

Maribyrnong Veterinary Clinic

• 95A Rosamond Road, Maidstone • Tel (03) 9318 3349



“MARIBYRNONG VET TAILS” - AUTUMN 2007

I’m Boooooored!

The last thing anyone wants is a bored pet that becomes depressed or destructive. Luckily, there are a number of things we can do to enrich their environment and keep our furry friends happy.

Creating an environment with small hurdles for your pet will leave them with a sense of achievement and a feeling that they can control their surroundings.

Room with a view: When you're not home, some pets will benefit from being left in an area that has a view of a busy scene. Watching cars drive past, people walking and other animals can be very calming and keep your pet's mind occupied. It can also be good for some dogs that bark as often the dog may be barking because it can hear motion, but cannot see what's going on.

Hunting and scavenging: Dogs and cats are hunters by nature and gain great satisfaction when they have to work for their food. Try putting their dry food into a product that requires effort

to release the food (such as a kong or buster food cube). On a dry day, instead of putting their food in a bowl, scatter it around the backyard, or hide it around the house if they're inside.

Toy swaps: Rather than allowing your pet access to all of their toys, keep toys in a place your pet can't get them. Let your pet have only one or two toys at a time and rotate those toys on a regular basis. This makes sure that your pet doesn't get bored of the toys and keep them excited over the “new” toys that re-emerge.

Free run: For dogs, an off-lead run can be super-exciting. It allows them to “meet-and-greet” people and pets, sniff everything, and lets them run as fast as they want. For cats this isn't really suitable, but teaching your cat to walk on a lead can be a good alternative.

Brain exercises: Dogs especially, but cats also, can benefit greatly from



regular training sessions. Teaching your pets new tricks exercises their brain and is a rewarding activity.

Play time: And of course, play with other people and animals is always more rewarding to your pet than playing with objects (both for your pet and for you).

Open Wide And Say “Ahhhhh”



Dental care of dogs and cats is one of the most commonly overlooked areas of pet health. Many people think that “doggy breath” or “stinky breath” is part of life when owning a cat or dog, when in fact smelly breath can be the first sign of plaque and dental disease.

Unfortunately, dental disease can lead to more serious problems than just stinky breath, such as heart, lung and kidney disease. For these reasons it's a great idea to get into the habit of good oral care for your pets.

Veterinary dental check: Vet dental care starts from when your pet is just a baby. During health checks, your Vet will examine your pets mouth

for deciduous (baby) teeth, missing or extra teeth, swellings and oral development. As your pet ages, regular dental checks will look for developmental abnormalities, the accumulation of plaque and tartar, periodontal disease and oral tumours.

Dental procedures: If it is found that your pet has excessive accumulation of plaque and tartar, or has teeth that need to be removed, it may be advised for your pet to undergo a dental procedure. All dental procedures are performed under general anaesthetic and can range from a clean and scale, to major dental work.

Oral care foods: There are a large variety of premium pets foods available at our clinic that are designed

specifically with cat and dog oral care in mind. The food often has a larger kibble and is designed not to shatter when bitten. Instead, as the tooth penetrates the kibble, the outside of the tooth is gently scraped. Many of these foods also include enzymes that limit the production and accumulation of tartar and plaque.

Teeth brushing: As silly as it may sound, brushing your pet's teeth is the best way to avoid dental problems. If you start brushing when your pet is young you are more likely to have success. Initially, just touch around your pet's mouth and lift it's lips to get it used to you handling it like this. You can then move onto putting a cloth over one finger and wiping along your pets teeth. If you master this you can graduate to a pet toothbrush (available at the clinic) and even some doggy and kitty toothpaste. Never use human toothpaste because your pet cannot spit it out and swallowing human toothpaste can be harmful.

Oral care toys: Yes, there are some fun oral care products too! Specially made pet toys are designed to massage your pets gums and rub nasty build ups from their teeth while they enjoy some good old fashioned toy chewing.