



# VILLAGE VETERINARY CLINIC NEWSLETTER

April 2018

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## Message from Dr Craig Mostert

Welcome to our April newsletter. Autumn months in KZN are amongst our best. Our gardens are still green, the humidity begins to lessen and the evenings outside are blissful.

All the nasty summer insects start to disappear and flies and mozzies are less of a nuisance.

It's a wonderful time of year before the blanket cupboard needs to be opened and winter soups feature on menus.

Veterinary practices have seasons too. In Summer we see many skin issues but these lessen during the colder months.

Now, in Autumn, it is time to reassess our pets in preparation for winter. Older pets may need a change in diet as they move from 'adult' to 'senior'. Puppies may need to move on to adult food and similar changes for cats and kittens. Time flies by so quickly we often find that pets are on a specific food for a while out of habit and the fact that they need a change in life stage diet often catches owners by surprise.

Please come and see us if you aren't sure if a change is needed. Our wonderful reception ladies are highly trained and can offer excellent advice.

If your older pet is experiencing some discomfort in their joints, please bring them in for a senior assessment. We will advise on diet and supplements to keep them comfortable an active through the chilly winter months. All in all Autumn is a great time to catch a breather after a sticky summer and to prepare for winter, for humans and pets alike.

Please come and see us if you need help or advice to make sure your pets are winter ready. We look forward to seeing you.

That's it from me, as always thank you all for your ongoing support, it is greatly appreciated.

With thanks and warm regards,

Dr Craig Mostert

## World Veterinary Day - 28 April 2018



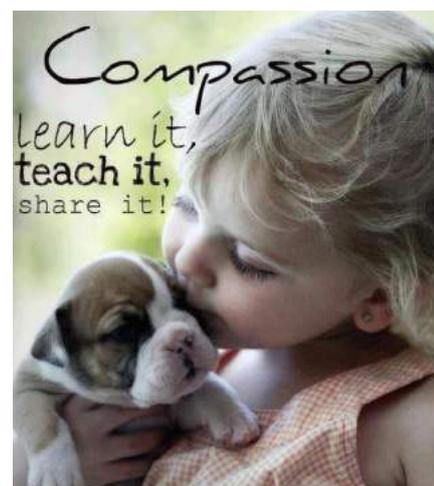
World Veterinary Day is one day of the year completely dedicated to the lovely people that decided to dedicate their lives to the love, health, and well-being of the animals on this planet. This day is celebrated all around the globe every last Saturday of April.

This veterinarian holiday was first celebrated in the year 2000 with the motive to highlight the lives and the hard work carried out by the veterinarians all over the world.

We may love our dogs, cats, horses, all other farm animals, but one thing they all have in common, and we must love that one thing, is their doctors, the veterinarians. Without the veterinarians, and all other veterinary professionals that help them, the animals that we care so much about will have lives with lower quality, shorter life spans, and less happiness. We must agree that veterinarians are essential for an animal to have a great life.



The history of the celebration of the World Veterinary Day lays in the history of the World Veterinary Association. Approximately 150 years ago, the very first International Veterinary Congress was held in Edinburgh, organized by the professor of Anatomy and Physiology Dr. J. Gamgee from the Dick Veterinary College. The WVA (World Veterinary Association), exists to unite and represent all the veterinarians in the world and generally the veterinary profession. Their mission is to promote animal health and in general global public health, and to promote private and public veterinary services.



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## Catnip and cats

Even though cats go crazy and some even seem drugged around catnip it's not a drug. It's actually a herb that belongs to the mint family. When the leaves are broken it releases a certain chemical that most cats respond to.

All cats respond differently to catnip. Some of them walk away as they couldn't care less, but others go ape. The cats that do go crazy are responding to the active ingredient in catnip called Nepetalactone which stimulates a cat's five senses (touch, smell, sight, sound and taste.)

Those cats that do react will eat it or lick it; some roll in it and others just sniff it. The catnip reaction is inherited so not all of them respond. Young kittens and old cats rarely respond although large cats like



tigers will. If your cat's behavior doesn't change around catnip it's nothing to worry about. About 10 to 30 percent of cats don't go berserk over catnip.

Catnip is completely safe and isn't addictive to cats so give your feline friend a treat every now and then. The most amusing thing about giving cats catnip is the behavior change. Although it's safe, keep in mind you can have too much of a good thing. If a cat eats lots of fresh catnip it could vomit or have diarrhea but this is rare. If it does happen don't give your cat as much catnip or any at all.

## Signs of illnesses in birds

The signs of illness in a bird are sometimes termed "sick-bird syndrome". This is because many illnesses in birds cause the same symptoms and by the time a bird shows signs of illness, it is really sick. Aviary birds, like other prey



animals, hide signs of illness. Predators look for illness or weakness when choosing their prey, so a prey animal needs to appear healthy or it will be a sure target. By the time they are showing signs of disease, the birds have become too weak to be able to disguise it. At this point, small birds especially have little reserve and even handling them can put them into shock. This is why it is extremely important for bird owners to be aware of signs of illness in their bird and monitor them twice daily for the presence of these signs. It is also an idea to weigh your bird on a kitchen scale once a week and make a note of the weight.

If you notice any of the signs of illness in the list below, contact your veterinarian.

- Huddled
- Sitting low on the perch
- Sitting on the bottom of the cage
- Hanging onto the side of the cage with his beak instead of sitting on a perch
- Head tucked under wing and standing on two feet
- Ruffled feathers
- Weakness
- Losing balance, teetering or falling off perch
- Lumps or swelling of any portion of the body
- Picking at feathers or body
- Trembling
- Not preening
- Eyes dull, sunken or abnormal colour
- Walking in circles
- Unusual smell to bird or droppings do not look normal
- Dropped or elevated wing (s)
- Not eating, talking or chirping
- Bobbing tail
- Weight loss

## Fourth rabies death in KZN



Following our February article on rabies, KZN has now had a fourth human death due to rabies. The four rabies cases (1 adult and 3 children) all involved exposures to rabid domestic dogs and domestic cats. The rabies virus is present in the saliva of the affected animal and may be transmitted to humans through bites, scratches or other wounds that break the skin and allow the infected saliva to enter the body.

The first line of defence against infection is to ensure that your animals are protected and cannot transmit the virus. Rabies vaccination of domestic dogs and cats is mandatory by law in South Africa. In KZN it is law to vaccinate against rabies on a yearly basis. The onus is on pet owners to ensure that their pets are vaccinated.

### **Please vaccinate your pets today!**

Please don't approach any strange dogs or cats in your neighbourhood. Report them to the nearest SPCA for collection. Children must be monitored and told not to play with strange domesticated animals, unless you know they have recently been vaccinated for rabies.

In cases where someone has received a dog or cat bite, no matter how minimal it may look, we urge them to immediately approach a clinic or hospital within 24 hours for rabies treatment. Any delay in treatment can be fatal.

## Pet Insurance

If you're a pet owner, injury and illness are part of the deal. Thanks to good nutrition, vaccinations and general health care, pets are also living much longer than before. This has caused many pets to suffer from diseases associated with old age, such as arthritis. Treatment is also becoming more sophisticated and therefore also more expensive.

More and more South Africans are opting for pet insurance – that's a sort of medical aid for your dog, cat or horse. The cost of living has increased and pet owners are finding it difficult to afford the veterinary care their four-legged family members deserve. This is why more pet owners are looking at medical insurance to assist with unexpected, unplanned vet visits when their non-human loved ones are sick or injured.

The two most popular South African veterinary insurance providers are:

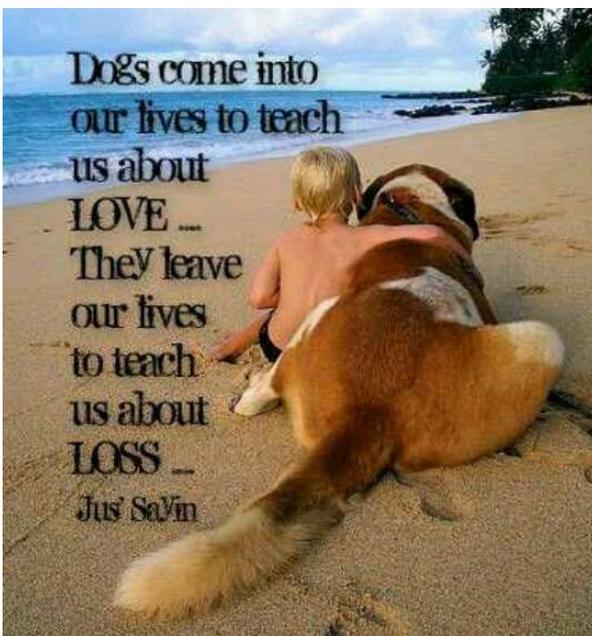
**Medipet** which is a short term health insurance for pets – not a medical aid scheme. They offer three options to ensure the best health care for your pets and if you contact them on 021 701 2023 they will be happy to provide you with all the relevant information.

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

**Petsure** administers Hollard Pet Insurance which is underwritten by The Hollard Insurance Company. It is a medical insurance that provides cover against unforeseen accidents and illness. Petsure provides three main plans as well as a routine care option and emergency boarding and kennelling option. The "Routine Care Option" is an add-on policy which provides additional benefit for procedures like: vaccinations, deworming, flea control etc. You can contact them on 0860 738 787. Email address is [info@petsure.co.za](mailto:info@petsure.co.za)

Website address is [www.petsure.co.za](http://www.petsure.co.za)

Both veterinary insurance providers do not cover pre-existing conditions, routine care (e.g. spaying, neutering, defleaing, deworming and vaccinations), pregnancy, breeding and related treatments.



## Snake bites and pets

If your dog happens to be bitten by a venomous snake there is an 80% chance of it surviving if treated quickly. The degree of damage inflicted by a venomous snake is determined by a wide variety of variables. The age and species of snake, the intensity and depth of the fang penetration, the amount of venom injected, the location of the bite and the size of the dog are just a few of the variables.

In South Africa some common venomous snakes are the black mamba, puff adder and boomslang.

### Black Mamba



The black mamba is not actually black. It takes its name from the interior of its mouth which is inky-black in colour. It has a "coffin-shaped" head and skin colour can vary between olive-brown to grey.

They weigh about 1.6kgs and range from 2 to 3 metres in length. Their venom is highly toxic and composed of neurotoxins which affect the nervous system. The anti venom is effective.

### Puff Adder



Their colour patterns vary geographically. The head has two well-marked dark bands, one on the crown and the other between the eyes. Large specimens 190cm in length and weighing 6kgs have been reported.

This species is responsible for more snakebite fatalities than any other African snake. The venom of the puff adder is cytotoxic which affects cell structure and the anti venom is only partially effective.

### Boomslang



Their colouration is variable. Males are light green but adult females may be brown. Its total length is about 160cm but can exceed 183cm (6 feet). The eyes are exceptionally large and the head is egg shaped.

Their weight varies from 175 to 510g. The venom of the boomslang is highly potent, delivered through large fangs located at the back of the jaw. The venom is hemotoxic which disables the blood clotting process. The anti venom is only available from Onderstepoort in Pretoria.

### What should you do in the event a snake bites your dog?

First of all do not take out your pocketknife and cut Xs over the fang marks! Do not attempt to suck venom through these X marks. Do not attempt to grab the snake as you may be bitten yourself. Instead you should:

- ◆ Try and identify the snake by taking note of its size and colour patterns
- ◆ Look the dog over carefully for fang marks, noting that there may be more than one bite wound
- ◆ Keep your pet as quiet as possible and seek immediate veterinary attention.

Please phone ahead and alert your Vet.

Symptoms to look out for: Unsteadiness, trembling, vomiting, drooling or frothing at the mouth, swelling/redness and paralysis.

# Puzzle page



## Desert Animals

Circle the names of the animals in the word search.

C	I	T	A	S	V	U	L	T	U	R	E	F	A
O	G	N	R	A	T	I	D	O	K	W	R	T	I
Y	U	G	C	E	M	L	C	V	X	E	A	O	S
R	A	T	T	L	E	S	N	A	K	E	H	R	K
A	N	E	I	M	U	T	P	E	B	R	F	T	E
B	A	K	A	W	B	W	J	I	Z	A	S	O	R
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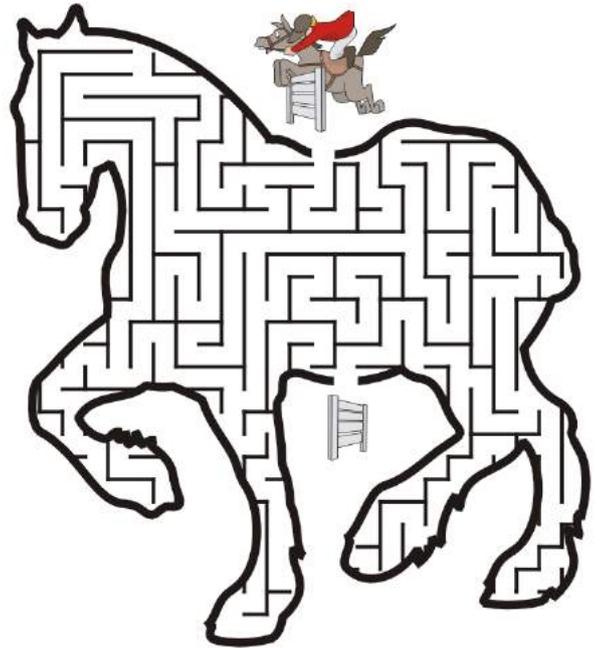
tortoise      camel      rabbit  
 spider      rattlesnake      hawk  
 vulture      coyote      iguana

### Ox Maths Facts Colouring

Solve the simple sums and then colour in the picture using the key below!

$3 + 6 =$	$1 + 8 =$
$5 + 2 =$	$1 + 7 =$
$3 + 4 =$	$6 + 3 =$
$0 + 7 =$	$5 + 4 =$
$1 + 6 =$	$4 + 4 =$
$4 + 5 =$	$4 + 4 =$
$2 + 6 =$	$7 + 1 =$
$1 + 5 =$	$3 + 5 =$
$1 + 4 =$	$2 + 3 =$
$4 + 2 =$	$3 + 3 =$

5 grey  
 6 green  
 7 yellow  
 8 brown  
 9 blue



5		3	4		
6				3	
2					
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	6				4
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		2			4	
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	9	8	5		7	1
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