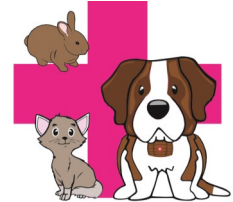


St Bernards Buzz



ST BERNARDS ROAD
Veterinary Clinic

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RSPCA Million Paws Walk



We hope that you all enjoyed a Happy and Safe Easter with your four-legged family and friends. As you can see, we are sharing our thoughts about endocrine disease this month, and giving you information to help you pick up early warning signs in your pets. As with most diseases, early detection of these diseases makes such a difference when it comes to the long term outcome and quality of life.

Don't forget that the RSPCA Million Paws walk is on in May - mark Sunday May 15th in your diary today! There are regional RSPCA walks, including one in Berri, if you would like to try something different with your pooch this year.

Fat, Lazy Dogs & Skinny Crazy Cats

The most common endocrine diseases that we see in veterinary practice are associated with the Thyroid gland. The thyroid gland runs our metabolism, for both people and animals, so if thyroid levels are too low we are slow and sluggish and if they are too high we are revved up and running on overdrive.

This is one example where dogs and cats are completely different in how they are affected. Dogs generally suffer from hypothyroidism (low thyroid hormone levels) which causes them to be fat and lazy and cats generally suffer from hyperthyroidism (high thyroid hormone levels) which causes them to be skinny and crazy!

Diagnosis of thyroid disease involves running blood tests, which we do as part of regular wellness testing every six months. Monitoring the weight of our pets is also another good way to get an early warning of thyroid disease.

Dogs that have gained weight unexpectedly should all be checked for thyroid disease, and cats that are ravenously hungry (to the point of vocalising excessively and craving food) should also be checked for thyroid disease.

Thyroid disease in both dogs and cats can be managed very successfully with long term medication – it is wonderful to see these patients get their metabolism back on track. The key is early diagnosis – so make sure you have regular weight checks and blood tests to detect problems early.

Diet not working???

Over the past few months we have focused on the importance of maintaining our pets within a healthy weight range. As mentioned previously this involves a combination of the right diet and plenty of exercise.

If you have been following all of our recommendations and your pet's waistline has not budged then there might be an underlying problem causing the weight issues.

As mentioned above, low levels of thyroid hormone can cause dogs to become "fat and lazy", and no matter how diligent you are with diet and exercise, these dogs won't lose any weight until their low levels of thyroid hormone are addressed. If you are struggling to get your dog's weight under control we should do some blood tests to screen for thyroid disease - the weight falls off these dogs once they receive thyroid medication.



Patient of the Month

This month we would like to share Maggie May's story with you.

Maggie suddenly started having some seizures early last year which necessitated doing some diagnostic blood tests to check for underlying problems. The blood tests showed that she had some mild changes in her liver enzymes which we decided needed to be monitored. Fortunately for Maggie May the seizures stopped without the need for medication, however subsequent blood tests showed that the changes we detected were becoming more significant. Our concern was that she had hyperadrenocorticism (Cushings disease), so some additional blood tests were done which confirmed that this was the case.

Hyperadrenocorticism is an endocrine disease which is relatively common in dogs, and can be treated with long term medication. Maggie has started on medication and has had two follow up blood tests which have shown that she is responding really well to the treatment. It was great to have her in hospital last week and see her looking great and responding to the medication.

Maggie May's story is a great example of how important regular blood tests are when it comes to the early detection of nasty diseases.

