

SUMMER 2012

Summer has arrived with a bang the last few weeks. Christmas is just around the corner and hopefully a well deserved summer holiday. Season's Greetings to all.



Hendra Virus Vaccination

The new Hendra virus vaccination for horses will become available in Victoria on the 1st of December 2012. The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) has developed guidelines that suggest all horses in Australia should be vaccinated against this deadly disease that is also deadly to humans. This disease has occurred only in Queensland and Northern NSW up until now, however studies have shown that flying foxes that carry the disease have shown evidence of infection (antibodies to the disease) throughout Australia. In addition movements of horses around Australia are very common and animals incubating the disease could easily return to Victoria from further north. The vaccination must be administered by a registered veterinarian and any horse receiving the vaccine needs to be microchipped in order to allow effective tracking of the vaccination program.


The initial course of vaccination is two doses spaced exactly 21 days apart given by injection into the muscle of the neck. Although the vaccine has been developed and put into use rapidly, extensive trials have been conducted and it appears to be as safe as other vaccines that we use routinely. Its rapid push into production and use has occurred because of the seriousness of this disease especially its zoonotic potential (ability to spread to humans). In cases of infection in humans there is a fatality rate of 57% even with intensive treatment. Any horse that tests positive to Hendra virus is euthanased as a means of disease containment and public health protection. Trials of the vaccine led to a small lump developing at the site of vaccination in around 30% of cases, but all resolved within a few days without any treatment. Minor vaccine site reactions like this are quite common with many types of vaccination and occur as a result of immune system stimulation, precisely what a vaccine aims to do.


Warby St Veterinary Hospital/Wangaratta Equine Hospital will be coordinating vaccination of our equine patients over the coming months. Please contact us to organise an appointment or discuss any questions you may have about the vaccination process. Vaccination is not compulsory, but is recommended because of the potential risk to your horses, yourselves and any others that come into contact with them should they be infected.

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Transmission and clinical signs of the Hendra virus






Hendra virus is one of Australia's most lethal viruses

approximately **75% & 57%** of horses & humans infected with the virus have died



Flying foxes are a natural host for the Hendra virus

Australian flying fox populations coincide with the areas of greatest risk for Hendra virus



Horses contract Hendra virus by ingesting feed or water contaminated with flying fox saliva, urine, faeces, aborted foetuses and/or reproductive fluids

Clinical signs of the Hendra virus in horses may include :

- Acute Onset of Illness
- Increased Body Temperature
- Shifting of Weight Between Legs
- Depression
- Increased Respiratory Rate
- Nasal Discharge
- Head Tilting/ Circling
- Muscle Twitching
- Urinary Incontinence

Hendra virus infection in people has been the result of close contact with respiratory secretions and/or blood from an infected horse

Clinical signs of the Hendra virus in humans may include :

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Lethargy

Meningitis or encephalitis can develop, causing :

- Headaches
- High Fever
- Drowsiness
- Convulsions
- Coma

Equivac HeV Hendra virus | vaccine for horses
May be given from four months of age

Preparing for Summer Holidays with Pets

The end of the year is fast approaching and with it the Australian tradition of the summer holiday. Many pets are lucky enough to go on holidays with their owners, whilst some need to go on a “holiday” of their own to the boarding kennels. Before the mad Christmas rush takes hold now is the time to plan what your pet is doing and to get them ready for their trip. Unfortunately many people leave these preparations to the last minute, which can lead to frustration or disappointment when plans are disrupted.

The main things to consider are booster vaccinations whether your pet is going to the kennels or not, and any additional disease or parasite threats your pet may face if they are heading off with you.

Most people are aware that boarding kennels require your pet to be up to date with their vaccinations before they are allowed to stay. This includes the vaccination for kennel cough in dogs. This means that all pets at the kennels should be protected from contagious diseases when they are in an environment of close proximity. It is important to note that vaccinations can take several weeks to reach full efficacy and many kennels will not admit a pet that has been vaccinated less than a fortnight prior to their stay (particularly if it is their first kennel cough vaccination or they have not been vaccinated in a long period of time). This obviously creates a scenario primed for major disruption to your travel plans when you try and drop the dog off on your way to the beach only to be told that they cannot stay. We recommend that all pets be vaccinated at least 2 weeks prior to their stay at the boarding kennels to avoid any disappointment and more importantly so that your pet is actually protected by the vaccine whilst at the kennel.

Many people take their pets to the coast for the summer holidays and this exposes them to other potential diseases that are not present, or more uncommon in the North East. The two major considerations are paralysis tick and heartworm (which is spread by mosquitoes). Dogs going into a paralysis tick area should be protected by a fortnightly anti-tick treatment (Frontline or Advantix), as well as a tick collar. These should be started prior to leaving for the coast. As paralysis ticks are not present in our area it pays to organise these in advance as your vet may need to order them in for you. Heartworm prevention should also be up to date (either an annual injection or a monthly tablet or topspot) when heading to the coast or rivers this summer.

So plan ahead this Summer and get your pets ready now for their holidays. If nothing else it will save you from sitting waiting in the veterinary hospital on Christmas eve with all the others who didn't get organised earlier!



Newsletter Mailing List

We produce a 4 page newsletter every season to keep our clients informed about the goings on at Warby St Veterinary Hospital and the Wangaratta Equine Hospital. We send the newsletter out with our statements each time it is printed, but also deliver it electronically by email. If you would like to receive the newsletter in your email inbox you can either email me your address at tim@warbyvet.com.au or fill out the slip below and return it to Warby St Vet Hospital or Wangaratta

YES! I'D LIKE TO RECEIVE THE QUARTERLY WARBY ST VET HOSPITAL NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL!

NAME:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

“KING VALLEY RUN”

A service for routine work provided most **TUESDAYS** charging travel fees from:

Glenrowan, Greta, Moyhu or Milawa.

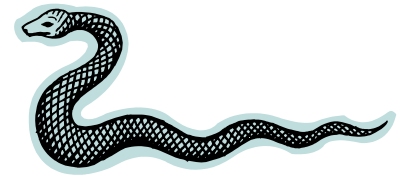
“BEECHWORTH AND MYRTLEFORD RUN”

For routine work most **THURSDAYS**, travel fees from:

Markwood, Everton, Beechworth, Myrtleford

Snake Bite!

With the return of the warmer weather we are seeing many cases of snake bite. It seems a good time to warn owners of the danger of snakes and what can be done if you think your dog has been bitten. Many of the snake bites we see are in small dogs like Jack Russells which seem to have an inherent trait for chasing snakes. However, any breed of dog can be affected. The signs you see will usually include drooling, shaking, incoordination, dilation of the pupils and collapse. In some cases there will be an initial collapse and the dog will then appear normal for a short period before the signs progress.

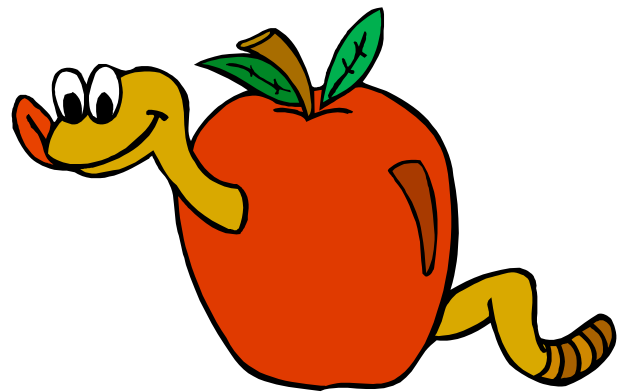


One very important thing to remember is that having your dog bitten by a snake does not necessarily mean they are sure to die. There is a window of opportunity for treatment to take place and in many cases we can save the dog's life. This window is usually about half an hour after the bite, but may be longer especially with smaller doses of venom. If you think that your dog has been bitten it is always better to be safe than sorry and have them checked quickly. Your vet will be able to perform some quick and fairly cheap tests to determine whether they have been bitten or not.

Treatment of snake bite is quite an expensive process, largely due to the high cost of the antivenom used to neutralise the toxins in the snake venom. A snake bite is an emergency situation and requires critical and intensive care, which can be very time and labour consuming. But after all what price can you put on your beloved dog!!

Intestinal Worming

Intestinal worms are parasites that live in the stomach, small intestine and large intestine of the dog and cat. They feed on the lining of the gut and take away nutrients that would normally be absorbed from food. The damage they do to the gut in their feeding can cause diarrhoea and bleeding, which can be very significant especially in young pups and kittens. Of further importance to pet owners is the fact that some intestinal worms of dogs and cats can be passed on to humans.



There are 4 main types of worms in dogs and cats: Roundworms, Whipworms, Tapeworms and Hookworms. A good intestinal worming tablet will effectively control all of these types of worms. Veterinary hospitals stock various worming tablets from several different brands that are effective against all the types of intestinal worms. In adult animals it is best to give an allwormer every 3 months to keep the animal free of worms. Kittens and puppies are usually treated at 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 weeks of age before continuing with monthly worming until they are 6 months of age. The adult worming regime begins at 6 months of age.

Humans can contract worms from cats and dogs if they get the worm eggs on their hands and then into their mouths. This can be effectively prevented by washing your hands after touching your dog or cat and especially after cleaning up their feces or litter trays. It is particularly important to get young children in the habit of washing their hands after they play with their pets as they tend to be the ones most often infected by intestinal worms.

Owners may become aware of their pets having worms by their behaviour or appearance. Worms can lead to the dog "scooting" its backside on the ground. They can also lead to some weight loss and poor coat. In some cases blood will be evident in the feces and it is possible to see actual worms in the feces as well.

Regular and effective intestinal worm prevention is a cornerstone of good pet ownership.

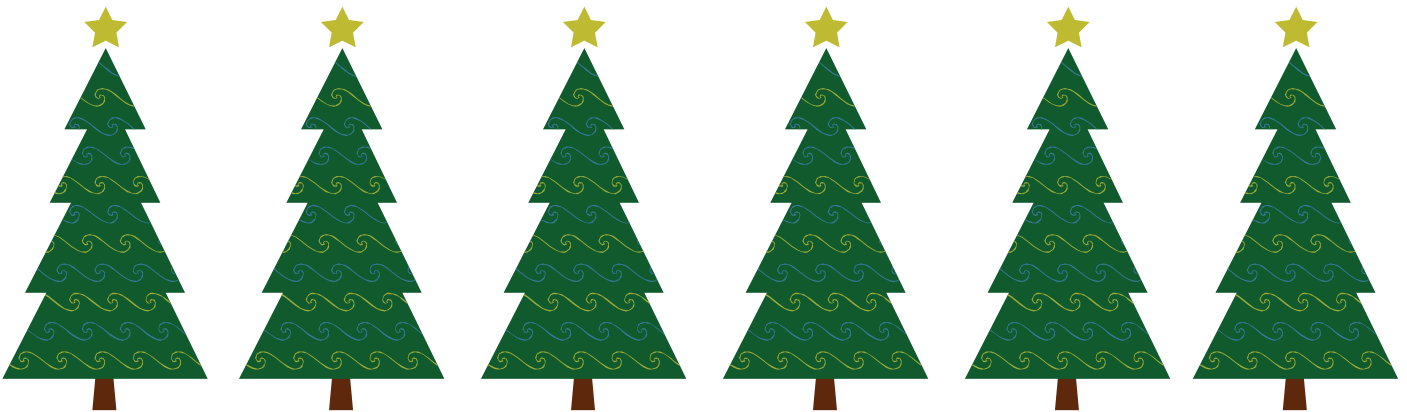
Pets and Christmas

The holiday season is fast approaching and hopefully this means some time to relax and enjoy the company of your family and pets. Most veterinarians will have a story about the work they ended up doing after hours on Christmas Day or Boxing Day. It is therefore probably a good time to highlight some of the things to avoid to save you that trip to the animal hospital over the Christmas period.

By far the most common problems we see over Christmas are with animals that have eaten something they shouldn't have. The list may include stone fruit seeds, satay skewers, Christmas decorations (tinsel particularly) or even whole Christmas presents. There is a simple rule with animals that if they can eat it, then they probably will! So a little precaution with what you leave lying around and secure closure of rubbish bins may save you a lot of money in the long run.

The second major issue with things pets eat over Christmas relates to feeding leftovers from Christmas lunch or dinner. Fatty foods (like turkey skin or BBQ meats) and a lot of pork meats can easily cause a stomach upset, especially in dogs. It is also possible for this stomach upset to progress to the more serious illness of pancreatitis, which can require an extended stay in the hospital. The general rule of thumb is to try and avoid feeding too many table scraps and especially to avoid pork, fatty meats and any rubbish bin scrounging.

There are many other pitfalls to try and avoid. Other "memorable" Christmas day jobs include the broken jaw from practice swings with the new golf clubs, swallowed golf balls and the Labrador someone hooked with their new fishing rod. Some events are more easily prevented than others.



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone from the staff at Warby St Veterinary Hospital and Wangaratta Equine Hospital. See you in the New Year.

Merry Christmas