



# Warby Street Veterinary Hospital

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas!

Summer edition 2009/2010



## Grass seed time...



Barley grass

By now you would have noticed the sharp invasive things that are grass seeds plaguing us once again. This time of year we get animals in every day with grass seeds in their eyes, feet, ears and every other orifice.

A classic presentation is the dog shaking its head or scratching at an ear. Grass seeds in the ear canal are most commonly found right down on top of the ear drum, and cannot be seen externally. These require examination with an otoscope for identification and removal. Some dogs will sit very still and allow us to do this in the consultation, others require sedation for this procedure if the ear canal is inflamed and painful. Both ears are always checked as it is amazing how often another grass seed is

found in the 'good' ear. Grass seeds can burrow in and hide themselves very well. Often the animal has a mucky eye that doesn't improve, and when examined closely a large grass seed is found hidden behind the third eyelid. These can cause nasty corneal ulcerations if not removed promptly. Grass seeds in other parts of the body are excellent at migrating, making them very difficult to find on occasions. Grass seeds entering between the toes can end up in the abdomen or spine even. A discharging sinus (hole with pus) is typical of a grass seed tract between the toes. If brought into us early, the tract can often be followed and the offending seed/s removed. A course of antibiotics is generally

required if an abscess has formed in the area. Sometimes no grass seeds are found on initial examination, but an area distant from the original entry point may swell in time and reveal the location of the grass seed. Clipping dogs with long coats reduces the incidence of grass seeds penetrating the skin and allows them to be discovered more easily. Horses and cattle eating barley grass pasture or in particular hay may develop sores in their mouths where the seeds penetrate. They are also prone to getting them in their eyes, which may lead to corneal ulceration similar to that which occurs in dogs and cats. Any mucky eye should be examined carefully for grass seeds.

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## Parvo Virus Vaccination

Parvo virus is a debilitating viral infection of dogs that is often fatal. The virus is very hardy and survives for long periods in the environment where it is ingested by the dog. **The virus is quite prevalent in Wangaratta.**

Common places that dogs share like parks and walking tracks are a major source of infection for unprotected dogs.

After the virus is ingested it targets the rapidly dividing cells in the body. This mainly involves the cells of the intestinal tract and the bone marrow. Intestinal wall cells are destroyed causing an awful bloody diarrhoea and the bone marrow damage makes it hard for the dog to mount an immune response. The disease is almost invariably fatal if no treatment is sought.

Veterinary treatment is

often successful in saving the life of the dog, however it is no substitute for adequate prevention.

Luckily the routine vaccination of dogs provides a very effective protection against parvo virus. It is very important that dogs receive their vaccinations as pups because it is young dogs that are most susceptible to contracting the virus.

Vaccinations should be given at 6-8 and 10-12 weeks of age and the pup should not leave its home until they are completed unless it is to visit a home where all the dogs are up to date with their vaccination. Taking a young pup out in public or letting it mix with unvaccinated dogs before its final

vaccination can leave it

at risk of exposure to this nasty virus.

Vaccination technology has advanced significantly in recent years and a final vaccination at 10 weeks of age is now fully protective for 12 months. This minimises the time that a pup needs to be isolated and allows their socialisation and exploration of the big wide world to safely start at a younger age than in the past. The period from 6-15 weeks of age is very important for pups to attain many different experiences and interactions with people and pets and the new vaccination protocol is a great step in enabling this to happen safe from parvo virus disease.

**“routine vaccination of dogs provides a very effective protection against parvo virus”**



**“King Valley Run”**  
 A service provided every Tuesday charging **TRAVEL fees** from Glenrowan, Greta, Moyhu or Milawa.

**“Beechworth & Myrtleford Valley Run”**  
 A service provided every Thursday charging **TRAVEL fees** from Markwood, Everton, Beechworth and Myrtleford

## Wangaratta Equine Hospital



Arthroscopic view of a joint

We are very excited about our new Equine Hospital, due for completion January 2010. It is located at the new Goulburn Ovens TAFE centre on Tone Rd.

The Hospital features state of the art surgical facilities and equipment, where we will perform surgical procedures that are currently undertaken

'in the field' and those that are only performed in sterile surgery such as arthroscopy for the removal of bone chips. We are currently advertising for a specialist equine surgeon to join our team.

The hospital will allow us to provide a safer environment for the recovery of horses from anaesthesia with

padded recovery boxes. We will be running the majority of our equine practice from this new location under the 'Wangaratta Equine Hospital' banner. Warby Street Veterinary Hospital will remain in its current location and continue to operate as usual for our small animal and other large animal components of the practice.



## Our new arrivals

Warby Street Veterinary Hospital has two new additions... Congratulations to Andrew and Lucy on the birth of baby girl 'Annika May Bett', born on 23rd November 7 pounds 2 ounces, and to Amy and Craig with baby boy 'Nicholas James Dickson' born 24th November 8 pounds 13 ounces. Both families are doing well.

## Snake envenomation

As the weather warms up, so too does our incidence of snake bites. We see mostly dogs and cats affected, but the occasional horse and sometimes cattle too. If you find your animal with a snake and are concerned they may have been bitten, it is best to get them examined by a Veterinarian as quickly as possible. It is not important to bring the snake in for identification as we can use Tiger/Brown combined antivenom for treatment.



Brown snake

Common signs in dogs that have been bitten are enlarged pupils, salivation, wobbly on legs, respiratory difficulty, collapse, defecation/urination and vomiting. Cats can exhibit similar signs but often present as a flaccid paralysis, unable to move at all.

It is important to know that animals that have received a multiple lethal dose of venom can look quite ill and then appear their normal selves for a few minutes to hours before ultimate death. If you see your animal collapse/urinate/defecate/vomit then appear ok, seek Veterinary attention. When examining an animal for a suspected snakebite, we may need to do blood and urine tests to help confirm a diagnosis of snake envenomation. The snake toxin damages muscle, and it is these muscle breakdown products that we

can detect in blood and urine. This can take up to 6 hrs after the bite to show as elevations. A blood test to measure blood clotting time can also be performed as some snake toxins have an anticoagulant that causes the clotting time to be prolonged.

Depending on the severity of clinical signs and length of time elapsed since the bite, antivenom may or may not be recommended for your animal. Animals being treated that don't receive antivenom still require hospitalisation on intravenous fluids. This prevents dehydration and improves blood flow through the kidney, where the muscle breakdown products from the snake toxin can damage the kidneys.

Please give the clinic a call in advance if you are on your way in with a suspected snake bite, so we can ensure we have a Veterinarian available to see you as soon as possible.

## Newsletters online

Would you like to receive our quarterly newsletters via Email?

If so, fill out the form below and drop it in to us at Warby Street (or fill out one at reception).

Name: .....  
 (first name) (surname)

Postal Address: .....

Email Address: .....