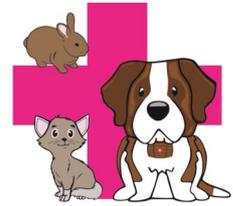


St Bernards Buzz



ST BERNARDS ROAD
Veterinary Clinic

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Does your pet have a broken heart?...



Our focus this month is on Heart Health, something which is just as important for our pets as it is for us. Just like people, a heart that is not working well will impact on your pet's health significantly. We are offering FREE Broken Heart checks with our Nursing team during February.

If you would like one of our nurses to perform a Heart Health check on your dog or cat (or both!) please call the clinic on 8364 4545 and make an appointment.

We are very excited this month to welcome Judy to our team. Judy has joined our team as a Trainee Veterinary Nurse, but has had significant experience working in the Veterinary Industry doing administration and reception work. Judy is another cat-a-holic and is really looking forward to working with all of our amazing feline patients.

Rabbit Calicivirus—a new strain

A new strain of Rabbit Calicivirus (RHDV2) is spreading across Australia with confirmed cases in Paruna and Murray Bridge. This new virus strain is distinct from RHDV1, which was released in Australia in 1996 for the control of wild rabbits.

The impact on pet rabbits and rabbit farms is high and it can cause sudden death in young kittens (3-4 weeks) and a proportion of vaccinated adults.

Virus transmission is both by direct contact and indirectly via fomites or vectors, like blowflies, flies, mosquitoes and biting fleas. The virus causes acute liver failure.

The current vaccine for Rabbit Calicivirus is not fully protective against RHDV2. However, keeping domestic or pet rabbits' vaccinations up to date is recommended to provide the maximum possible protection against this new strain. While an updated vaccine is being developed in Europe, a revised vaccination protocol is warranted for kittens, using the vaccine currently available in Australia. The suggested off-label regime is: vaccinate kittens at 4 weeks, then at 8 weeks, and again at 12 weeks, followed by yearly vaccinations. For breeding adults, a six monthly booster is recommended.

What is SRR?

SRR refers to your pet's Sleeping Respiratory Rate. The SRR is a very useful tool in recognising the onset of or monitoring left sided congestive heart failure (CHF) in both dogs and cats.

Many of the common heart diseases lead to left sided congestive heart failure. When pressure in the top left heart chamber increases and blood backs up into vessels within the lung, it results in blood accumulating in the lungs. This fluid, referred to as pulmonary oedema, causes an increase in your pet's respiratory rate.

How to monitor Sleeping Respiratory Rate

The good news is you can easily perform this test at home!

The measurement should be done when your pet is asleep in a normal environment (not too cold, not too hot). Repeat the measurement over 2-3 days (to get a baseline variation), and then ongoing monitoring should happen once or twice a week.

Normal SRR in dogs and cats is less than 30 breaths per minute, often in the high teens or low 20s.

If your pet has an underlying heart disease and their SRR is consistently greater than 30 breaths per minute, your pet could be developing CHF.

An elevated SRR can also be caused by high blood pressure, anaemia, pneumonia, heat stress or a fever - so if you are concerned about your pet it's best to arrange a check up with us as soon as possible.

Visit www.healthyheartfordogs.com.au for more information.



Patient of the Month

Nino is a delightful young man who is one of our regular visitors at St Bernard's Road Veterinary Clinic. He visited last week because he was straining and having trouble going to the toilet. It is very important that we check male cats when they are straining to toilet, because they are at risk of developing small stones which completely block the urethra and prevent them from being able to urinate.

As you can imagine cats who are not able to urinate become uncomfortable very quickly and these cats are often in crisis when we see them presented at the clinic.

Nino was admitted for some investigations and fortunately after x-rays it was found that his bladder was not blocked, but that he had some spinal trauma which was causing him to struggle and strain when he was trying to toilet. He has been treated with some anti-inflammatory medication to settle the spinal pain and he is recovering really well.

While our cats are often very private about their toileting, as owners it is important that we keep a close watch on what is going on in the litter tray.



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