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Caring for a senior pet

May 2018

Calling all Woofers and Woofettes!

On Sunday 20 May, come on down to Sturts Reserve for a fulfilled day for the whole family, and walk to fight animal cruelty!

The Million Paws Walk is an event that brings together fuzzy friends on two- and four-legs for a fun, family friendly event for pets and animal lovers alike.

Starting with a walk along the beautiful Murray river, the day will then have a village style atmosphere with market stalls, a barbeque, coffee truck, Aussie Pooch Mobile Dog Washes, children's activity stall, live music and more! Tickets can be purchased at <https://www.millionpawswalk.com.au/locations/SA/murraybridge>



All proceeds raised go to the RSPCA to help fight animal cruelty.

Entry Cost:

Child Price: \$10.00

Adult Price: \$15.00

Family Price: \$35.00

Pensioner Price: \$10.00

Event Venue: Sturts Reserve, Murray Bridge

Event Times: 9am - 1pm

Will you see MBVC there? You sure will!

Once again you will see a lot of the clinic staff there on the day, before the walk helping with registrations, or during the walk with their own dogs, or after the walk on the clinic stall. Make sure you pop by to say hi - there will be free vet checks and lots of fun and games.

If you can't make it on the day but would still like to contribute, please donate via our fundraising

page: <https://www.millionpawswalk.com.au/fundraisers/profile/view/7613>

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01 Puppy Preschool Graduates



Congratulations to the puppies who have graduated from the March Puppy Pre School Class.

Cindy
Ella
Izzy
Daphnie
Darius
Uzi

Lyla
Poppy
Thor
Mavis
Suki

What will my puppy gain from Puppy Pre School?

Your puppy will gain valuable social skills by simply interacting with other puppies and people. These skills the pup develops it will use for life. Your puppy will learn how to interact with lots of people, loud noises and children and even a visit to the vet will become fun rather than something to shake about. Your puppy will develop into a friendly, educated, confident adult dog.

How will I benefit?

Owning a dog will be enjoyable rather than a chore. Having an obedient, well socialised dog is much more pleasant and stress free. You will also gain knowledge in all areas of pet care from dental, nutrition, solving behavioural problems, toilet training and lots, lots more. Weekly freebies and samples to take home for the puppy.

02 Hip Hip Hooray!!



Happy Birthday to our current Senior Pet Club and Healthcare members who will be celebrating in May:

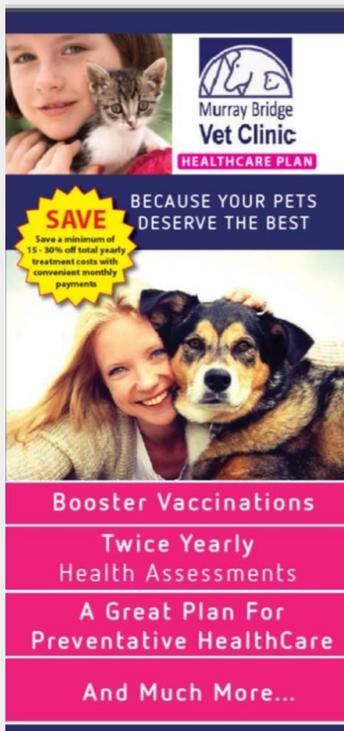
Molly - 15 years old
Voss - 14 years old
Turbo - 11 years old
Ellah - 12 years old
Jessie - 13 years old

And welcome to our newest Healthcare member who joined us in April:

Ella

MBVC Healthcare plans are available for cat and dogs of all ages! If you would like some more info on our Healthcare Plans please [Contact Us](#) or read more on our [website](#).

03 Have you heard of our Pet Healthcare Plan?



The advertisement features a woman holding a kitten in the top left corner. The Murray Bridge Vet Clinic logo is in the top right. A central banner reads "BECAUSE YOUR PETS DESERVE THE BEST" with a yellow starburst saying "SAVE Save a minimum of 15-30% off total yearly treatment costs with convenient monthly payments". Below this is a photo of a woman and a dog. The bottom section lists benefits: "Booster Vaccinations", "Twice Yearly Health Assessments", "A Great Plan For Preventative HealthCare", and "And Much More..."

If you would like to know more about it, follow this link to our [website](#) !

Here you will find how the plan could help you to provide comprehensive preventative healthcare for your pet, spread the cost and take advantage of special offers for Pet Healthcare Members.

04 You Tube



Murray Bridge Veterinary clinic now have a You Tube channel.

Have a look at the videos we currently have [online](#) - we will be added new ones all the time.

05 The best ways to care for a senior pet



Did you know that dogs and cats are considered senior when they reach 7-8 years of age? Most importantly, senior pets require some extra special attention to help keep them happy and healthy.

Here are some of the best ways you can care for your senior pet:

1. Regular health checks



More regular health checks are absolutely essential for your ageing pet. There can be many changes that occur to your pet's health over a year (equivalent to 6-8 years in human years). A check up every 3 - 6 months will help us pick up on any changes and allow us to initiate a treatment plan to help your pet live a healthier and more comfortable life.

2. Appropriate diet

Our ageing pets have changing nutritional requirements. Older animals may be less able to cope with excessive nutrients or particular deficiencies. We recommend you feed your senior pet a complete and balanced premium food suitable for a mature pet. These help to maintain ideal body condition and will improve longevity. Ask us for a specific diet recommendation.

3. Keep an eye out for changes

Fluctuations in weight, appetite, thirst and urination can be a sign of an underlying disease. As can the presence of a cough, a change in sleeping habits, stiff joints and accidents around the house. It's also a good idea to run your hands over your pet every week and feel for any new lumps or bumps. If you find anything new or unusual, arrange a lump check with us as soon as possible. And don't be tempted to just put these changes down to 'getting old' as they are not normal!

Phone us if you have any questions about your senior pet, we are here to give you the best advice. [Click here to read the latest clinic blog on senior pets.](#)

06 Can my dog get dementia?



Yes! Doggy dementia (also known as Canine Cognitive Dysfunction) has been recognised for some time and has many similarities to Alzheimer's disease in humans.

Some of these signs of the disease can be subtle so you may not even realise your elderly canine is suffering from the disease.

Watch out for:

- Disorientation and confusion
- Lack or decreased levels of interaction with family members or other pets
- A disturbance in sleep patterns, pacing at night, unable to settle
- Forgetting toilet training
- Reduced activity levels
- Barking for no reason, staring at walls, getting stuck in corners

The most important point to remember is that there are many other diseases that can lead to any of the signs of dementia so diagnosis involves assessment of your pet and is a process of

elimination. This is just another example of why regular checkups are essential for a senior pet.

The good news is that we have a prescription diet available that may help improve brain function as well as medications that may improve the condition and others to help reduce any anxiety your pet may be experiencing.

Ask us for more information if you are worried about your pet.

07 Lenno's dry eyes



Meet Lenno. Lenno is an 8-year-old cavalier cross who snores very loudly and is obsessed with food. We will be following Lenno's health journey over the next few months.

Lenno is considered a senior dog and has regular health checks to manage his early arthritis.

At a recent visit, Lenno's eyes looked a bit red. They also had a mild yellow discharge and so a thorough eye examination was performed.

A routine tear test (known as a Schirmer tear test) indicated that Lenno's tear film was not sufficient enough and confirmed Lenno was suffering from a condition known as dry eye.

A lack of 'healthy tears' means the eye is not nourished properly and without tears, the eye becomes very dry and uncomfortable. This condition can be very painful if not diagnosed and treated properly. It can also lead to secondary problems such as corneal ulcers and even blindness.

It is most commonly caused by an immune-mediated condition that leads to damage to the tear producing glands. Breeds that are predisposed to the condition include the English Cocker spaniel, West Highland White terrier, Cavalier King Charles spaniel and Shih-Tzu. Other breeds include the Yorkshire terrier, Bulldog, Pekingese, Pug and Lhasa Apso.

Lenno will need to be given eye drops every day for the rest of his life to manage the condition and we will update you on his progress next month (as well as venturing into the management of his arthritis).

In the meantime, if you ever look in to your pet's eyes and notice any redness, change in size or colour, discharge or squinting you should arrange a check up with us ASAP. Eye conditions can be extremely painful and generally require swift veterinary treatment. Call us if you are worried.



Lenno having the quality of his tears assessed using a Schirmer tear test.

08 Children and dogs - keeping everyone safe



When it comes to children and dogs, many people say that supervision is essential. But it is critical to understand that supervision alone may not always be the way to prevent a dog bite.

The key to helping prevent a dog bite is *being able to recognise when a dog is feeling stressed or threatened*. It's important to be able to pick up on the signs and intervene before it's too late.

Everyone needs to know what to look out for and this includes parents, grandparents, friends and the babysitter. 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 or even unintentionally hurt a dog.



Some of the stress signals to watch out for in dogs:

1. Lip licking (not in the context of food)
2. Yawning when not tired
3. Whites of the eyes visible
4. Immediately standing and leaving the environment
5. Turning head away
6. Hiding behind another person or furniture
7. Ears back
8. Tail low or tucked between legs and only the end wagging

If you notice any of these signs you should separate the child and the dog immediately. Never allow 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 a dog bed). These can all lead to increased stress for a dog.

We also encourage you to watch and share the video below that expresses how a dog might feel when put under stress by young children.

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

09 "The Family Dog" video

Here's a [short video on YouTube](#) created by "The Family Dog" that expresses how a dog can feel when put under stress by young children. It might give you a different perspective on how kids and dogs should interact.



The Fine Print

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