

Fulham Gardens Vet Surgery
(08) 8355 5475

Unley Vet Surgery
(08) 8272 3400

Black Forest Vet Surgery
(08) 8351 6066



Spring in to Summer

Fleas Bees and Sunburn

After what seems like a rather long winter, warmer weather appears just around the corner. In this newsletter read about the risks of sunburn in pets, and how to avoid them.

The summer edition of our newsletter last year contains more information on biting insects in pets

Summer means that fleas become more prevalent so make sure your flea treatments are up to date.

Mosquito's are also more active, so heartworm spreads more easily. For more information on heartworm prevention please contact the practice.



Slip Slap Slop

Sun smart pets

Provide shade for cats

Apply sunscreen to hairless or exposed areas of skin

Use sun proof coats

Highest UV levels are usually between 10am and 4 pm

After a long feeling winter, warmer weather is just around the corner. And just like in people dogs and cats that soak up the sun, can pay the price.

So as you tell your teenage daughter not to sun-bake, also think about our dogs and cats.

Long hair coats and pigmented skin help guard against sunburn. So the animals we see most commonly with sun damage and disease are white cats, and short or thin haired dogs such as bull terriers, whippets, boxers, and dalmatians.

Cats are most commonly affected on their ears and around their nose, whilst dogs are more commonly affected on hairless areas of the belly and limbs.



Sunburn

Initial signs of sun burn are, not surprisingly more pronounced the more your pet sunbathes. Sun damaged skin will be red and often ulcerated. Secondary infections are common so a moist oozy appearance to the skin is common. Over longer periods the skin becomes thickened and can become scarred. At this stage the signs will mostly or completely resolve if the sun exposure is avoided. However secondary disease such as infection can be severe and sometimes requires quite protracted treatment. Skin tumours

As with people sun burn can lead to skin cancer. However unlike people melanomas are rare. Dogs and cats more commonly develop squamous cell carcinoma. This is a locally invasive skin tumour, that less frequently metastasize (spread) to other parts of the body, than melanomas do in people. Surgery can often be curative, though we may have to remove whole ears or the nose of cats. In dogs multiple tumours are often found at one time. Dogs may also develop cutaneous haemangiomas, or haemangiosarcomas. These are vascular skin cancers that bleed readily. They often look like small blood blister. Though it may be possible to remove them surgically they metastasize more often than squamous cell carcinomas.

Check your pets skin regularly for changes, especially if they have been sun-burnt in the past. Persistent ulcers, or scabbing areas should be checked by us. Likewise any bleeding or red areas of skin may be of concern and should be checked, if they persist for more than a few days.

Prevention is better than cure

The following tips can help decrease or prevent skin tumours.

- Keep pets indoors on high UV days and times.
- For cats in cat runs some shade cloth blinds can be a good addition for summer days.
- Use baby safe water proof sunscreen on areas prone to burning. Pet sunscreens are also available with an antiseptic added. Please check with us which products are appropriate for your pet, before using.
- For dogs look at tailor made dog suits from companies like Bromalli (www.bromelli.com.au), pictured above.





Tetrodotoxin!

What do puffer fish, blue ringed octopodes, and Fugu have in common. The answer is tetrodotoxin.

Fugu is the Japanese name for puffer fish and rather surprisingly the dish prepared from it.

Surprising because it is a dish with a propensity to kill people! A number of people each year die in Japan from Fugu. To try to avoid unnecessary fatalities the dish can only be prepared by licensed chefs, who undergo three years of training in preparing Fugu.

The Blue ringed octopus

The blue ringed octopus is highly poisonous but happily, also very shy and retiring. Only 3 reported human deaths have occurred from these bites in the last 100 years.

The blue ring will hide where possible, and flashes with bright blue warning rings when threatened. Dogs have also been bitten but in unknown numbers. The effects of these bites is similar to those for puffer fish toxicity below.

Puffer fish

Dogs will eat puffer fish if they find them. The fish can be highly toxic, and remain so even if the fish has been on the beach for significant periods of time.

Clinical signs of poisoning usually develop rapidly and include vomiting, shivering, agitation, seizures, and death. Death results from respiratory or heart failure. Though there is no antidote affected animals can usually be treated until the toxin wears off if they can get veterinary help quickly enough.

Tetrodotoxin is found in puffer fish species, and in the bite of the blue ringed octopus.

It is produced by bacteria living in these animals.

Tetrodotoxin is a potent neuro (nerve) toxin.

Fugu is delicacy in Japan.

3 reported human deaths have been attributed to the bite of the blue ring octopus in the last 100 years.

Most recreational fishermen don't like puffer fish.