

Maribyrnong Veterinary Clinic

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“MARIBYRNONG VET TAILS” - SPRING 2007

Sting Like A Bee

In Spring, when the flowers start to bloom, the birds and bees follow. Our pets are naturally curious and will often be attracted to the buzz and activity of flying creatures in their environment. Both cats and dogs may stalk and chase birds – either to hunt, or to get them out of their territory, or just for fun. Dogs especially will nip and snap at insects which come too close and this can turn nasty if that insect is a bee or wasp.

Bee stings occur commonly around the mouth and head in dogs, usually because the dog has sought out and attempted to bite the insect. You may be able to identify and remove the actual stinger – like a little splinter – from your pet's mouth. Whether a sting is serious or not depends on the dog's individual reaction and immune response. There are broadly three categories:

1. Little or no reaction. The dog may shake it's head and run away. You may or may not see a small sore or swelling at the sting site. *No treatment is required – call for advice if concerned, and monitor your pet closely for the next few hours.*

2. Mild to moderate reaction. Face and lips often swell up. The skin may break out in “hives” or raised welts over the next hour. May yelp; uncomfortable. *This can be somewhat alleviated by antiinflammatories or antihistamines, depending on the signs and the time frame – a veterinary visit is recommended.*



3. Severe allergic reaction. As above, but more severe. If the sting is within the mouth, may get serious throat swelling, obstruction the airway. Panting, distress. Sudden anaphylaxis can lead to breathing difficulty and cardiac arrest. *Seek immediate veterinary attention. Call ahead, so we can prepare. Have someone travel in the back seat with the dog – if breathing stops, you can stretch out the head/neck and blow air through your cupped hand into the nostrils to the lungs.*

Latest News

The boys have been off to the World Small Animal Veterinary Association conference in Sydney for a week and we are happy to say that they're all back safely and straight back to work.

We have also managed to re-home a puppy which is fantastic as it means one less on the unsafe streets.

Grass Seed Foreign Body

Playing in the park as the weather gets warmer is dog-heaven. There is nothing like romping through the spring grasses and rolling in freshly mowed lawn. But at the end of the day, there is one little thing that will make the bed of roses feel a little prickly: a **grass seed**.

The awns of grasses often have barbs or prongs at the back, with a single point at the front. This works like the barb on a fish-hook – once it starts poking in to something, it is very difficult to get out, and tends to keep tracking in, rather than fall out backwards. When the point is heading into your dog's skin, he will lick and chew at it, the skin gets irritated, and the grass-seed just keeps going further

in. By the time you realise it is a problem, it is already fully buried in the skin. The dog then may leave it alone for a while, as the grass-seed keeps traveling up underneath the skin. Often it is red, maybe swollen, and a small infected wound remains where the seed entered.

What to do? Once the seed has tracked underneath the skin, it will usually require surgical removal. A poultice will occasionally help to draw it out, and antibiotics and pain relief may be required.

Prevention. Every time you take your dog to the park, give them a brush and comb-through. Check between the toes and around the feet – the most common sites.



Some thick coated and long haired dogs may need to be clipped short to avoid this unpleasant problem.

Got Some Love To Give, And Love Recycling?

If you have room for a pet in your life, consider adopting a stray! There are many more dogs and cats who find themselves in shelters, than ever find homes... Some are specific breeds, some are friendly nobodies. You can usually get to meet your chosen friend, and get to know them before you decide.

Here are some of the places around Melbourne you may like to visit before you take the trip to that cute puppy in the pet shop – an even cuter friend with love to give may be there just waiting for your visit.

Lort Smith
24 Villier Street
North Melbourne
(03) 9328 3021

Lost Dogs Home
2 Gracie Street
North Melbourne
(03) 9329 6933

Save-A-Dog Scheme
Weir Street
Glen Iris
(03) 9824 7928

RSPCA
Cnr Burwood Hwy & Middleborough Road
Burwood East
(03) 9224 2222

