

St Bernards Buzz

Kids and Dogs—keeping everyone safe!

When it comes to kids and dogs, supervision alone may not always be the best way to prevent a dog bite.

Being able to recognise when a dog is feeling stressed or threatened is the key and it is essential people are able to pick up on the signs and intervene before it's too late.



Parents, grandparents, friends and babysitters all need to be educated on what to look out for. No matter how "trustworthy" or safe you think a dog is, it always pays to take care and remember that kids can push dogs to new limits.

There are *three really easy stress signals* to watch out for in dogs:

1. Yawning
2. Lip licking (not in the context of food)
3. A half moon eye (when the whites of the outer edges of the dog's eye is visible)

If you notice any of these signs you should separate the child and the dog immediately. Other tips include never allowing a child to be around a dog when there is food involved and take care if a child is in a dog's territory (such as his bed). These can all lead to increased stress for a dog.

If you have any questions about your pet's behaviour please ask us.

We love a bit of wee!

You might think we're crazy but a small amount of wee (technically referred to as urine!) can give us heaps of information about your pet's internal health and rule out problems such as kidney disease and diabetes.

Infections, inflammation and urinary crystals are just a few of the other nasties we can detect with a little bit of urine.

Signs to look out for that may indicate a urinary tract problem:

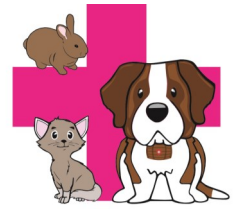
- Urinating more than usual
- Urgency urinating
- Straining to urinate
- Blood in the urine
- Incontinence
- Urinating in unusual or inappropriate places

If we ask you to collect urine at home you might feel out of your depth, but we are here to help!

As a guide, we recommend that you catch the urine in a clean and dry shallow container and bring it to us as soon as possible. A morning sample is usually best unless we advise otherwise.

Don't worry if you're not successful as we can also collect urine using a very small needle. This painless procedure is called a *cystocentesis* and is often used if we need to collect urine without contamination (especially when looking for bacteria).

Radiographs and ultrasound are further tools we have available to look for abnormalities in the urinary tract and we will advise you if these tests are necessary for your pet. ***If you think your pet's urination habits have changed it is best to phone us for advice.***



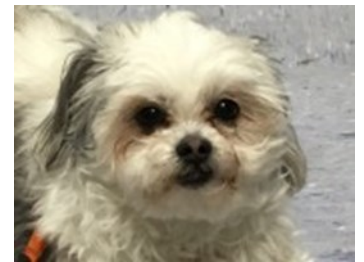
ST BERNARDS ROAD
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Patient of the Month— Maggie May

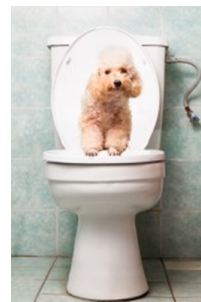


Maggie May is a 9 year old female spayed Maltese terrier cross with Cushing's disease (Hyperadrenocorticism). She was diagnosed about 3 years ago on a routine blood test.

This is a condition where there is excessive production of cortisol which in turn causes clinical signs like excessive drinking and urination, hair loss, excessive appetite, pendulous abdomen to name a few.

Maggie May is now well controlled with medication but needs 6 monthly blood testing to check that she is still in good condition and the disease is under control.

It is lovely having her come into the clinic. Her favourite thing is to sit on our laps and fall asleep while we work at our desks. She is always up for a cuddle. "We look forward to seeing you next time Maggie May!"



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Being kind to the kidneys!

Have you noticed any of the following in your pet?

- increased thirst
- increased urination
- weight loss
- vomiting
- lethargy

Any of these changes may be an early sign of kidney disease. The sooner we detect this disease and initiate treatment, the better your pet will feel and the longer he or she will live.

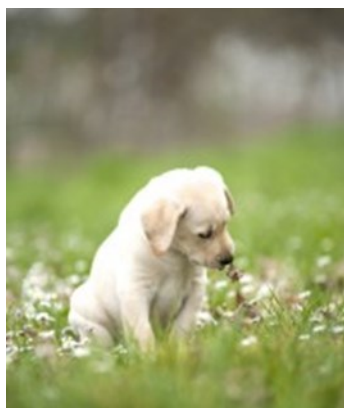
Kidney disease occurs when there is damage to the nephrons. Nephrons are simply little factories that work out how much water should be conserved in the body. Once damaged, nephrons don't function properly and can't regenerate. Toxins, drugs and diseases can harm the nephrons but what's alarming is that your pet may not show any signs until 75% of these nephrons are damaged.

There are plenty of other diseases that present with similar signs to kidney disease (such as diabetes) so it is always important that we investigate further if you notice these symptoms. A blood test, urine test, a measure of your pet's blood pressure and an ultrasound may be necessary.

It's best to arrange an appointment with us as soon as possible if you notice any changes or are worried about your pet.



Garden Hazards!



As the days get longer and warmer, you and your pet might be spending more time outside in the garden.

Here's a list of some of the more common dangers to be aware of:

Bee and wasp stings: these can cause a painful sting and in some pets, a dangerous anaphylactic reaction. Signs to watch out for include sudden limping, excessive licking, swelling, vomiting or problems breathing. If you think your pet has been stung you should call us for advice

Snail and slug bait: these are very attractive to pets. Ingestion of small quantities can be rapidly fatal. Be aware of products that claim they are "pet safe" - they are bitter in taste so only act as a deterrent. Pets will still eat these highly toxic baits so you should always consider carefully whether these baits are absolutely necessary in your garden

Poisonous plants such as rhododendrons and azaleas, daffodil bulbs and daphne are best avoided. Some lilies (the Liliium or Hemerocallis species including the tiger and Easter lily) if ingested can cause kidney failure in cats. If you are in doubt it's best to pull them out!

Fertiliser: unfortunately pets love the smell and taste of some fertilisers and if eaten, these can prove rapidly toxic or even fatal

Compost: the garden compost heap is very interesting to your pet but the contents contain bacteria, moulds and toxins all of which can make your pet very sick

Insecticides and weed killers: these are toxic to pets and should be safely stored and locked up

Rodent baits: these cause blood clotting disorders and can be deadly. Often signs don't appear until a few days to weeks after ingestion. Keep these out of reach of pets and again, consider if these baits are absolutely necessary.

If you are worried about your pet or think they might be in danger please call us for advice.

