



Hilton Veterinary Hospital

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Inside this issue:

Hi again from Hilton Veterinary Hospital. August has been a month that I have been wishing away, mainly because I find it the windiest month of the year in the Midlands, but also because our Guillain Barre patient has needed the time to pass, for her nerves to heal. Rose came to us 7 weeks ago and was diagnosed with this rare affliction of her nerves. She slowly became paralysed, starting in her hind legs and progressing right up to her neck. It was decided that if the disease reached the nerves to her diaphragm we would need to put her to sleep. It nearly got there. Two weeks ago Rose could not lift her head. She had to be taken out to wee and we had to express her bladder. All her nutrients and water had to be fed to her by hand. She had to be turned every hour at night and cleaned if any accident should happen. As a great testimony to all our staff, Rose has not developed any bed sores. As August passed us by her nerve function has steadily, but very slowly, restored. Rose is walking on her front legs barking and moving her head normally again. We are still waiting for her back legs to restore but that is starting to happen as well. She can stand again, but only just. Do not miss the opportunity to meet her if you come our way.

August has also seen an increase in trauma patients presented and referred to us at Hilton Vet. I have learned that one should never underestimate the body's own healing capabilities. Mammals have systems within themselves that fight disease and heal wounds. Sometimes our biggest challenge is actually just keeping the tongue and teeth at bay,

whilst the body does the healing. Yes of course properly debrided and sutured wounds heal quicker, but they also easily break down if the debriding is not adequate or too much tension is on the stitches to pull the wound edges together. Many animals present in severe pain and shock and are high anaesthetic risks. Most animals that I have seen deteriorate after severe bite wounds have been a result of sepsis, pain and shock. It is vital that these aspects get addressed in every trauma case, before rushing to close the holes. Obviously if blood vessels are punctured bleeding must first be controlled. This is best done at home by taking a towel or piece of sheet and wrapping it fairly tightly around the wound. Chest holes are especially bad and can be carefully covered with plastic before wrapping. Immediate veterinary attention is always best as soon as possible. Also be aware that animals in pain may bite when they normally would not dream of it, so be careful. You may find yourself scrambling for a doctor to get that tetanus injection for yourself as well. An injured animal that is fractious can be gently wrapped in a blanket to protect you from any attempts to bite. They can usually be placed in vehicle as well by using this method. Once they are assessed we usually administer a combination of three or four pain killers to allow for appropriate humane handling.

The more I see the fighting spirit of dogs and cats to survive these adversities, the more committed we feel to treating them.
Regards
Martin de Scally
Dedicated to the health of your pets.

Opening Letter	1
Nurse's Clinic: Armadillos	2
Weight loss in Dachshunds	3
Body Condition Score	4
Scooby	5
Staff Profile	6
To make you smile	6

After Hours Emergencies:
Please phone
(033) 343 4602

Contact Details:
If your contact details have changed then please inform us.

This month's theme:
Weight loss in Dachshunds and Armadillos

Nurse's Clinic: Leprosy in Armadillos Sr Jane Lindeque

My boys love to watch a programme on Discovery channel called "The call of the Wildman". Its all about a strange man that comes from the back woods of Kentucky. This man goes to people's houses, farms etc removing any "critter" that is causing a problem and he then releases them back into their natural habitat.

Last week I was watching as well and he was trying to catch an Armadillo that had got into someone's shed. During the course of the programme he said he had to be very careful as Armadillos are carriers of Leprosy. I found this very interesting and so decided to do some research on it.



I thought Leprosy was an ancient disease and not found anymore. Well apparently not and Armadillos are one of the carriers of the microbe that carries it. This is called "Mycobacterium Leprae". In the USA alone between 150 - 250 people are diagnosed with the disease annually. From these cases about one third of people have been infected by either handling or eating Armadillo meat. Most of the cases come from Texas and Louisiana. These litter mammals are native to the Americas and there are various types of them. They have very short legs but can move very quickly. They have poor eyesight but have a very good sense of smell.

Armadillos can carry the bacteria because of their low body temperature of around 34 degrees. The bacteria are relatively fragile and don't live too long, but do very well at this low temperature. The bacteria can only survive in moist soil for 1-2 weeks. The Armadillo has an outer "armour" which is made up of dermal bone, covered in small overlapping scales called scutes. The bacteria live under these scales and thrive at the low body temperature. Although these little animals carry the bacteria they never seem to be infected with Leprosy themselves and are therefore just carriers of the disease.

The incubation period for Leprosy is 3-5 years. So it can take this long for any symptoms to appear on the person. It is therefore quite a difficult disease to diagnose in humans. The symptoms are disfiguring skin sores and nerve damage at the site of the sore. The skin can also form thick, stiff and painful spots. It is mostly seen on the arms and legs. It can be treated with antibiotics over a 1-2 year period. If it is left untreated the person can suffer from lifelong nerve damage

So next time any of you are in North of South America don't mess with an Armadillo!!



Weight Loss in Dachshunds: by Dr Martin de Scally

An interesting fact is that because we are still genetically programmed to survive, starvation and not abundance it takes 4 times more effort to lose weight than it takes to gain weight. This theory is known as the thrifty gene theory. Weight gain is usually as a result of too many calories being ingested for the amount of calories being burnt.

Obesity is a disease and it has now been shown that dogs and cats that are severely overweight have all the metabolic abnormalities of a type II diabetes mellitus patient.



More rarely they have low thyroid hormone levels. Any Dachshund with weight gain and excessive drinking should be tested for Cushing's disease. Once medical reasons are ruled out we do need to turn back to life style and diet to solve obesity problems. A weight loss program will take in to account the caloric density of the diet and the ability of the animal to exercise. This often benefits the owner too.

Much better than looking at weight or mass is body condition score. I have included a self (own pet) evaluation chart for you. Any animal with body condition score > 5 should enter an obesity program. Remember it is harder to loose than to prevent weight gain.

Our nurses will gladly help you with weight loss programmes and appropriate diets. Feel free to join one of these programmes in the clinic. This is sort of a "weight watchers" for dogs. Just remember the fattest man in the world reached 670kg by eating a 500g bar of chocolate too much in calories over 20 years.



Guillaine Barre Patient: Rose



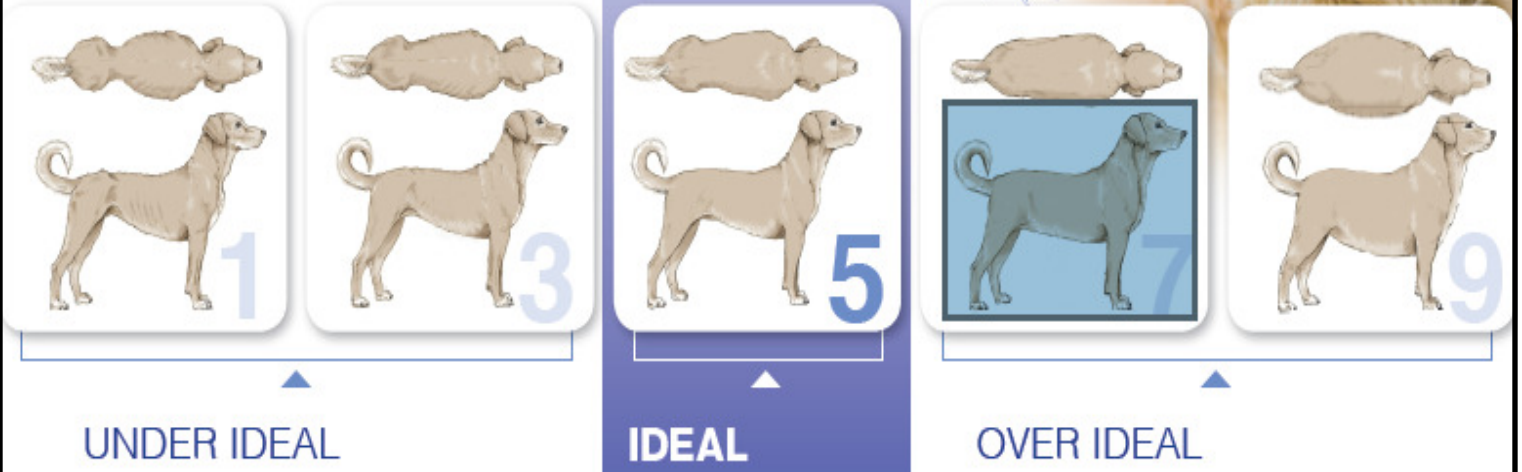
Rose

Rose and
Rebecca





Body Condition Score



1. Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and all bony prominences evident from a distance. No discernible body fat. Obvious loss of muscle mass.

2. Ribs, lumbar vertebrae and pelvic bones easily visible. No palpable fat. Some evidence of other bony prominences. Minimal loss of muscle mass.

3. Ribs easily palpated and may be visible with no palpable fat. Tops of lumbar vertebrae visible. Pelvic bones becoming prominent. Obvious waist and abdominal tuck.

4. Ribs easily palpable, with minimal fat covering. Waist easily noted, viewed from above. Abdominal tuck evident.

5. Ribs palpable without excess fat covering. Waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above. Abdomen tucked up when viewed from side.

6. Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering. Waist is discernible viewed from above but is not prominent. Abdominal tuck apparent.

7. Ribs palpable with difficulty; heavy fat cover. Noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent or barely visible. Abdominal tuck may be present.

8. Ribs not palpable under very heavy fat cover, or palpable only with significant pressure. Heavy fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent. No abdominal tuck. Obvious abdominal distention may be present.

9. Massive fat deposits over thorax, spine and base of tail. Waist and abdominal tuck absent. Fat deposits on neck and limbs. Obvious abdominal distention.

Scooby: by Gaby Frey

In March 2012 last year Scooby belonging to Gaby Frey was savagely attacked by a pack of roaming dogs on the Port Shepstone Borough Field. She had severe internal injuries as well as a dislocated hip. She was rushed to Dr Claire Norton in Port Shepstone and was stabilised. After many, many stitches later, that evening, it was recommended that she get further treatment from specialist veterinarians at Hilton Vet Hospital. Gaby travelled to Hilton as quickly as she could and Scooby received immediate attention from Dr Martin de Scally and Dr Derek Clover. Over a period of 10 days, Scooby received a blood transfusion, required oxygen, was fed through her nose, had three quarters of her spleen removed and her hip put back. It was a long road to recovery and a very trying time for Gaby who took a leave of absence from work to be with Scooby. With prayers going out from different parts of the world and with the dedication of the doctors and with Gaby's trust and positive attitude Scooby made a slow but steady recovery and was allowed to go home. Scooby had to be confined to a crate for a few months. Slowly she learned to walk again and had lots of swimming lessons in her rehabilitation programme. Then in August 2012 Scooby decided to jump over one jump and then two whilst Gaby was setting up jumps at training. Slowly Scooby convinced her that she was ready to do more by running to the dog walk obstacle and sitting on it while the course was being set up.

In October 2012 Gaby entered Scooby in the KZN Dog Championships in Scottburgh and she was so happy and back to her amazing self. She won the title of KZN Champion in non-contact agility. In March this year in the 4 qualifying rounds to represent SA at the world championships she managed to be placed in the top 10 which meant she qualified for the final competition in Johannesburg in May 2013. Scooby ended up by coming 2nd in SA. The top 4 qualify to represent SA at the world championships which for the first time will be held in Johannesburg from 11th to 13th October at the Coco Cola Dome.

In August this year Gaby and Scooby qualified to take part in the Nationals in Bloemfontein. Scooby scooped 3 out of 3 Gold medals! Absolutely amazing since she is already 9 years old and had to compete against youngsters! Scooby is the top dog in SA in the small dog category in all 3 disciplines. Gaby is so proud of her awesome little dog!

Gaby and everyone in the agility world is so overwhelmed at Scooby's miraculous recovery and Gaby is very thankful to the vets, Dr Claire Norton, Dr Martin de Scally and Dr Derek Clover for all their dedication and expertise.

Scooby and Gaby



Staff Profile

Lauren de Scally

Lauren has been working at Hilton Vet Hospital since 2010. She creates the newsletters, maintains the website and Face book page, assists in computer problems and she is involved in marketing and accounts.

Lauren enjoys chatting to clients and getting to know their precious pets a little better. She is always looking for photo opportune moments.

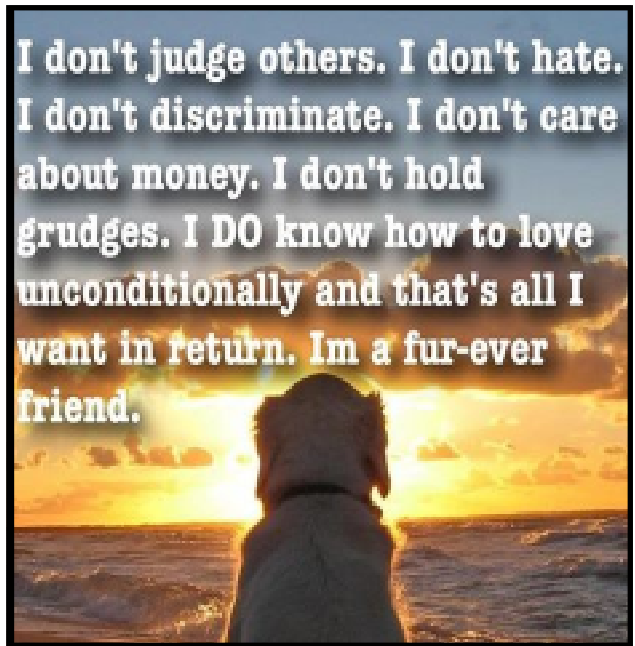
Lauren is married to Martin and they have 2 sons, Nicholas is 12 years old and Christopher is 9 years old. They both enjoy playing soccer, tennis, running, cycling, swimming, playing the piano and singing. They have 2 dogs, Jane and Josie.

In her spare time Lauren enjoys running, playing tennis, playing the piano, baking and being a Mom.

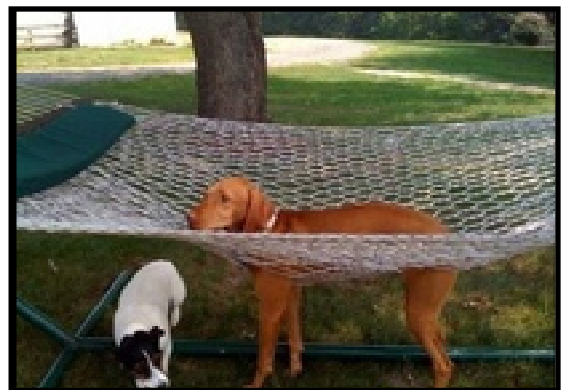


To make you smile

I don't judge others. I don't hate. I don't discriminate. I don't care about money. I don't hold grudges. I DO know how to love unconditionally and that's all I want in return. Im a fur-ever friend.



How do humans sleep in these things?



If you have a story about your pet that you would like to share with us, then please e-mail it to lauren@hiltonvethospital.co.za