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**Murray Bridge Veterinary Clinic**

140 Swanport Rd,  
Murray Bridge SA 5253  
[murraybridgevet.com.au](http://murraybridgevet.com.au)  
[mbvet@lm.net.au](mailto:mbvet@lm.net.au)  
(08) 8531 4000

**Pet Care Newsletter**



## Puppy Pre School Graduates

Congratulations to the puppies that graduated from the February Puppy Pre-School classes with our Delta Society trained Nurses Kirstie & Amanda.

To view all the adorable graduation photos please visit our [website](#).

Max  
Cujo  
Chester  
Roger  
Bingo  
Frankie  
Gypsy  
Hulk  
Blizzard

### 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.



## Happy Birthday

A really BIG Happy Birthday to our current Healthcare members who will be celebrating in March 2022.

Meg - Happy 6th Birthday

Jake & Elwood - Happy 2nd Birthday !!

### MBVC Healthcare plans are available for cats and dogs of all ages!

At Murray Bridge Veterinary Clinic we believe that prevention is better than cure, which is why we have developed our Pet Healthcare Plan. Each Plan is designed to cover all the regular essentials, such as booster vaccinations as well as unlimited consultations.

If you would like some more info on our Healthcare Plans please contact us or read more on our website. There 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.

[Click here to find out more](#)



## Tummy troubles

When our pets are suffering from an upset tummy, we empathise with them and want to relieve their troubles as soon as possible (even if we're pretty sure their symptoms are the result of some cheeky food scrap stealing). However, it can sometimes be hard to know when to just support them with TLC at home, and when they actually require urgent veterinary care to treat their tummy woes.

Here are some indications that a prompt veterinary assessment is recommended for your pet's gastrointestinal issues:

### **Your pet is lethargic**

If your pet is lethargic, they may be uncomfortable, require pain relief and anti-nausea medications.

For those pets displaying more severe lethargy, this can also indicate that your pet is becoming dangerously dehydrated, or is affected by a more significant illness requiring urgent treatment.

### **Your pet is a young puppy or kitten, or an older animal with chronic health issues**

Whilst healthy adult animals have some ability to cope with a routine gastrointestinal upset, very young or chronically unwell pets can have reduced immune capacity. These pets can also become dehydrated or develop metabolic imbalances much more easily, which may cause a rapid deterioration in their condition.

### **Your pet is bringing up blood**

If your pet is vomiting or pooping fresh blood, urgent veterinary care is always recommended.

### **You suspect your pet has eaten something they shouldn't have**

If you think your pet has eaten something potentially toxic (e.g. rotten garbage or human medications) or something that could cause a blockage, phone our team for urgent advice. Time can be of the essence when treating these conditions.

### **Your pet's symptoms aren't settling within 24 hours**

This indicates that further veterinary assessment and treatment may be required for a more significant illness.

### **If you are worried about your pet!**

If you are simply concerned about your pet, please don't hesitate to phone our friendly team. We're always happy to help!



## A sharp warning

Like us, animals don't always get on with each other! Unfortunately, the results of their disagreements can range from a warning nip to a full-blown attack or fight. As well as being traumatic and upsetting for the pets involved (and us as owners), dog and cat bites can also create nasty injuries.

When a dog or cat bites with intent, their long sharp canine teeth can penetrate deeply into the victim's tissues.

In the case of dog bites, their powerful jaws can cause significant tissue bruising, crushing or tearing. Even with relatively simple-looking skin puncture wounds, it's recommended to have a veterinarian assess the wounds, as:

- With some bites, areas of skin may be separated from the deeper muscle tissue that it normally attaches to, creating an internal "pocket" that can easily become infected
- Significant crushing damage can result in dangerous swelling (particularly around the throat) and can affect the blood supply to nearby tissues, resulting in a larger wound

Whilst cat bites tend not to cause large wounds, their sharp teeth can act like needles, "injecting" nasty mouth bacteria deep into the bitten animal's tissues. This means that cat bite wounds very frequently develop infections, and can easily become large painful abscesses requiring surgical drainage.

If your pet has been bitten badly enough to break the skin, we advise contacting our clinic to request a prompt appointment, so that we can provide your pet with pain relief, and assess and treat their wounds further.

If your pet has been attacked and has gaping wounds or wounds that are steadily dripping blood, or if they seem to be lethargic or in significant pain, contact our team to request an urgent assessment.

With the correct support and veterinary treatment, we can help bitten pets recover from their injuries as comfortably and smoothly as possible.



## Survival of the fittest: the animals adapting to climate change

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*The "hurricane lizard"*

*Image source: [The Guardian](#)*

Evolution is a fickle thing. When the environment changes, species must adapt to these changes to avoid extinction - this is called plasticity. From changing breeding seasons to changes to access to food sources, species plasticity shifts (both physical and behavioural changes) are being recognised across the globe.

When a region gets too hot, animal species must find cooler regions to survive. This is evident in an article from [Mongabay](#), that reveals how mountain-adapted species are having to move to even higher altitudes, as the warming world decreases habitat space.

Phenological shifts (the seasonal timing of biological events) are also being observed, with mother grey seals birthing their pups earlier in the breeding season, but at an older average age. The [Royal Society](#) explains that, "grey seals accumulate resources for breeding during the majority of the year and then do not forage while suckling their pups," so, as sea conditions become affected by the climate and resources become limited, a more competitive resource demand is put on seal mothers trying to feed their young.

A new movement in food sourcing has become apparent too, with Alaskan bears opting for early-ripening elderberries to supplement the nutrients missed from their usual salmon diet.

And species themselves are changing.

Usually territorial aggressors, butterflyfish have altered their evolutionary behaviour, becoming more pacifist to conserve energy and survive on nutrient-depleted reefs.

While the Humboldt squid have been maintaining their population and combating marine heat waves by shrinking in size and shortening their life spans.

Similarly, Amazonian birds have, each decade, shrunk as much as 2% of their body weight since 1980 to more effectively dissipate heat. Caribbean Anole lizards have evolved their toe pads to a greater size to increase their gripping strength when holding onto trees and shrubs amidst more commonly-occurring hurricanes.

Although many species are demonstrating plasticity to adapt to the current, already-warmed climate, sadly, many species will simply not be able to. Conservation resources are limited, so understanding which species can conform to a changing climate is crucial. As [The New Statesman](#) article articulates, "we simply cannot save everything."

Read more about the impacts of climate change on species from [Brightly](#), [ABC News](#) and [The Guardian](#)



## Animal News In Brief

### **Calls to make exercising pets a legal requirement, everywhere**

We know animal cruelty exists, but it's not often talked about how cruelty can be caused by something as casual as not making time to walk your dog. When a dog is locked inside all day, they don't just miss out on vital exercise, but also the sensory stimulation they receive from socialising and exploring surrounding environments. In March last year, the Australian Capital Territory enshrined pet walks into law, with a \$4,000 fine for pet owners who neglect to walk, feed or provide water for their pet. Now, animal welfare campaigners are calling on other states and territories to consider similar penalties. "A lack of socialisation is emotionally damaging, it can make a dog fearful, aggressive and hostile towards other dogs and people," said Rebecca Linigen, National Director of FOUR PAWS Australia. "If this law does create a positive impact on animal welfare, and preventing animal neglect, then it's something we should all support." This legal shift in ethically supporting the welfare of our furry friends is happening not just in Canberra, but around the world, with Norway recently taking a stand against the selective breeding of certain pets, such as bulldogs, who endure a life of 'man-made health problems'.

Read more about the ACT fine from [Daily Mail](#).

### **-----Sniffer dogs now detecting... platypuses!**

Despite being a national treasure, it's intriguing how little we know about the platypus. In the interest of platypus conservation, Zoos Victoria have been training Kip, a six-year-old kelpie cross, to detect and locate wild platypuses in order to gain critically-needed population data. Working alongside Kip is wildlife detection dog officer Naomi Hodgens, who will ensure Kip can follow the platypus scent and persevere through challenging environments, while avoiding any disturbance to our duck-billed friends. Once Kip finds a burrow occupying a platypus, his training will have him sit a respectful distance away and alert his handler, who will hand him a treat. In January 2021, the Victorian government marked the platypus as a threatened species, and due to their dark colouring, darkly-lit habitats and the fact that they're nocturnal, platypuses aren't easy for humans to track, which makes population data hard to uncover and conservation very tricky. In April, however, Kip will graduate out of training and bring his skills into the wild. Although to Kip, this work may just seem like "a big game" according to Hodgens, this very good detection doggo is helping to increase our understanding of the platypus, kindling a national hope in protecting these incredible, yet vulnerable, critters.

Read more about Kip's project from [The Guardian](#).

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### **As climate change intensifies, pets simply cannot handle the heat**

Heatstroke in pets can be prevalent in the warmer months, but as a new study by Nottingham Trent University reveals, the condition is only going to become more common due to the effects of climate change. "Heat-related illness can affect all pets and is likely to become more common as global temperatures rise," said researcher and veterinarian Emily Hall. Climate change is impacting everything, and that means that as the days get hotter, we must adjust our animals' environments. Researcher Dr Anne Carter stresses that the issue is not just about "dogs in hot cars". Guinea pigs, rabbits, ferrets and cats can all be affected, while dogs with flat faces are especially vulnerable. However, by keeping a watchful eye over our pets, ensuring they have cool, shady spaces to occupy with plenty of fresh water and aren't outside in the hottest parts of the day, heatstroke can be prevented. Pets with heatstroke can display symptoms of abnormal breathing, lethargy, collapse and gastrointestinal issues, such as diarrhoea. If you notice your pet showing any of these symptoms, bring them in to see us immediately!

Read more about the effect of heatstroke on pets from [the BBC](#).



## Dietary indiscretion

Uh oh, your pet has just stolen and eaten something they shouldn't have... What should you do?

If you think that your pet may have eaten something potentially toxic, it's always best to seek veterinary advice as soon as possible. Time can be of the essence when treating poisoning cases, with prompt therapy often minimising symptoms and reducing overall treatment costs.

### What are some common toxicities in pets?

Common toxicities seen in dogs and cats include:

- Chocolate
- Lily toxicity in cats
- Human medications, such as ibuprofen
- Rat bait

### What can we do to help poisoned pets?

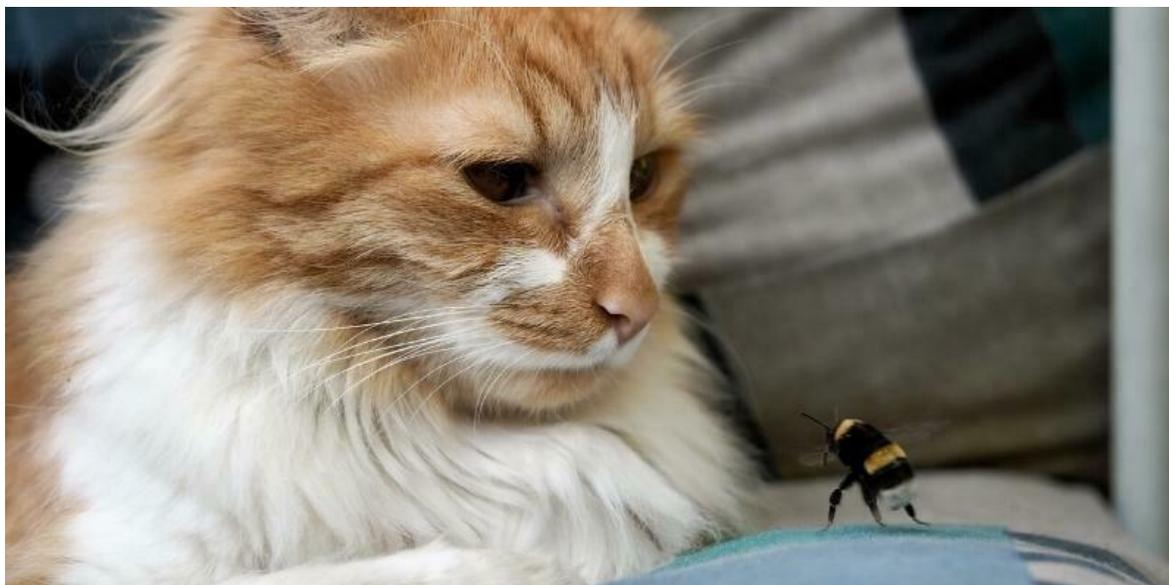
When seeking initial veterinary advice for your pet, it's helpful if you can have the packet of what your pet has eaten close to hand (so you can read out the label to us), and an estimated amount that your pet could have consumed.

If your pet has eaten the toxic substance within the last two hours, we will discuss potentially making them vomit or flushing out their stomach under anaesthetic, to rid them of any undigested material and limit toxin absorption.

If it's too late or unsafe to empty your pet's stomach, or if they're already showing symptoms, we will discuss ongoing treatment for their condition. Depending on the particular toxin, this can include:

- Feeding them activated charcoal to help "bind up" toxin in their intestines (note: this only works with some substances)
- Hospital care, including intravenous fluid support or medications to manage your pet's symptoms
- Administration of any relevant antidotes, e.g. Vitamin K1 for rat bait poisoning
- Regular blood tests to monitor your pet's health

With prompt veterinary treatment, we can improve the chance of your pet making a full, rapid recovery. Unfortunately, we haven't yet mastered the art of teaching them not to do something silly again!



## A sting in the tail

Bees are sometimes colloquially referred to as “spicy sky raisins”, because our curious pets are often drawn to snap at or play with these buzzing insects, and can unfortunately pay a rather painful price as a result!

### **What will happen to my pet if they get stung by a bee?**

Symptoms of a bee sting in pets can involve localised or generalised reactions, with localised being the most common.

Localised reactions involve pain at the site of the sting, with surrounding tissue redness and swelling - similar to what most of us would experience with a bee sting.

Generalised bee sting reactions can range from milder allergic-type symptoms (such as itchiness and red skin lumps around your pet's body), or serious anaphylactic reactions. Anaphylaxis occurs if your pet has a severe allergic response to the bee venom, and can cause affected pets to develop sudden vomiting, diarrhoea, collapse or breathing difficulties, or even respiratory arrest.

### **What treatment will my pet require for a bee sting?**

If you suspect your pet has been stung by a bee, but they seem generally OK (other than being sore at the sting site), you can start treatment at home by carefully removing any embedded stinger, placing a cold compress on the area and monitoring your pet closely for 12-24 hours. However, if your pet seems to be in a lot of pain, it's important to seek veterinary attention as pain relief and antihistamine medication may be required.

If your pet seems generally uncomfortable or is showing any signs of unwellness, we recommend an urgent consultation so that our vets can assess them further and administer treatment as required to support their safe recovery.

For more information on bee sting prevention and treatment in pets, give our team a buzz (on the phone, that is!).



## Pet breathing difficulties

Pet breathing difficulties (also known as dyspnoea) can indicate a serious issue, and may be distressing for both the affected pet and their owner.

### What are some common causes of pet breathing difficulties?

Dyspnoea in pets can be caused by:

- Airway issues, e.g. brachycephalic (flat-faced) dog breeds experiencing a sudden worsening in their breathing due to excessive heat or stress
- Lung problems, e.g. congestive heart failure (where the lungs fill with fluid due to poor heart function), or pneumonia
- Chest problems, e.g. trauma or rat bait poisoning causing bleeding within the chest cavity

Problems such as tick paralysis can impair the function of the airways, lungs and chest simultaneously.

### What should I do if my pet is having trouble breathing?

If your pet is showing signs of breathing difficulties, it's always best to have them assessed urgently, whatever the time of day. Please phone our clinic asking to have your pet seen as an emergency appointment.

If your pet is choking, carefully check their throat (if it's safe enough to do so) and try to remove the foreign object, and seek veterinary attention as quickly as possible.

On the way to your appointment, try to keep your pet calm. Keep the car cool with high air-conditioner fan flow.

Once your pet reaches the clinic, our veterinary team will assess the animal and provide them with supplementary oxygen and assess them further and other treatment as needed.