

Maribyrnong Veterinary Clinic

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



“MARIBYRNONG VET TAILS” - AUTUMN 2009

Wound Management

At some stage in your pet's life it is probably going to get a wound of some kind, from something as simple as a neat surgical wound (for example, after a desexing procedure), to a more difficult wound like one from a dog fight. For this reason it's a good idea for all owners to know what wound management involves in a vet clinic and at home. Also to understand the factors that may slow or prevent the normal healing process.

Wound management at the vet clinic can include:

- **Cleaning the wound** to remove any foreign material and as much infection as possible. In some cases the skin around the wound may be so damaged that surgery may be required to remove unhealthy tissue so that what remains is healthy and has a good blood supply.
- **Closing the wound** is done in most cases with either stitches or staples, although some wounds may not have enough remaining healthy skin to be completely closed. These can be treated as “open wounds”. Wounds that are contaminated or draining (for example cat fight abscesses) may require a latex drain to be placed temporarily to keep a small hole open so fluids can discharge.
- **Bandaging open wounds** is sometimes required to keep them clean and to prevent further trauma. It is often necessary to use a variety of bandaging materials on one wound to sufficiently protect it.

Wound management at home can include:

- **Observation:** Some wounds, like neat desexing wounds, may require no more home care than for the owner to observe the wound to make sure that it stays looking healthy and that it is healing well. Things that you would be on the lookout for would include excessive swelling, marked redness, discharge, or any problems with the stitches.
- **Cleaning:** If your pet has an open wound, you may be required to clean it at home. A sterile saline solution available from the vet clinic or from a chemist is usually the best thing to use as a strong antiseptic or excessively salty water can damage new cells and slow or prevent the normal healing process. If you want to make up a saline solution at home it can be done by adding a teaspoon of salt to one litre of boiled water, and then allowing it to cool. Ideally, any solution used should be warmed to body temperature.



- **Bandaging:** If bandage changes are required to be done at home the vet will always demonstrate how to do it before you take your pet home. There are a couple of main things to remember:

- Bandaging needs to be firm, but not tight, as tight bandages can cut off the blood supply to the wound and surrounding area.
- Make sure that bandages don't get wet. If the bandages get wet, change them straight away even if your pet is not yet due for its next scheduled change. Wet bandaging can prevent healing and lead to infection.

Why isn't the wound healing?

There are a number of factors that can cause a wound to heal slowly, including: infection, necrotic (dead) tissue, poor blood supply, on-going trauma or excessive movement. It is extremely important to ensure that you pet is not licking at the wound as licking can damage new cells and can introduce infection into the wound. Often pets are required to wear a special collar (e-collar or buster collar) to prevent them from licking/chewing. It's also important to keep the pet as calm and quiet as possible to reduce the amount movement and possible additional trauma to the wound.

The most important thing to remember with any wound is that if you have any questions or concerns, always ring us here at the clinic as soon as possible. Even if you are unsure if something is a problem, it's much easier to ring and ask, than to find out later that something is not going well.

Atticus and Co.

Atticus, the pregnant guinea pig, was presented to the clinic to see Dr. Danni Marchi early one morning in January as she was due to give birth. Atticus' owners were not really planning to have more than the two "girl" guinea pigs they had purchased from the pet shop however it turns out they had received a boy and a girl guinea pig instead! It's always a good idea to check with your vet after purchasing mice, guinea pigs and rabbits so this doesn't happen to you.



Unfortunately for Atticus, her pups did not want to cooperate and come out! After giving Atticus some syntocin (a synthetic hormone to help Atticus push the babies out) they still refused to be born. Dr. Danni knew the babies were alive and kicking as there was so much movement it looked like they were kicking around a footy inside Atticus' belly. The only option was to perform a caesarian section to remove the pups.

After Dr. Danni successfully put Atticus on an intravenous fluid drip (which was amazing considering how tiny her legs are!). Three pups were removed via caesarian. Nurses Mandy and Kim who were monitoring the anaesthetic during the surgery

managed to revive all of the pups after they were removed. Sadly however, after tireless efforts from the nurses, one pup sadly passed away.

Shortly after Atticus awoke from the surgery the pups started trying to feed. This however was not coming easily to Atticus either and it was noticed that she was not producing any milk! This could have been bad news for the babies as they need their mother's milk to give them a good chance to survive. Luckily when the owners came to visit Atticus and the pups after the surgery, they mentioned that their friends guinea pig had also just given birth to a

few pups. After a quick call to their friends we luckily had a new wet-nurse for the babies.

Atticus and the pups were able to go home that night after a quick stay in hospital to meet their new surrogate mum. Everyone was ecstatic to see that the pups started to feed from their wet-nurse with no troubles at all.

To date, the pups are doing amazingly well and are happy and healthy and living at home with mum. Atticus is one of our most memorable pets to come into the clinic and it gives us all great joy to see her and her babies doing so well.



24 Hour Wildlife Emergency
13 000 WILDLIFE
13 000 94535

Injured Wildlife

Unfortunately not all wildlife is smart enough to avoid the road and sadly it's not uncommon to find wildlife injured on the side of the road.

If you see an injured animal on the side of the road, pull over only when it is safe to do so, and turn on your hazard lights. Approach the animal carefully and cover it with a towel or blanket if possible to calm it and contain it. Stress is the major killer of injured animals so keep handling and disturbance to a minimum. Do not attempt to feed or force the animal to drink.

Remember that it's always in the animals' best interest for you to seek help as soon as possible.

For further information on any topic covered in this newsletter, please contact the clinic on (03) 9318 3349
Opening hours: Mon – Fri 8:00am – 7:00pm, Sat 9:00am – 5:00pm, Sun 10:00am – 4:00pm
