

# Animal Medical Services

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Alexandria, Kingsford and Brookvale South

Veterinary Hospitals

And Mobile Veterinary Services

### SUMMER NEWSLETTER

*From all the staff at Alexandria, Kingsford and Brookvale South veterinary hospitals we're wishing all our clients a safe and happy holiday season.*



### *A Sad Farewell To Dr Ken*

By the time January 2011 has drawn to a close, we will also have closed a big chapter in the history of AVH. We don't have many staff members who have been with us longer than Dr Ken Sedgers. Ken has been working with us full-time since 2004 since leaving his passion for racehorses and entering the world of small animals.

His compassion and dedication to his clients (and their owners!) is well known and his profound enthusiasm is

an inspiration to us all. Ken's skills and knowledge have been a valuable asset to AVH and to all the animals in our care.

Ken, his partner Justine and son Avey are making the big move to the USA. We wish them the very best for their new lives. Ken, thank you for all that you've contributed to AVH over the years. It won't be the same without you.



### *Don't Get Ticked Off*

*By Dr Toni Nguyen*

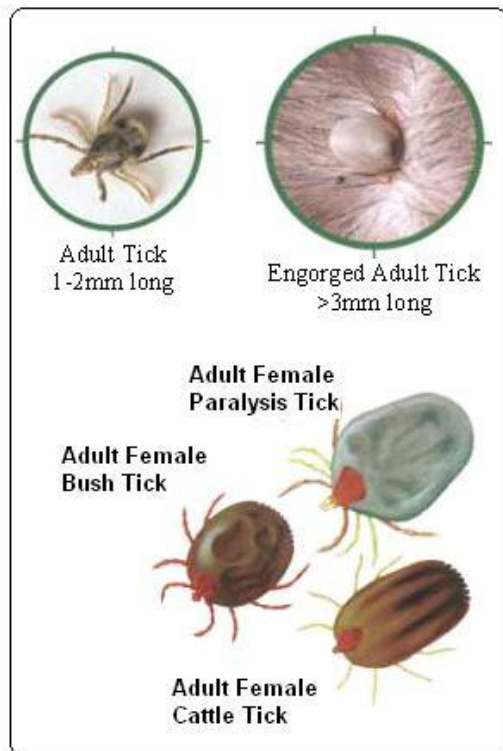
Summer is a great time for being outdoors but for dogs this also carries a serious risk of tick paralysis.

Paralysis ticks (*Ixodes holocyclus*) are among the most dangerous parasites that can affect your pet. It is estimated that over 75,000 dogs and cats are paralysed in Australia each year and unfortunately, many die.

### Where Do We Find Paralysis Ticks?

Paralysis ticks are found on animals that live in or near thick bushland. The northern and western areas of Sydney are most affected but it isn't unusual to find them in Sydney suburbia as well.

Native animals such as marsupials, birds and reptiles are the natural hosts. Ticks can then become attached to dogs and cats.



### How does the tick cause Paralysis?

The tick sucks blood from the host animal and secretes saliva that contains toxins which are absorbed and cause signs of paralysis and poisoning.

### Symptoms of Tick Paralysis

Symptoms of poisoning may occur up to 5 days following the initial tick attachment. They include:

- Loss of coordination in the hind legs – 'a wobbly walk'
- Change in voice or bark
- Retching, coughing or vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Progressive paralysis to include the forelegs
- Difficulty breathing or rapid breathing

Not all cases follow a simple progression and the animal can die suddenly in the very early stages of paralysis.

### If you see these signs you should:

1. Keep your pet calm in a cool, dark place until you can take it to your vet.
2. Do not offer food or water, as this may lead to pneumonia and breathing difficulties if the animal cannot swallow properly.
3. Seek veterinary attention as soon as possible.

### At the vet:

Your veterinarian can give your pet an anti-toxin to help recovery. Other specialised procedures such as sedation and treatment for respiratory complications may be vital for your pet's complete recovery. Your pet will probably require hospitalisation for several days.

### Protect Your Pet

#### a) Avoid the tick habitat

During the tick season, don't take your dog walking in bush areas known to harbour large numbers of ticks. Keep lawns and shrubs short and remove compost material from backyards.

## **b) Do A Tick Search**

Run your hands through your animals fur front head to tail to feel for a small 3mm-7mm lump attached to the skin.

Also look in the ears and between the paws as they can hide in the places. When an adult tick feeds on blood, it increases in size dramatically.

When a tick attaches to the skin, the area becomes red and a raised thickening or "crater" may appear. A crater is evidence of a prior tick attachment. Very furry animals are often shaved if suspected of a tick so none are missed.

Try to identify the tick or bring it to a vet because some are non-harmful.

## **c) Remove ticks**

As soon as a paralysis tick is found it should be removed as soon as possible. Quickly remove the tick without squeezing the engorged abdomen. Your vet can do this or show you the best method. A special hook or tweezers may be useful.

## **d) Preventatives for paralysis tick control**

In addition to daily searching, application of products specifically intended for tick control can greatly reduce the risk of tick paralysis for your pet.

**You should ask your vet for their recommendation.**

## *Pirate the One Eyed Cat*

At Alexandria Veterinary Hospital (AVH) we sadly get a lot of stray kittens that come in sick or injured. Pirate was one of these kittens. He came in as a welfare case with severe cat flu. Cat flu is caused by Feline Herpesvirus, Calicivirus and/or

Chlamydia. He had all the signs including sneezing, coughing, runny eyes, nasal discharge, conjunctivitis, loss of appetite and tongue ulcers.

To combat this disease, a three course F3 vaccination at 8,12 and 16 weeks is recommended for all new kittens. Thereafter, only an annual booster is required. This disease is very contagious and can be fatal in young kittens.



Pirate was in a serious state for two weeks and was on soft food only due to his oral ulcerations and both antibiotic tablets and ointment to combat his infection. Unfortunately his eye infection was so bad that one his eyes was damaged beyond repair despite his otherwise good recovery.

It was decided by our vets that Pirate could lead a normal life with one eye and he was placed in our ongoing kitten adoption program at AVH.

This program allows kittens that otherwise would have been put down

to be re-homed to new, loving families. They are vaccinated, microchipped, wormed and desexed. If you are looking for a new kitten then please contact either any one of our clinics for more information.

To combat our increasing stray cat population please ensure that all your animals are desexed at 6 months of age.

### **Testimonial from Pirate's New Owner – Sarah**

*"Pirate was behind the counter with his best mate Maria (AVH nurse) and I was instantly smitten. We had been considering getting a friend for Poppy, and he was clearly the one. Someone had found his litter in the neighbourhood, and they were all very unwell.*

*The wonderful doctors and nurses at Alexandria Vets nursed him back to health, though his eye was so infected that he went blind. We brought him home on a trial for the weekend to see how Poppy felt about a friend. He wanted to play; she was not impressed. He was so sweet and was sleeping on my chest, playing with everything. There was no chance we were giving him back!*

*We went in the next week to adopt him (Maria was sad to see him go!). The desexing, vaccinations etc was already organised and the only thing left was to surgically remove his eye when he was old enough. They did an amazing job with his eye and after several patient months, Pirate and Poppy became tentative friends, and today they follow each other around the house and are happy to play together. And he is still the same sweet purring ball of fluff that he was as a kitten."*

## **Introducing Dr Brona Kemp to Brookvale South Vet**



Brona graduated from the University of Queensland in 2004. She worked in her home town of Toowoomba for just over a year before the travel bug set in – the UK was calling.

What was initially going to be one or two years doing locum work quickly turned into a 4 year stint working around various parts on England, finally settling into a permanent job with a great veterinary team in London.

Brona has always had a passion for animals. Her family have 2 cats, 3 curly coated retrievers and her rescued cat 'Monkey' was brought back with her from the UK to live out her days here in Australia.

Brona has a special interest in soft tissue surgery, dermatology and feline medicine. Her broad experience, compassionate manner, technical skills and attention to detail ensure that her patients receive the utmost care.

Brona and her partner Andrew enjoy spending time with their pets and family, exploring the hidden beaches of Sydney, scuba diving and planning their next trip away.

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