

Maribyrnong Veterinary Clinic

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"MARIBYRNONG VET TAILS" - WINTER 2008

Beat the winter blues – 8 tips for pets during winter

Outdoor dogs - If you have a dog that lives mostly outside it's essential that they have a suitable shelter to escape into from the cold. Bigger is not always better, and for a dog kennel to effectively keep a dog warm it should be just big enough for the dog to stand up, turn around and lay comfortably in. It should also have a door or a heavy flap over the entrance to keep out winter draughts.

Puppies - Puppies are much more prone to hypothermia and should never be left in cold conditions for long periods of time. A good rule is "if you are cold, then your puppy is cold!".

Senior citizens - Our senior pets are similar to puppies in that they are often less able to regulate their body temperatures as well as an adult dog. If you have an elderly pet, stick with the "if you are cold..." rule.

Winter Walks - Most dogs still enjoy their walks even during the

colder months. If you have a short-haired dog, a small dog, or a dog that seems to get a bit chilly on their walks, there are a couple of things you can do to make winter walking a bit more comfortable. Maybe get them a nice winter coat or jumper to keep their body warm. Dogs lose a lot of warmth from their feet, so a pair of booties can keep their feet nice and toasty.

Hungry dogs - You might notice that your dog wants to eat more during winter. This is because it takes more calories to keep warm during winter. But, in many cases pet dogs receive less exercise during winter and therefore don't use as many calories. Be mindful of your pets individual calorie needs before adjusting their diet.

Housebreaking during winter - Cold, wet weather can make housetraining difficult for both puppies and older dogs if they decide they don't like walking on cold, wet ground. It can be a good idea to start a strict toileting

schedule which involves you taking your dog outside at regular periods. Some people use indoor toilet-training products like "puppy pads".

Arthritic pets - If your pet has arthritis, be aware that winter can make it worse. Try to keep your pet warm, give it some thick bedding, and continue gentle exercise. If your pet seems uncomfortable, make a time to have your pet re-assessed by the vet in case a change in medication dosage is required.

Snuggle time - During colder times your pet probably adores a nice warm snuggle (and so do we!!!). Why not cuddle up on the couch with your furry friend and warm their heart while you warm their body? If you find you don't have enough snuggle time with you pet, you might consider getting a hot water bottle (be careful how hot you make it though) or a heat pad that your pet can snuggle up with while you are not around.

Responsible Pet Ownership

Did you know that pet owners are generally healthier than non-pet owners? And, did you know that it's a dog owners responsibility to make sure their dog is well behaved and manageable in public places?

The Government has created a wonderful website with lots of information for pet owners about their rights and responsibilities both to their pets and their neighbours. It contains lots of information and even has a wonderful section aimed at children!

The website can be found at: www.pets.info.vic.gov.au



**responsible
pet ownership**

Cardiovascular disease in Cavalier King Charles Spaniels

It's an unfortunate fact that heart disease can not only effect people, but can also effect our pets. While heart disease can have numerous causes and can appear in any breed, there are some breeds that are predisposed to the development , and this includes the Cavalier King Charles Spaniels (CKCS).

In many cases for the CKCS the cause of heart disease is due to the development of degenerative valvular disease (endocardiosis). Most commonly in this condition, the mitral valve on the left side of the heart degenerates and fails to function properly.

The severity of endocardiosis in CKCS can vary greatly and therefore their individual symptoms can also vary. In cases where the disease is only mild, or in the early stages, it's not uncommon for the only noticable symptom to be a heart murmur. However, as the disease progresses the faulty valve can cause enlargement of the heart chamber and pulmonary oedema (a build up of fluid in the lungs). At this stage further symptoms can often occur such as weight loss, panting, coughing, weakness and lethargy.

Unfortunately there are currently no medications that can prevent or cure this disease. At this point in time treatment is given to control the symptoms associated with the disease.



These can include diuretics to assist in removing fluid from the lungs, heart muscle stimulants to improve heart function, and blood vessel dilaters to maintain normal blood pressure. In addition to medication, some lifestyle changes are often recommended, such as special diets, weight loss if the pet is overweight, and controlled exercise.

Annual vaccinations and health checks are important in diagnosing and managing heart conditions. If you have a CKCS (or any other breed) that is displaying any signs of heart failure, please contact the clinic to book an appointment to assess heart function

How many dogs does it take to screw in a light bulb?



Golden Retriever: *"The sun is shining, the day is young, we've got our whole lives ahead of us, and you're inside worrying about a stupid burned out bulb?"*

Border Collie: *"Just one. And then I'll replace any wiring that's not up to code."*

Dachshund: *"You know I can't reach that stupid light."*

Rottweiler: *"Make me."*

Chihuahua: *Yo quiero Taco Bulb.*

Boxer: *"Who cares? I can still play with my squeaky toys in the dark."*

German Shepherd: *"I'll change it as soon as I've led these people from the dark, check to make sure I haven't missed any, and make just one more perimeter patrol to see that no one has tried to take advantage of the situation."*

Lab: *"Oh, me, me!!!! Pleeeeeeeeeeze let me change the light bulb! Can I? Can I? Huh? Huh? Huh? Can I? Pleeeeeeeeeeze, please, please, please!"*

Jack Russell Terrier: *"I'll just pop it in while I'm bouncing off the walls and furniture."*

Old English Sheep Dog: *"Light bulb? I'm sorry, but where's the light?"*

Pointer: *"I see it, there it is, there it is, right there."*

Greyhound: *It isn't moving. Who cares?"*

Kelpie: *"First, I'll put all the light bulbs in a little circle...."*

Poodle: *"I'll just blow in the Border Collie's ear and he'll do it. By the time he finishes rewiring the house, my nails will be dry and my owner will have my dinner ready."*

The Cat's Answer: *"People change light bulbs. So, the real question is: How long will it be before I can expect some light, some dinner, and a massage?"*