barrier function - see atopy notes.

In the ever growing flea product line Bravecto have expanded their range to include a topical Bravecto for cats lasting for 3 months and one for dogs which lasts for 6 months.

The Bravecto oral for dogs is still available and lasts for 3 months.

Vivitonin is not a new product but one which I have recently rediscovered and used quite successfully for aging dogs.



Christmas and New Year Hours

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|-------------|--------------|
| Dec 22 Fri | 8am - 6.00pm |
| Dec 23 Sat | Closed |
| Dec 24 Sun | Closed |
| Dec 25 Mon | Closed |
| Dec 26 Tues | Closed |
| Dec 27 Wed | 8am - 6.00pm |
| Dec 28 Thur | 8am - 6.00pm |
| Dec 29 Fri | 8am - 6.00pm |
| Dec 30 Sat | Closed |
| Dec 31 Sun | Closed |
| Jan 1 Mon | Closed |
| Jan 2 Tue | Closed |
| Jan 3 Wed | 8am - 6.00pm |

Our usual hours will apply on other days.

The North Shore Veterinary Hospital is open from 8am to 6.00pm 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 of the following clinics.

After Hours Veterinary Clinic in Glenfield (Phone 443 5640)

The Animal Referral Centre at 224 Albany Highway (phone 281 5815)

Animal Emergency Centre in Carrington Road, Mt Albert (Phone 849 2121) and they will be happy to assist in any emergency.