

Common Dietary Problems in Rabbits

Rabbits are now gaining more popularity worldwide including Australia. They make lovely pets but have a few differences that most people are not aware of. Rabbits are "hindgut fermenters" which mean that they need large amounts of fibrous foods. In fact non-digestible dietary fibre is critical to maintaining your rabbit's health.

First of all your rabbit's teeth never stop growing. Fibre is essential to wearing those teeth down otherwise malocclusion & tooth root impaction occurs which often leads to severe mouth pain from abnormal tooth wear & spurring that cuts into gums & tongue causing pain, anorexia, & ultimately death.

Secondly, fibre is essential to stimulating gut motility preventing enteritis. Rabbit's hindgut fermentation differs from the horse by eliminating non-soluble fibre (typical dry faecal pellets) & soluble fibre is concentrated into energy/nutrient rich portion called ceacotropes which is passed overnight & eaten by your rabbit for supper!



Unfortunately, simple carbohydrates are poorly processed by rabbits which feed toxic bacteria in the intestinal tract leading to endotoxaemia.

So rabbits need a high fibre diet low in carbohydrates such as timothy, orchard or rye grass. Limited amounts of alfalfa hay (can cause bladder stones), & rabbit pellets are acceptable as well as a handful of fresh greens daily (broccoli, watercress, parsley, carrot tops, dandelion & turnip leaves). For treats, use high fibre fruits like apple, melon, pear & peach. Cereals, grains, seeds & nuts must not be fed. **A food pyramid is available on request at Pet Universe Veterinary Centre on 8266 4666 or 8269 3111.**



PET UNIVERSE NEWS

The latest news & views from your pet's point of view from Pet Universe Broadview & Northgate

Where Health Meets Beauty - Derma Spa Treatments

Is your dog literally itching for a soothing spa & skin treatment that will manage their dermatitis? Well help is at hand. Pet Universe Skin Allergy Clinic is proud to announce the launch of its new service - The Derma Spa Treatments for the symptomatic treatment of itchy & /or inflamed skin.



So if your pet has any of these symptoms please book in with us for a veterinary consult, diagnosis & treatment plan.

Treatment vs Shampoo

For these Derma Spa Treatments to be successful it is essential that the active therapeutic ingredients can:

Our new service uses The Dermcare Range of Therapeutic Shampoos & Conditioners developed by Prof. Ken Mason, the leading Skin Specialist in Australia.

The difficulty in treating skin allergies & conditions, especially in Winter, is that the weather conditions are not conducive to bathing your dog at home. The other problem with skin allergies & ongoing skin conditions is that these are often chronic conditions - so they are "control" rather than "cure" scenarios. So maintenance with "medicated baths" to wash off any allergens in conjunction with long acting antibiotic injections/antifungals are the way to go & PURE BLISS for itchy skin.

Skin conditions that typically benefit from this are:

- **Mild Itchy Allergy - itchy "pink skin"**. The most common clinical sign is itching, often around the muzzle, eyes, ear flaps, armpits, groin & paws. Some dogs have recurrent ear infections. Here Dermcare Aloveen Oatmeal range soothes the itch.
- **Bacterial skin infections** "staphylococcus intermedius" classically presents as pustules & scabs where the belly & neck develop "hot spots" the infection can spread all over the body. Dermcare Pyohex Shampoo & Leave-In Conditioner in tandem with a long acting antibiotic injection (see Compliance article on page 3) is indicated. The chlorhexidine in Pyohex has an antibacterial action.
- **Yeast/Fungal Infections** - in conjunction with a bacterial component are characterized by a "musty odour & greasy skin" & can be extremely itchy. Here we treat with Dermcare Malaseb & /or antibiotics/antifungals.
- **Ringworm** - signs are mild itching, red rings on skin with hair loss. Malaseb is good for limiting any environmental fungal spores that stick to the coat.

1. Penetrate right down to the skin
2. Have sufficient contact time to work
3. Achieve the necessary "coverage" of all affected, difficult to access areas (e.g. parts hidden by thick fur, groin, under tail, armpits, between the toes). Our three Derma Spa Treatments are performed by our trained staff. Each treatment starts with a powerful skin deep hydrobath "prewash", second therapeutic wash, blow dry & conditioner & are available as one off treatments or as packages of four or six treatments.

- **Derma Spa Aloveen** - for itchy skin with soothing oatmeal in the shampoo & leave-in conditioner. Performed once a week or as needed.
- **Derma Spa Pyohex** - for bacterial infected skins using the potent antiseptic effect of chlorhexidine done twice a week for two weeks plus.
- **Derma Spa Malaseb** - for intensely itchy skin caused by fungal/yeast infections with active ingredients miconazole & chlorhexidine for multiple washes.

So if you want to scratch your best friends back may we suggest you call us to discuss our new skin service!

Yours sensitively,
Dr. Christopher Lee
Principal Veterinarian

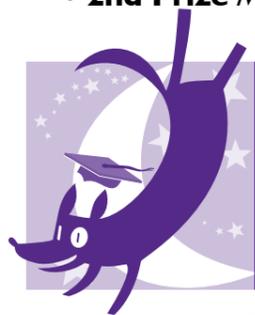
Merial Prize Winners of Digital Photo Frame or Pet Pack

Pet Universe would like to thank all clients who participated in the very popular Spring Frontline Plus 6 Pack promotion. The lucky prize draw winners at Pet Universe Broadview are:

- **1st Prize** Mrs. Georgina Dunbar mum to "Chloe" & "Isabella"
- **2nd Prize** Mrs. Tran mum to "Tripple"

At Pet Universe Northgate:

- **1st Prize** Mr. & Mrs. Atkinson Carr parents to "Colin" & "Sophie"
- **2nd Prize** Mr. Lucca Prisciandaro dad to "Rocky".



PET UNIVERSE OBEDIENCE ACADEMY

Behavioural Training Program

Puppy Preschool	Every Tuesday 6.30 - 7.30 p.m. at Broadview
Puppy Preschool	Every Wednesday 6.30 - 7.30 p.m. at Northgate
Kitten Kindy	Early evening at Broadview - time available on application

HOW TO FIND US...



Pet Universe Veterinary Centre Broadview
71 Hampstead Road
Manningham SA 5086
8266 4666

OPEN 7* DAYS & 24/7 EMERGENCIES
*Pet Universe Broadview only for Sunday consulting 10-5pm

Pet Universe Veterinary Centre Northgate
Cnr Fosters Road & Folland Ave
Northgate SA 5085
8369 3111



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Our Secret Service

Continued



An Interview with Esme Sandford

In my final year or two at Scotch College, I knew I wanted to work as a Zoo keeper but didn't think I would be able to get up close & personal with big cats. So I did some work experience with a local veterinary practice to pursue my love of domestic cats & after that decided that vet nursing was the career for me. I was accepted onto the fulltime Certificate 4 Veterinary Nursing Course at TAFE, during which I completed a 6-week internship at Pet Universe & the rest is history.

My favourite pet is my cat "Loki" who is an only child. I call "Loki" "my little white shadow" as he follows me everywhere! He's a real mummy's boy & spends all day sleeping under the blankets until I come home from work. He has a daily routine of waking up in the late afternoon & spending all night harassing me while I try to sleep!

Favourite Venue: Any cinema - I love the movies

Favourite Movies: Comedies

Favourite Food: Risotto - at Mondialli on Unley Road

Favourite Hobby: Reading thrillers & fantasy & Kelley Armstrong

Favourite Music: Anything loud

Favourite Cat: "Loki" of course

Favourite Animal: Red Pandas



Referrals: We'd Love To Say Thank You

We started our own practice 10 years ago as a small one-man cottage practice. Today we have two state-of-the-art veterinary hospitals offering a 24/7 emergency service. One thing is for sure - we wouldn't be where we are today without your support & particularly without you recommending us to your friends, family & work colleagues.

So next time you refer a friend to us give us a call - we'd love to say thank you & show our appreciation!

Just call us on either Broadview 8266 4666 or Northgate 8369 3111 & give us your name & your friend's name & we'll do the rest!

Road Testing

The Ragdoll

The Ragdoll breed started in the early 1960s in America & is thought to be the result of crossing several breeds (Birman, Persian & Angora) gradually over time.



The Ragdoll's name originated from their special ability to relax like a child's ragdoll toy...

It wasn't until 1967 that Ragdolls were recognised as a breed in the United States, & until 1990 in Australia. Ragdolls are bred all over Australia but Queensland claims the lion share of breeders. All Ragdolls have semi-long, non-matting, rabbit-like fur & large blue eyes. The Guinness Book of Records lists the Ragdoll as being the biggest breed of domestic cat.

Ragdoll females weigh up to five kilograms & males weigh from six to nine kilograms; they reach full maturity around three years of age. Born white, kittens gradually reach their true colour at around two years of age.

Typically Ragdolls are very placid, loving cats who go to anyone. They enjoy being held like a baby & relax in your arms & will often lay on their back with legs in the air, but don't expect a couch potato as they are very active & love to play. The Ragdoll is full of spirit & are also mischievous, but so beautiful while they're doing the deed they usually get away with it. The Ragdoll is an indoor cat, which is happy living totally indoors & are safest when kept indoors. When outside they can wander off, or be harmed as they are very trusting in their nature.

Ragdoll breeders suspect that the breed may have a genetic pre-disposition to cardiomyopathy - a condition which affects the heart muscles. Cardiomyopathy is a progressive disease & is invariably fatal, with death usually occurring within a year of development. Polycystic kidney disease can occur too - an inheritable disease in which the kidneys become filled with fluid. Tests are available for this disease, so if you want trouble free kittens, make sure the parents have been screened & passed prior to breeding. Ragdolls, as with all cats, are also prone to gingivitis. This is usually due to poor diet. To overcome this problem, supplement the diet with foods such as raw chicken necks. A yearly visit to the veterinarian is advised.

Are You Compliant?

Your vet has just dispensed a two week course of antibiotic tablets for your dog's skin infection & explained how to give them, when to give them etc. How closely do you follow your vet's instructions? That is, how compliant are you with medicating your dog? And does it really matter if you miss a couple of doses?

What is Compliance?

To be 100% compliant a patient must take the right dose, at the right time, by the correct route for the prescribed treatment period. The bad news for our pets is that humans are not good at being compliant.

Let's consider the dog with the skin infection for which antibiotic tablets have been prescribed.

You know how to give your dog tablets, & you do splendidly for the first couple of days giving the tablets each morning & night, every 12 hours. The next morning you miss a dose. By the weekend you give all the doses, but certainly not every 12 hours. On Sunday you slept in & gave one dose at 11am, & the next one at 4pm, as you had to go to a barbeque that evening. The next week a couple of doses were missed, & by Thursday your dog's skin rash was completely gone, so there seemed no need to continue with the tablets. So you put the remaining tablets in the cupboard with all the other dog medications that haven't been all used up. Sound familiar?

What are the potential consequences of poor compliance?

Of great importance when it comes to antibiotics is the timing of doses or missing doses. For many antibiotics to be effective the antibiotic must remain above a minimum level in the dog's body. By missing a dose or giving a dose late these levels may not be sustained & the antibiotic will not work as it is meant to, & this can even promote antibiotic resistance!

The potential consequences for:

- Your Dog - is a greater chance the infection will recur & possibly that it will not respond to the original antibiotic
- You - is if the infection recurs you'll need another trip to the vet & possibly more intensive & expensive treatment.
- The wider community - poor compliance with dosing is a critical factor in selecting for antibiotic resistance¹ & can have important implications for the health of other pets as well as humans.



Stress in the Older Cat & How To Avoid It

Your cat's stressed but how do you know?

As cats age, they are less able to deal with any changes in routine & their environment. Common causes of stress are age-related diseases such as hyperthyroidism which speeds up their metabolism, or immune suppression diseases such as chronic renal failure & diabetes as well as infectious diseases such as Feline Aids or even cat flu. Your lifelong companion will start becoming more withdrawn & you may notice appetite changes & other behaviour changes which are unfortunately often misinterpreted as "old age" changes.

So here are some tips to help de-stress or avoid stress:

- Avoid changing your daily routine e.g. feeding times & play times
- Avoid changing their environment i.e. changes in your house & garden
- Ensure your pet has regular twice yearly senior health checks to maintain optimum health & allow early diagnosis of age-related diseases
- Our Senior Pet Health Questionnaire which owners fill in prior to these Senior Consults help identify symptoms more easily.
- Supplement their diets with antioxidants & essential fatty acids to feed their brains - diets containing these are available in store now at Pet Universe.

Does your dog have a skin infection?

Your vet may recommend treating your dog with **ONE injection**

Ask your vet about the alternative to a course of tablets

A new antibiotic that eliminates the issue of Compliance.

A new antibiotic is now available that eliminates the issue of compliance: This antibiotic is an injection that is administered by your veterinarian & is equivalent to a two week course of oral antibiotics. No more need to give your pet tablets, remember to give the tablets, or make sure you're at home in time to give the scheduled dose. This option may or may not be appropriate for your pet's infection, but is an option available for certain types of infections. Discuss with your vet whether the convenient injectable alternative is suitable for your pet's condition. It will give you peace of mind & assist in providing a positive outcome for you & your pet.

References 1.

World Health Organisation (2002) Fact Sheet No 194 Antimicrobial Resistance. Accessed 02.03.2009 <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs194/en/>