



# Hilton Veterinary Hospital

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With Spring comes change.

A big thank you must go out to all who have endured the continued building process with us. It is completed. A big thanks to Kim and his team for working around us so well. Thank you to all the open day sponsors and attendees. If you missed a tour of our new hospital please feel free to ask at reception.

Congratulations to Dr Lillian Hirzel and Matthew on the birth of their beautiful daughter Isabella. Lillian has come back from maternity leave.



Congratulations also goes to Brian and Precious on the birth of their gorgeous son Edwin. We wish both families lots of love and happiness with their new family members.



We are now going to be offering puppy classes at Hilton Veterinary Hospital. Please read the article in this newsletter. We wish Dr Elge Bester and Dr Derisha Reddy good luck with their post graduate honours exams.

On a sad note we have had to say good bye to Dr Richard Burchell after he made a decision to move his family to New Zealand.

Loosing such a valuable South African makes one question your own reasons for staying. Having chosen an outdoor life style for our children in the Midlands we are here to make the best of that decision. There are few places in the world where the beauty and diversity of the Midlands is reproduced. At Hilton Vet

Hospital we have made the decision to contribute to the local community as much as we can and do so in 5 ways. Some of our free time is donated to rabies control, a very important and successfully controlled disease under difficult circumstances. We help both the Howick and Pietermaritzburg SPCAs with scans, radiograph, clinical exams, advice and scopes of difficult cases. We are involved in the continuing education of other veterinarians locally, nationally, and internationally throughout Africa. We have provided a world class veterinary facility to Hilton, locally and to the rest of KZN, through referrals. We have even had referrals from Onderstepoort for highly specialised diagnostic and oncological treatment procedures. We are one of only a few emergency clinics in the Midlands. We are undisputedly the best equipped Veterinary Hospital in the Midlands and we are the only Veterinary Hospital capable of 24 hour care for in house patients. This is vital for poisoned, fitting or critically ill patients. Finally we offer a safe house facility for lost animals wandering the streets of Hilton. Thank you to all you fantastic people that stop to bring lost pets in for safe keeping. Even late at night, an animal can be brought in for safe keeping by contacting our night care personnel through the air phone on the front door. Thank you to all our clients for your support. We hope that you enjoy reading the newsletter.

Kind regards

Martin de Scally

Dedicated to the health of your pets.

## After Hours

### Emergencies:

Please phone  
(033) 343 4602

### Contact Details:

If your contact details have changed then please inform us.

### This month's

#### themes:

Common Toxins &  
Chronic medication

## Nurse's Clinic: Daschund Diseases by Sr Lezaan Haupt

When Lauren asked me to write a little piece for the nurses corner, I had to think very long & hard. I finally decided to write about a few of the most commonly seen conditions/diseases that dachshunds get, seeing as I have a very soft spot for the "worsies".

### Intervertebral Disc Disease / Disc prolapse

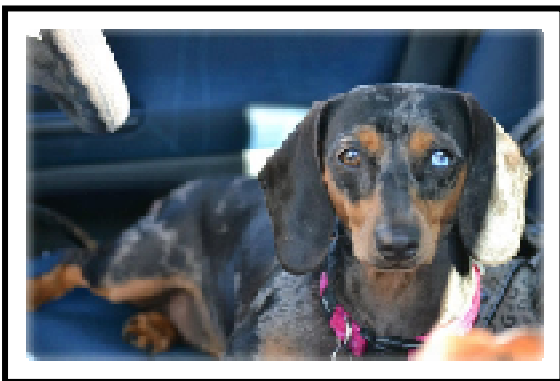
This is a very common condition in chondrodystrophic breeds, (long bodies and short legs) like the Dachshund due to early ageing of the disc, but can also be seen in other breeds. (Trauma is seldom the cause.)

Signs to look out for: Cervical (neck) - Stiff painful neck, reluctant to move the neck and will, therefore follow any movements with their eyes only. I have often seen them come in to the vet holding up one of their front legs. Almost presenting as if they have a front limb lameness due to the nerve being "pinched".

Thoracolumbar (back) - back pain, reluctant to jump, tense abdominal muscles that may be mistaken for abdominal pain. They can be ataxic (wobbly) to more severely completely paralysed.

It is always very important to get your dachie to the vet as soon as any of these signs are seen. The earlier you can start treatment the better the prognosis. Your vet will discuss the various treatment plans with you, which could vary from complete cage rest with anti-inflammatories or an MRI and surgery.

Surgery can be quite expensive, so I always advise dachie owners to start them on medical aid rather



### Obesity

A little bit of a more sensitive topic, but should definitely be kept in mind. Dachshunds are very prone to obesity just like many other breeds. I like to advise clients to start with "weight watching" as soon as they go off puppy food (after 1 year of age). For example feeding a "light" / reduced calorie diet. It is easier to maintain an ideal body weight than to try lose the extra weight. Please feel free to ask anyone at Hilton Vet about dietary weight management.

Just like us humans, there are a lot of conditions that are the result of obesity, but I will not go in too much detail about that in this article. However, if you are struggling with your dachie's weight, despite keeping a close eye on what he/she eats, it might be a good idea to pay visit to your vet as there might be another underlying cause. (for example hypothyroidism) (inactive thyroid).

### GME (granulomatous meningoencephalitis) "inflammatory brain disease"

We have seen quite a few patients with GME over the last couple of months. I wanted to mention it, as it is often mistaken with a slipped disc because of the neurological signs.

The most clinical signs are: in coordination, stumbling, falling, circling, head tilt, seizures, dementia, neck pain, blindness and listlessness.

It is usually in small breeds from ages between 2-6 years old. It is best to get your dachie to the vet soon if you see any of these signs, although the disease is not curable it is manageable by medical treatment.

A spinal tap is performed to rule out other diseases that could present with similar clinical signs, but most of the time a MRI is done to confirm the condition. Initially the disease can appear quite overwhelming/scary to see as a pet owner, but often they respond well to treatment and the improvement is always very rewarding for us to see. Please feel free to ask our vets to tell you a little more about GME.

## Five toxins lurking in your home & garden: Dr Derisha Reddy

Your home may harbour all kinds of innocuous looking items that are actually dangerous to your pet. Here are five toxic substances that can cause serious injury to your dog or cat that you may not have known about:

**1. Garlic:** While garlic is actually good for your health as a human (say goodbye to cholesterol), it is dangerous if ingested by your pet. Garlic is not metabolised in the same way in animals as in people, as it causes damage



to the red blood cells in the animal's body. This can cause a mild to severe anaemia in the animal, depending on how much garlic has been ingested. The red blood cells carry oxygen around the body but if they are damaged and there are less circulating red blood cells in the bloodstream, the body becomes starved of oxygen. The symptoms can present as weakness, lethargy and pale gums. Unfortunately, there is a myth that feeding garlic to dogs prevents ticks from biting them. This is not true, and the tried and tested products available at your vet are the only safe way to protect your pet from ticks and fleas.

**2. Macadamia Nuts:** Macadamia nuts cause vomiting, unsteady walking, weakness, muscle tremors and fever in dogs. The dog needs to ingest more than 2 grams per kilogram of weight before signs start to show.



Vomiting can be a serious threat to the health of smaller breeds of dogs as they lose a greater proportion of water and electrolytes in the vomit, which can lead to dehydration, low blood glucose, and weakness.

**3. Grapes and Raisins:** Grapes and raisins can cause serious damage to kidneys in dogs. The signs of grape and raisin poisoning develop within 12 hours and present as vomiting, diarrhoea and lethargy. The amount needed to be eaten in order to cause

poisoning varies from dog to dog as some dogs are more sensitive to the toxic effects than others. This poisoning can be fatal so grapes and raisins should never be fed to your pet



**4. Lillies:** Lilies are beautiful flowers to keep around the house and most people are unaware of the danger they pose to your pet if they are ingested. They cause severe kidney damage when eaten and your pet will need prompt veterinary treatment if you find them munching on these plants. Any part of the lily is toxic, even the leaves. Cats are known to chew on plants and we have treated a cat recently in our hospital for lily toxicity. If you do keep these flowers in your house or garden, make sure they are out of reach of the pets.



**5. Cycads:** Cycad poisoning in dogs is common and it causes severe liver damage. All parts of the cycad plant are poisonous, but it is the seeds that puppies are tempted to play with as they resemble a toy that they can chase and chew. The plant contains a toxin called cycasin, which causes gut and liver poisoning. Signs to watch out for are vomiting, diarrhoea, anorexia and lethargy. The liver often becomes so damaged that the dog cannot recover and the poisoning can be fatal. It is important to fence off these plants if they are growing in your garden.



## The use of Chronic Medication: Dr Elge Bester

After being diagnosed with a chronic condition, most animals are placed on a chronic medication regime that is prescribed for their specific condition. These medications are made to improve the clinical signs and help improve the patient's health, however these are still drugs. All drugs do come with fine print, most pharmaceutical drugs come with mild side effects with chronic use of the medication.

To monitor for these side effects as well as the efficacy of the drug and the dosage prescribed, it is recommended to see a veterinarian every 6 months for a full clinical check up. It is also a legal requirement for veterinarians to do a clinical evaluation of animals if refills of prescriptions are to be done for a further 6 months. A lot of older animals are on chronic use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication, e.g. Rimadyl, Metacam, Onsior. With chronic use of this medication a number of reported side effects can develop. Some of these can be life-threatening, Vomiting, diarrhoea, decreased activity and appetite, intestinal and stomach ulcerations, kidney failure and liver failure.

Therefore it is recommended to have your animal checked every 6 months and to perform a full biochemistry panel, this will show elevation in liver enzymes or kidney values indicating an early possible problem that might occur. If these levels are elevated, it could be considered to change the medication or the dosage.

Medication for hypothyroidism in dogs is also commonly used. Eltroxin or thyroxin are common drugs prescribed. These drugs are designed to increase the release of T4 from the thyroid gland. T4 is very important in the body and plays a vital role in the metabolism of your body, heart function, neurological function and ocular function. Total T4 levels are checked 6 monthly or as required, to ensure that your pet is still receiving adequate dosage of Eltroxin.

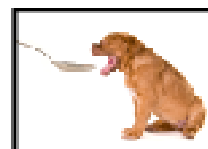
Cats however are often diagnosed with hyperthyroidism and depending on the elevation of the Total T4 levels, a number of medications and treatment options are available. Cardiac medication can also be prescribed for chronic use, to improve clinical signs, or improve chances to limit the heart remodeling to compensate for the extra stress of a heart disease.

Often Vetmedin is prescribed as well as number of other cardiac drugs e.g. furosemide. Not all of these medications have been shown to help at all stages of heart disease and therefore response to the stress of heart disease and the effect of the medication needs to be closely monitored. A cardiac ultrasonographic echogram is recommended every 6 months to monitor any changes in heart remodeling or increase pressure in the heart. Blood pressure and chest x-rays are also recommended to monitor secondary effects of heart disease. This also prevents you spending money on medications possibly not necessary at that specific time.

Seizuring animals could be considered emergency cases. If an animal has been diagnosed with seizures or with idiopathic epilepsy there is a number of different medications the animal could be placed on to control the severity and occurrences of these seizures. All the drugs have a number of side effects on the kidney or liver. E.g. Phenobarbitone has been described to cause liver disease. The therapeutic levels of phenobarbitone also need to be monitored closely as this level is required to keep the animal from seizing. These levels are checked every 6 months or as needed, to find a suitable dosage. A full biochemistry profile should also be done at this time to rule out any early secondary complications associated with chronic medication use.

In diabetic mellitus animals, it is crucial to monitor the blood glucose of the animal and to ensure that the insulin and dosage of the insulin is adequate to control the diabetes in the animal. As these levels change quickly, it is recommended to do a glucose curve often and intermittent spot checks.

It is therefore not only required by law but also in the best interest of the animal that the veterinarian recommend full clinical and required blood tests every 6 months to ensure no early secondary problems are missed, no under or overdosing is occurring and that the therapeutic levels are still adequate to control the animal's clinical disease and progress.



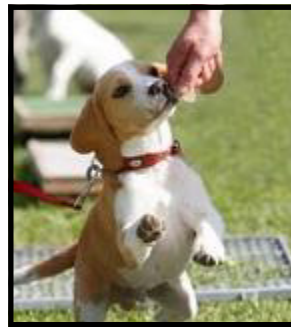
## Puppy Classes: by Judith Buchanan

Why is it so important for all puppies, whatever size and breed to have this initial "nursery school" training? In puppy classes we try to prepare the puppies for living in the big, wide world. We give them the skills that enable them to cope with any situation. We also teach them self-control, which they would learn in a pack situation, but it is something we often forget to teach them in a home environment. We allow them to socialise off lead with puppies of a similar age and they learn how to interact with other puppies and to correctly read and respond to other dogs body language.



They will learn to walk correctly on a lead, to sit, to lie down and to come when called in any situation. The owners will be helped with any problems, eg jumping up, digging etc.

But most important of all, puppies and owners will have fun together and a strong bond will be built between them. Please contact Hilton Vet Hospital to enquire about our puppy classes.



## HILTON VET PARLOUR

Our newly built parlour is now complete and open for business. We cater to all shapes and sizes, both canine and feline and offer a complete range of grooming services.

Working hand in hand with the vets, allows us to sedate animals if required.

Contact Heather on 0762798589 for any further information regarding the parlour. Bookings are essential.



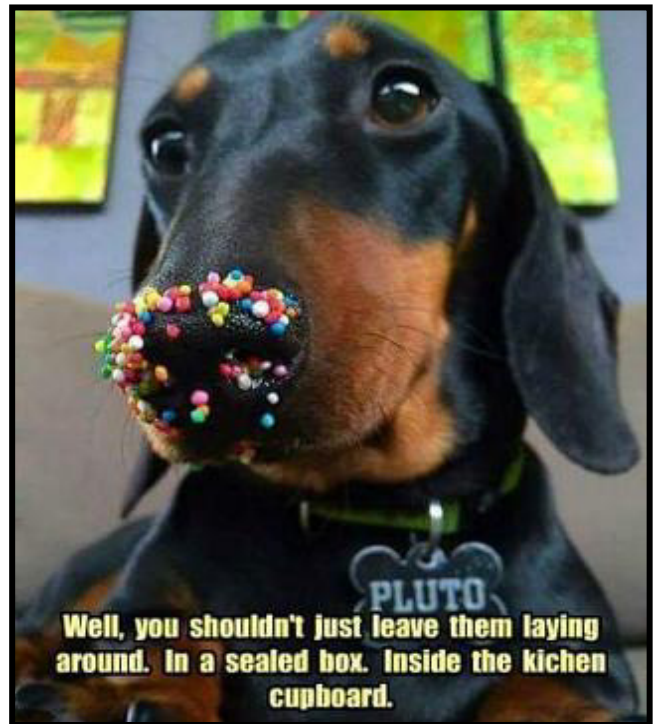
## Dr Natanya Faurie:

Natanya joined Hilton Veterinary Hospital in June this year. She is one of the dedicated, caring vets that form part of the night clinic rotation. Natanya qualified in 2013 and was part of a specialist reproductive practice in Brits before she joined the Hilton Vet Hospital team. Natanya has a particular interest in genetics, reproduction and small animal medicine. She has 1 dog, called To to.

Natanya is engaged to Corné and they are planning on getting married next year. In her spare time Natanya enjoys reading, horse riding, cooking, hiking and playing scrabble.



## To make you smile:



## To think about:

*I weep for Africa  
But not tears of judgement  
For this is a land with its own destiny  
And a people whose sun is on the rise  
Yet for my forgetting of her ancient ways  
And my ignorance of her hidden secrets  
For my deafness to her fireside stories  
Africa weeps for me too  
And for my dwelling in her shadows past  
And my cutting loose her community ties  
For my arrogance looking from the outside in  
Africa weeps for me too  
Yes, for turning my back on her wild spirit  
And bleaching the arc of her rainbow vision  
For my veil of salty tears shed for her  
Africa weeps for me too  
Wayne Visser*