



# Hilton Veterinary Hospital

Website: [www.hiltonvethospital.co.za](http://www.hiltonvethospital.co.za)

72 Hilton Avenue Hilton 3245

Tel (033) 343-4602

Small Animal Veterinary Advice e-mail: [martin@hiltonvethospital.co.za](mailto:martin@hiltonvethospital.co.za)

Inside this issue:

June and July 2014 witnessed the launch of our extended hours clinic. At Hilton Veterinary Hospital This clinic has been warmly received by most of the surrounding veterinarians, enabling them to have some resemblance of a life and refer cases during what we have called unsociable hours.

The unsociable hours clinic is available to all Hilton Veterinary Hospital patients and other veterinarians patients and is run on week days until 9 pm. Thereafter, and on weekends, our veterinarians are on call should the need arise any time day or night.

During normal working hours all emergencies are dealt with immediately. You simply apply basic first aid to your pet if possible and bring them. On arrival alert us to the fact that you have an emergency and we will respond appropriately. For after hours you will need to phone our answering machine and then phone the veterinarians cell number. As they are "real people" we will always give you their name as well. I am literally always around or on the phone to help with cases as needed. Most of our advanced equipment can produce images for telemetric assessment. This means that images can be seen from things like ECG's and X-rays anywhere in the world.

I am proud to say that the emergency clinic has tested our systems and they have come through very well. It is a great testimony to the staff that work at Hilton Vet Hospital and their dedication to their jobs. Our veterinarians go through proven protocols to ensure accurate diagnostics and treatment and our kennel managers and nurses ensure on going care for every patient 24 hours a day. Attention to detail is paid regarding the patient's nutrition, pain control and anti-nausea medication. A diagnosis is always reverently pursued as that leads to an accurate prognosis and treatment. Our intention is not

to take patients away from other veterinary clinics or hospitals. For that reason after stabilisation, all referred patients are transferred back to their original veterinary practice.

Some tips on pet emergencies. You cannot prepare for every emergency but you can try to prevent them. Make sure your animals, especially older ones are not in the way of motor vehicles. Keep their vaccinations up to date. This means every three years, but your vet will advise the best for each animal in their unique circumstances. Have an annual check up and insist on a full clinical being performed. Deworm them and prevent tick and flea infestations where possible. Microchip them so that you can be contacted if they are found after escaping home. Be careful with poisons, yes dogs and cats love rat poison and it kills them. Sterilisations reduces wandering behaviour. Lastly please put them on medical aid It may be unreasonable to expect your vet to do charity work all the time if they are to keep their doors open to be available for pets in medical need. I your veterinarian has to constantly pay for improved knowledge, all the medicines, facilities, laboratory fees, all the staff costs and taxes and also have to fund part of your animals treatment they will not be able to continue offering best medicine for your animals.

If the treatment to aid your pets survival is costly, we have organised payment plans to help you afford the necessary treatment. Please remember to always discuss costs with your vet and be up front about the kind of treatment you want for your animal. I hope we do not see your pets for emergencies, but we are there for you, should the need arise.

Thank you to all the staff and clients who contributed to this newsletter .

Regards

Martin de Scally

Dedicated to the health of your pets

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After Hours

Emergencies:

Please phone

(033) 343 4602

Contact Details:

If your contact details have changed then please inform us .

This month's theme:

**Emergency Monitoring and treatment**

## Nurse's Clinic: Not to give a dog a bone! sr Vicki Smith

You have probably heard it said that feeding dogs bones is natural and healthy for them and can help keep their teeth clean. Raw bones have been a part of canine's diets for as long as they have been tracking and killing their prey. Today canine house pets share almost exactly the same genetics and behaviorisms as their long-distant predecessors. But humans have found ways to breed canine companions for specific jobs such as hunting or retrieving at which point their coat colour, body size and shape became important.

What didn't change through the centuries of breeding were the internal organs. The general pattern of teeth, stomach, intestines, kidneys, liver, heart and other organs stayed the same and therefore basic nutrient requirements have not changed. That is exactly why so much focus has been given to the practice of feeding dog's raw meat, unprocessed foods and bones.

But there are risks in feeding your dog bones

**Broken teeth**, which can be painful and possibly can cause your pet to stop eating, this will call for Veterinary dentistry.

**Mouth and tongue injuries** can be very bloody and painful, possibly causing infection and or require suturing.

**Bone gets stuck in your dog's lower jaw**, which can cause severe irritation and pain causing your pet to stop eating.

**Bone stuck in the Esophagus**, the tube that food travels down to the stomach, causing a blockage which may cause vomiting as food cannot get passed into the stomach.

**Bone stuck in the Trachea (Windpipe)**, if your dog accidentally inhales small fragments of bone, this is an emergency and needs to be seen by your Vet immediately as your dog will be battling to breath.

**Bone stuck in stomach**, so it has gone down without too much problem but now it's sitting in the stomach and is too big to pass into the Intestines. This may require Endoscopy or surgery,

**Bone stuck in the Intestines**, this can cause constipation and will most likely require surgery.

**Constipation due to bone fragments and bleeding from the rectum**, your dog may have a hard time passing the bone fragments due to sharp edges scraping the large intestine and rectum as they move along, causing discomfort and bleeding.

**Peritonitis**, a bacterial infection of the abdomen due to bone fragments poking holes in your dog's stomach or intestines. This is an emergency and could kill your dog.

As for the nutritional aspects of feeding your dog's bones, there really isn't any... Originally, canines would obtain their nutrients from the meat, cartilage, fat and connective tissue, not from the bone itself. The protein matrix in bone is mainly collagen and dogs can't digest and assimilate collagen.



## Emergency monitoring and treatment Dr Martin de Scally

Although veterinary medicine has largely moved to preventative care, every now and then tragedy strikes and dogs and cats present to us poisoned, run over, chewed up or sick with a serious infectious disease or metabolic crisis.

All these cases require an initial comprehensive and rapid assessment to try and help them. The first thing we look to see, is whether the animal has an intact airway and if the animal is breathing. If not an airway is immediately established and breathing is reestablished usually on air concentrated in oxygen and with the aid of ventilation.

The next thing is whether the heart is beating and adequate blood is in the circulatory system. Shock is a common presentation for emergency cases and usually requires immediate administration of intravenous fluids. If possible, electrolytes such as sodium, potassium, chloride, calcium, magnesium and glucose are restored to normal values. This can be life saving if heart rates are detected as critically low, high or arrhythmic. If excessive internal or external bleeding has occurred a blood transfusion may be helpful. You do have to type blood unless it is the animal's first blood transfusion. Cats always have to be typed even with their first transfusion. Heart function can also be aided with intravenous drugs such as adrenalin and dobutamine.

Mental alertness is assessed with a coma score and pain is assessed. If the animal has an abnormal coma score, treatment is instituted. This usually involves oxygen, correction of low blood pressure, elevation of the head and plasma osmotics. It may involve decompressive surgery. The coma score is monitored for deterioration or hopefully improvement. During the initial crisis and every three hours after admission a simple pain assessment is performed and all animals in pain receive pain killers. There are five simple things that we look at. The first is whether the animal is vocalizing with pain. The second is whether touch elicits pain. The third is whether the animal is guarding when approached. The fourth is any change in posture to try alleviate pain (for example limping on a leg). The fifth is if pain is contributing to loss of appetite.

Samples of blood, urine, stool and any other abnormal collections of body fluids in the animals are taken within minutes of arrival if time allows.

If infections are either considered to be a primary or secondary risk, intravenous antibiotics are started.

Believe it or not many infections in emergency patients develop after the accident and stem from the animal's own intestine. The best way to try to stop this from happening is to keep the bowel functioning normally. The best way to do that is to feed the animals, if possible immediately. If the condition is causing nausea anti-emetics are started immediately. Tubes are then placed, if either a swallow reflex is absent or the animal is difficult to syringe feed. Caloric requirements, micro and macro nutrient requirements and protein requirements are essential to meet in critically ill patients. The strange thing is a bowel that has just been operated on is less likely to leak if the animal is fed so that appropriate healing can take place, than if the animal is starved. For that reason, and also because the immune system uses up a lot of energy and nutrients to function properly, all intestinal surgeries at Hilton Vet are fed immediately post surgery. Blood proteins are monitored in critically ill patients and protein requirements are met through enteral (nasogastric) feeding wherever possible. This is especially important in cardiac cases, septic bite wound cases and burn wound cases.

X-rays and ultrasound scan of certain critically ill patients may also be required to pick up fractures, organ damage and internal bleeding. Once a full emergency assessment is made and patients are as comfortable as possible, plans can be made to fix fractures and close up wounds. If organ or wound bleeding cannot be stopped medically or with pressure it must be surgically controlled.

Contrary to popular belief more sepsis occurs in wounds initially closed than properly managed wounds left open to drain. Badly chewed up animals die from pain, shock and sepsis and not from open wounds. Rather control those things first. The body will usually close the wound itself over time. Wound management until granulation tissue has formed (healthy pink healing tissue without pus).

After all of the above has taken place, the monitoring and healing phase can hopefully begin. Our animals are real soldiers and many of them survive things we would have succumbed to.

## Update on Patient's Page Wollie Theron: That Old Chestnut

By Kathleen Theron

A friend of mine is a veterinary nurse, she is always a mine of medical information and gives me good advice regarding the care of my dogs and cats. She came to visit the other day, just as I was preparing to proudly dispense a platter of marrow bones to my dogs: the best quality, free range, grass fed, raw beef marrow bones! My friend, the nurse was not impressed. "I do hope you will not be feeding bones to your dogs?" she said in dismay. As a Trauma nurse with many years of experience she has seen more than her fair share of emergencies caused by the feeding of bones, raw or not, grass fed or feedlot! It is a well known fact that bones can cause upset tummies, intestinal obstructions, perforations of the gut, injuries to mouths and teeth etc.

Ah, but luckily I knew better. Having given my dogs raw bones as treats for many years and never having had a single tummy upset or ailment, I was confident that I knew what I was doing. I gaily ignored her instructions and the dogs were duly thrilled by their treats.

It was not too much later, perhaps a day or so, that I discovered a problem. My beautiful, hardy, long-haired Africanis cross Collie had split her molar in half. Both halves remained embedded in the gum but it was pretty obvious that the tooth could not be saved. Of course, it did not take a rocket scientist to work out that the cause of the broken tooth was the Super High Quality Marrow Bone that I had fed her shortly beforehand.

So we hastened to the surgery of Dr. de Scally where luckily the in-house dentist was on call. Dr de Scally was very courteous with me, when discussing the dangers of bones.

He did not condemn me for stupidity or ignorance or wilful disregard of well known facts. I felt more than embarrassed because I had read all the articles about not feeding your dog bones and yet, here I was in his surgery, because I had failed to heed that specific veterinary advice. Dr de Scally reminded me that dogs in the wild don't actually eat bones. Of course, they would eat the meat, connective tissue and cartilage on a bone, but they were really not designed to eat the bones themselves in their entirety. Only hyena and lammergaeiers do that, and therefore, they are at risk of injury or death, when eating a food they are not really supposed to be enjoying.

After immediate dental surgery, excellent nursing care, large amounts of antibiotics and painkillers, my dog and I duly left the practice late in the day, minus one molar and a considerable amount of Rands. My dog recovered beautifully, the care she received could not have been bettered, had she been a human child rather than a furry one.

I had learned my lesson and was sad that my lovely dog had to suffer pain and surgery because of me. I for one, will be heeding the vet's advice regarding the feeding of bones from now on. Sure, you might not have any problems, but should the situation arise that your dog is ill or injured due to a bone, you will realise that it is just not worth it to take a chance.

And so, my friend the vet nurse came round for tea. No marrow bones on the counter this time, just a delicious chocolate cake. But before I could have a slice, I first had to eat a large Piece of Humble Pie!

## Staff Profile:

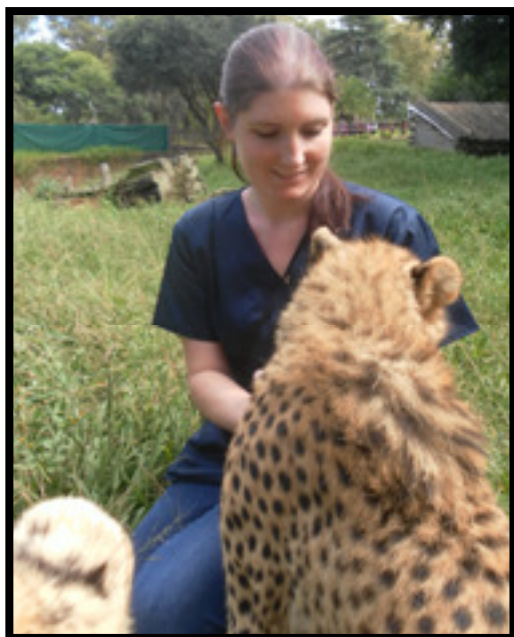
### Lara Brown

Lara has recently joined the team at Hilton Vet Hospital. She is one of our very caring, dedicated and capable veterinarians. Lara qualified at the end of last year. She has been doing locum veterinary work for the last couple of months. Lara is our dedicated after hours veterinarian and she assists with the weekend rota.

Lara particularly enjoys working with ultrasound and exotics and wildlife. She is passionate about after hour emergency cases.

Lara is dating Byron and she owns a Border Collie called Billie.

In her spare time, ("What is that?" Lara asked,) Lara enjoys reading, hiking and spending time in the Berg.



## To make you smile:



## To make you smile

A farmer had some puppies he needed to sell. He painted a sign advertising the 4 pups and set about nailing it to a post on the edge of his yard. As he was driving the last nail into the post, he felt a tug on his overalls. He looked down into the eyes of a little boy. "Mister," he said, "I want to buy one of your puppies."

"Well," said the farmer, as he rubbed the sweat off the back of his neck, "These puppies come from fine parents and cost a good deal of money." The boy dropped his head for moment. Then reaching deep into his pocket, he pulled out a handful of change and held it up to the farmer. "I've got thirty-nine cents. Is that enough to take a look?" "Sure," said the farmer. And with that he let out a whistle. "Here, Dolly!" he called.

Out from the doghouse and down the ramp ran Dolly followed by four little balls of fur. The little boy pressed his face against the chain link fence. His eyes danced with delight. As the dogs made their way to the fence, the little boy noticed something else stirring inside the doghouse. Slowly another little ball appeared, this one noticeably smaller. Down the ramp it slid. Then in a somewhat awkward manner, the little pup began hobbling toward the others, doing its best to catch up...

"I want that one," the little boy said, pointing to the runt. The farmer knelt down at the boy's side and said, "Son, you don't want that puppy. He will never be able to run and play with you like these other dogs would."

With that, the little boy stepped back from the fence, reached down, and began rolling up one leg of his trousers. In doing so, he revealed a steel brace running down both sides of his leg attaching itself to a specially made shoe.

Looking back up at the farmer, he said, "You see sir, I don't run too well myself, and he will need someone who understands."

With tears in his eyes, the farmer reached down and picked up the little pup. Holding it carefully, he handed it to the little boy.

"How much?" asked the little boy.. "No charge," answered the farmer, "There's no charge for love."

The world is full of people who need someone who understands.



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](mailto:lauren@hiltonvethospital.co.za)

**In next month's issue:** "The Vaccine Issue" and Accupuncture