

Cat vet

Diabetes Mellitus in Cats

Diabetes mellitus—usually just referred to as diabetes—is quite a common disease in cats, occurring in 1 of 200 cats and about 60% of diabetic cats are older than ten years. This disease occurs when either the body is not producing enough insulin (which is made by the pancreas), or the body becomes resistant to the effects of insulin. Insulin is a hormone, travelling through the body via the bloodstream, and one of its main functions is to let glucose ('blood sugar') into the cells to provide the body with energy.

Diabetes is more often found in overweight cats, and here in Australia, there is a predisposition for Burmese cats to become diabetic, with a prevalence of approximately 1 in 50 for all Burmese cats, and 1 in 10 for Burmese cats older than 8 years. Other risk factors include underlying disease conditions (for example chronic infection from dental disease), certain medications (particularly cortisone type preparations), older age and being a male.

In diabetes, the glucose builds up in the blood stream, spilling over into the urine, pulling extra water with it. This means that there is too much water being lost through the urine (and also means the cat is peeing more than normal), and therefore Puss starts to drink more. At the same time however, the cells are starving for energy, and so the cat feels hungrier and eats more (or pesters their owner for more food!), yet your cat starts to lose weight at the same time.

This all means that the usual signs we first see in an animal with diabetes is excessive drinking and urinating, with increased appetite and weight loss following soon after. It is important to realise that there may be other diseases (like an overactive thyroid) that can look similar, so blood and urine tests are needed for an accurate diagnosis to be made.



Melissa Catt BVSc
Paddington Cat Hospital

Melissa graduated from the University of Sydney in 1990. She worked in a private small animal practice in Adelaide for two years and then in England for a further two years. Melissa continued in private practice on her return to Sydney before starting Paddington Cat Hospital with her husband, Randolph Baral in 1997. Melissa is interested in all aspects of feline medicine and has a particular liking for soft tissue surgery. Of course, Melissa was nominatively destined for feline medicine.

183 Glenmore Road, Paddington NSW 2021
Phone: (02) 9380 6111
Website: www.catvet.com.au




If diabetes is not caught early, some animals can become very sick with the side effects of the disease. The body doesn't realise it has glucose available, so it tries to make its own and the by-products of this process are substances called ketones. Up until this point, most cats feel well in themselves, but when the ketone levels build up, they quickly become very sick and require intensive hospital care on intravenous fluids and Insulin through the dripline before being stabilized enough to go home.

For the majority of cats however, the diabetes is easier to treat, using dietary changes and usually insulin injections. These injections are usually twice daily (approximately 12 hours apart). Not surprisingly owners can find this a daunting task, but after a couple of goes, most realise that these tiny injections are actually easier than administering tablets! There is an initial period of stabilisation, and usually straight after first being diagnosed Puss needs to be checked daily to weekly. Once the correct dose of insulin has been determined, it's a good idea to have a check-up every 3 months to ensure the insulin requirement has stayed the same.

Knowing that obesity or just being overweight is such an important factor in developing diabetes (as it is with people), means that a healthy diet is crucial for your cats wellbeing. Weight loss in overweight cats should be gradual. It is highly recommended to feed your cat specific meals if possible, and to measure the food so that they have the same calorie intake each day. Tinned foods are far better than dry foods, and in particular having a diet high in protein is important (for example Hills® Prescription Diet m/d has been designed specifically for diabetic cats). Cats can be very fussy about their food, and don't necessarily eat what we want them to (even though it's for their own good!!). Consultation with your vet is vital to ensure that an ideal treatment plan is devised for each individual.

Diabetes generally is a disease which is readily treated and where Puss doesn't suffer from any loss in their quality of life. A reasonable number of cats can even come off their insulin treatment if underlying causes like obesity and/or illness are dealt with—but remember, once a diabetic, Puss always has that predisposition in future. Certainly, ensuring they maintain a healthy weight and have issues like dental disease addressed promptly helps to prevent diabetes from developing in the first place!




VetStop Shop

Stop paying too much!

All you need for your pet:
 Flea control, heartworm, supplements, joint care, treats, toys, ear care, beds, dental care & much, much more ...

www.vetstop.com.au



Dog/small animals vet

Periodontal Disease – the ugly facts

We have all heard the old adage "prevention is better than cure". In fact I'm sure that this was drilled into us when we all visited the dentist as kids. The same adage also holds true when it comes to our pet's dental care. Most of us brush our teeth at least twice a day after meals, and try to floss as often as our dentists tell us to. Can you imagine what sort of state our teeth would be in if we never brushed our teeth? Well this is the situation that many of our pets find themselves in.

So what exactly is periodontal disease? Periodontal disease refers to disease involving the structures that support the teeth – the gums, the jaw bone and the ligament that holds the teeth in the jaw socket. Periodontal disease is caused by plaque accumulation on the teeth.

Plaque accumulates on the teeth when they are not cleaned properly and regularly. Early periodontal disease is totally reversible, whereas the changes that occur with more advanced periodontal diseases are permanent. Unfortunately, these permanent changes can result in long term problems, including recurrent infections, oral pain and tooth loss.

The fact that early periodontal disease is curable and preventable underscores the importance of prevention as well as recognition of the early signs. Astute pet owners will easily be able to recognise these signs. They include bad breath, bleeding from the gum margin, and redness and swelling of the gum margins. If you notice any of these changes, your pet has periodontal disease which can be readily treated (stay with me, we're getting to treatment and prevention).

Now have you just checked your pet's mouth and found that they have these changes? Don't feel bad and don't think you are alone. According to recent research, a staggering 85% of dogs and cats over one year of age have periodontal disease. It is also the most common infection seen in dogs and cats older than three years of age.


The good news is that preventing periodontal disease is simple and inexpensive. The best and most natural way to prevent periodontal disease is by feeding raw meaty bones. Regular consumption of raw meaty bones provides the teeth with the cleaning and flossing necessary to prevent plaque formation and periodontal disease. It is



**ANIMALS
GREAT & SMALL
PHYSIOTHERAPY**

Khristine Edwards is a physiotherapist and acupuncturist with a Masters degree in Animal Physiotherapy, and works with both animals and people.

Did you know that animals suffer from many of the same problems that we do, such as back pain, arthritis, traumatic and sporting injuries? Physiotherapy, corrective exercises and acupuncture can alleviate many of these problems, make your pet happier and reduce your vet bills!



For more information please call Khristine on: 02 95604514 or 0408229341

hands on care for animal wellbeing

Acupuncture
For your pet, in your home.

Fully qualified acupuncturist specialising in the health & well being of your pets. Mobile service to Sydney & surrounds, other areas by arrangement.

Rae Hennessy, Bachelor of Health Sc. (Acupuncture),
Masters of Health Sc. (Chinese Herbal Medicine), MAACMA



For information or appointment: Phone: (02)46810202 Mobile: 0418 235 123
Email: billabong@bocnet.com.au Web: www.acupet.com.au

vital to commence feeding bones to your pet at a young age. Many older pets will not chew bones if they have not been exposed to them as pups or kittens.

Unfortunately raw bones are not suitable for all dogs, and there is no one type of bone that will be suitable for all dogs. I give specific advice to my clients based on the type of dog. Greedy dogs may attempt to swallow bones whole if they think they can manage it, with potentially disastrous consequences. Generally speaking, chicken wings and necks are ok for very small dogs and cats. Larger dogs should be given large shin bones that have been cut into pieces that cannot possibly be swallowed. Dogs like Staffys and Labradors should never be given smaller bones like neck bones, knuckles and T-bones. If in doubt, consult your veterinarian. Never give cooked bones. They are more likely to splinter as well as cause obstructions and severe constipation.

For dogs that cannot or will not chew on a bone there are other options that will also help prevent periodontal disease. Brushing the teeth with your finger or a soft bristled brush can be performed on co-operative pets. This should be done straight after meals. Your veterinarian will be able to supply you with appropriate brushes and toothpaste. Avoid human toothpaste as it foams up too much.

If manual brushing is not an option there are special types of dry food that have been designed to help remove existing plaque as well as prevent plaque from attaching to the teeth. These diets are very effective, but not as effective as raw meaty bones (and more expensive).

For cats and dogs that already have periodontal disease it will not be enough to just start feeding bones or manually cleaning the teeth. These pets will need a dental prophylaxis by your veterinarian to remove plaque and calculus (calcified plaque). This will usually involve manually removing as much plaque and calculus as possible

with a hand scaler, followed by an ultrasonic scale and polish. Performing a thorough dental prophylaxis is time consuming and requires a general anaesthetic. As such it is more expensive than when we go to the dentist.

Finally, to end on a bum note, the consequences of untreated periodontal disease can be serious and can extend far from the mouth. Dogs and cats with more advanced periodontal disease have a chronic bacterial infection in their mouth. Not only can this be painful and lead to loss of teeth, these bacteria regularly enter the bloodstream. They may then travel to other parts of the body including the kidney, heart valves and liver causing potentially life threatening infections.

The result of maintaining good dental hygiene is having a happy pet with fresh breath and good overall health and levels of activity.

Disclaimer: The advice in this column is of a general nature and should not take the place of professional veterinary consultation.

Dr Adam Gordon
Maroubra Veterinary Hospital

Adam Gordon graduated from the University of Sydney in 1990. He completed a Masters degree in Veterinary Studies at Murdoch University in 2002. Adam has been in companion animal practice since 1990 and is principal of Maroubra Veterinary Hospital.

88 Bunnerong Road, Pagewood NSW 2035
Phone: (02) 9344 8722
Website: www.maroubravet.com.au




Who's protecting your dog's joints?

- The only product for dogs to contain highly purified Glucosamine HCl, Chondroitin sulfate and MSM for maximum joint repair and protection
- Great "no smell, no taste" powder undetectable even by the fussiest of eaters!
- An ideal option for the full range of joint problems
- Comes in a cost-effective 400g tub which lasts a 20kg dog almost 6 months once on the maintenance dose
- Available from your vet and all good pet shops and online stores

www.jointguard.com.au

joint Guard
Powder for Dogs




NV
NATURE VET

For further information contact Nature Vet on 1800 624 174

HOLISTIC VETERINARY CARE

11 Beattie Street, Balmain NSW 2041



Homeopathy and Herbal Medicine

For Allergies
Chronic skin Disease
Arthritis
Cancer
Behavioral problems...

(02) 9555 9362

Dr. Manuela Trueby

www.balmainvillagevet.com.au

Bird and exotics vet

Beak Care for Birds with Overgrown Upper Beaks

One of the most common requests I receive from my clients is for an upper beak trim on their bird. Some owners are worried about the beak being overgrown while others want it trimmed because they feel it is too sharp. Many simply believe that birds need to have their beak trimmed on a regular basis. They feel that they have not looked after their bird well if the beak is not regularly groomed. Some avian veterinarians actually suggest that your parrot should have its beak groomed every 6-8 weeks. However, in general, beaks do not need 'clipping' unless they are overgrown.

Your bird's beak length will usually be assessed at its annual 'well bird' veterinary check. Some species of birds are more likely to have overgrown beaks. Overgrown beaks are most commonly seen in budgerigars, African lovebirds (*Agapornis* spp.), cockatoos, cockatiels, eclectus and canaries and so it is important that they are examined annually for this. Your veterinarian will decide if a beak trim and/or tests are necessary. Beak trims are usually performed with special clippers or – on large parrots – with a hand-held drill such as a dremel. On some occasions the procedure may involve a general gaseous anaesthesia.

So how do I decide if a beak is overgrown and when it is a problem? The answer is that an upper beak is overgrown if it is longer than normal for birds of that particular species. It is a problem if a bird cannot eat properly, the beak is interfering with its ability to climb or your bird has other underlying causes of beak overgrowth.

The overgrown upper beak may need regular clipping and remodelling. However, continued beak clips without diagnosis may miss an underlying disease or problem. In many cases chronic liver disease is involved and these birds may bruise and bleed easily. Since birds may bleed a lot after beak clipping, it is therefore not advisable to clip beaks until tests for liver disease have been performed.

There are several causes of long upper beaks that can be differentiated into non-infectious or disease problems.

Non-infectious causes of a long beak can include dietary problems, particular breeding or beak damage. Some birds have malformed upper beaks which do not correctly align with the lower beak. These birds often have overgrown beaks that need regular correction or even orthodontics. Occasionally it may be caused by a bird not grinding its beak correctly although this is rare.

There are several disease problems that may lead to an overgrown upper beak. Chronic liver disease is the most common cause. Affected birds often also have bruises on their beaks and nails. It is not entirely known why these birds seem to often have long beaks. Other causes include diseases that affect the beak growth plate such as scaly face mites, cere abscesses and sinus infections. (The growth plate is at the edge of the skin and beak, and is the area from which the beak continually grows.)

Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease (Pbfd) and Polyomavirus are also common viral problems that may lead to an overgrown beak, often seen in young birds with feather problems.

Therefore before trimming the long beak it is best to run some simple diagnostic tests on the affected birds. Samples may need to be taken for microscopic examination to look for mites and other infections of the beak growth plate.

For sinus infections, tests for *Chlamydia* (*Chlamydia*) and bacteria may also be required. Blood tests are commonly performed to diagnose chronic liver disease. In some cases Pbfd and Polyomavirus tests may be needed.

Treatment of the underlying cause of the overgrown beak may preclude the need for regular beak trims. In most cases dietary changes will be needed. This usually includes changing to a pellet or crumble diet from seed. In many cases other diseases need to be treated either after several diagnostic tests or as a treatment trial for the most common causes of overgrown beaks.

**Dr Alex Rosenwax – BVSC MACVSc (Avian Health)
Bird & Exotics Veterinarian, Green Square.**

Alex graduated from the University of Sydney in 1991. He achieved Membership of the Avian Health Chapter of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists in 1996. In November 1996 he opened the first and only Sydney all bird and exotic pet practice. The Clinic moved to 1 Hunter St Waterloo in 2003 and sees approximately 80% birds, and 20% fish, reptiles and other exotic pets. Alex is the current president of the Australian Veterinary Association Avian Group.

Shop 3, Block D, 1 Hunter St Waterloo, Sydney 2017
Phone: (02) 9319 6111
Website: <http://www.birdvet.com.au>



Turn your animal attraction into a career

Brisbane North Institute of TAFE offers a wide range of programs (from short course to diploma level) to assist you in your new or current career within a zoo, veterinary clinic, kennels, pet shops or grooming salons. We also deliver the training for your animal studies traineeship.

We offer **external study programs** in specialisations including captive animals and veterinary nursing (both surgical and emergency and critical care) and at levels from Certificate IV through to Diploma.

On campus studies at Ithaca campus (Brisbane) include:

- Certificate III in Companion Animal Services (on campus)
- Certificate III in Animal Technology (on campus)

Short Courses on campus:

- Accredited Training in Aquascapes
- Basic Care of Reptiles and Amphibians
- Advanced Care of Reptiles and Amphibians
- An Introduction to the Animal Industry

Help

your moggie or pooch look their best!

Our students provide a pet clipping and scissoring service to the general public at an affordable cost.

Call 07 3259 9153
or 131 248 for an appointment

131 248

www.bn.tafe.qld.gov.au



Brisbane North
INSTITUTE OF TAFE



TAFE Queensland
Queensland Government
Department of
Employment and Training

DOG LOVERS
2007 CALENDAR
Photography by Randi Hochman

Paws while...

Sydney's favourite gift store for pet lovers and their pets

Shop 43-45, Level 2,
Queen Victoria Building,
455 George Street,
Sydney 2000.

Ph: 02 9261 2952

sales@pawsawhile.com.au

www.pawsawhile.com.au