

# PAWS, CLAWS & ALL FOURS

## Winter 2024

There are many good things about working in a Vet Clinic. In particular working in a team with like-minded colleagues to improve animal welfare is most important. One of the times teamwork is most evident is doing a caesarian, which we do regularly. It is a real team effort as the bitch is under anaesthetic with a nurse and a vet doing the surgery and more people are roped in from elsewhere to remove placentas, tie off umbilical cords and ensure any sluggish puppies are breathing. It is satisfying to deliver a litter of healthy pups or kittens, but correct timing of caesarians is critical to getting a good result. The criteria we use for timing of caesarians are in the article below.

Twenty years ago ultrasounds in vet practise were useful for diagnosis of pregnancy and little more. The technology has improved vastly so that the images we get are much clearer. This has allowed us to make diagnoses that were not possible before. We recently diagnosed an obstructed bile duct from the gall bladder and were able to refer the dog to a specialist practice for gall bladder removal. This would not have happened twenty years ago. See the gall bladder images in the article below.

## Caesarians

*Peter Heslip (Veterinarian - Balclutha)*

Timing of the caesarean is important – too early and puppy survival is poor, too late and the puppies may be dead before delivery. We want bitches to have a chance to deliver the pups naturally if they are able. Most bitches will have pups naturally, so we need criteria to decide when to intervene.

The criteria we use to intervene are:

- No pup delivered within two hours of the bitch passing green foetal fluids - indicating that the placenta is detaching from the uterus.
- Pushing for half an hour with no pup passed.
- The bitch is unwell.
- The bitch has passed 64 days from her last mating.

For some breeds like Bulldogs which cannot naturally have pups we need to be sure of the mating date and due date, we monitor behavioral signs and we can measure blood progesterone levels.

A caesarian done at the right time is a very safe procedure for the bitch and puppy survival is also very high.

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## Puppy Strangles

*Martha O'Connor, (Veterinarian - Milton)*

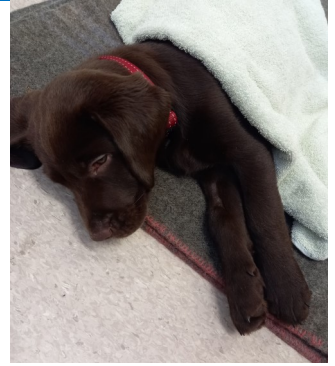
Mac is a very bubbly and outgoing 15 week old chocolate Labrador. When Mac was 9 weeks old he was a very sick and sad puppy. He came in and was unable to walk with very sore elbow and wrist (carpus) joints. His ears were sore and gunky. His shoulder (prescapular) lymph nodes were very enlarged.

Mac had blood tests, X-rays and samples of his lymph nodes to investigate.

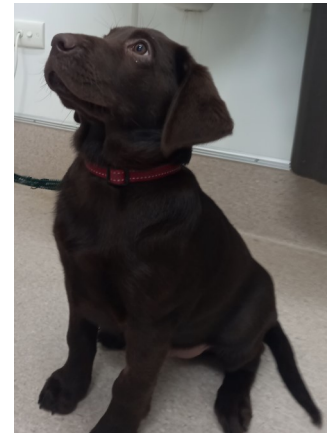
Mac was suffering from 'Puppy Strangles' - an unusual disease that is also called Juvenile Cellulitis or Sterile Granulomatous Dermatitis and Lymphadenitis.

This condition effects puppies (typically younger than 6 months). This condition is currently regarded as idiopathic, meaning that its cause is unknown. The condition does have an immune-mediated component, meaning that the puppy's immune system is attacking its own body.

Luckily for Mac, he responded well to treatment which involves administering a tapering dose of immune-suppressive drugs. To the owners (and our) delight he was up and walking again within a day. The prognosis for Mac long term is very good and he should make a full recovery!



***Very sick puppy***



***Mac after treatment***

## Maximising Value On A Budget

*Catherine Copland, (Veterinarian - Balclutha)*

Cutting costs and sticking to a budget are big factors for most of us when it comes to feeding our pets and working dogs. Looking at the cost per bag alone, may not get you the best value for money though.

Cheaper foods cost less because the ingredients are lower quality. Premium foods contain high quality ingredients so you can feed less and the bag lasts longer. With cheap foods you are paying for fillers like water and cheap carbohydrate byproducts (rice and wheat). Dry kibbled foods with a high dry matter are better value than tinned and sachet food which are around 85% water.

The cost per day of feeding a premium dry food is surprisingly good value. Feeding a 4Kg cat on a premium food like Royal Canin Neutered Cat or Black Hawk Adult Cat is around \$1/day with an 8Kg bag lasting 160 days. Feeding a 20Kg dog on a premium food costs around \$2.50 a day.

Premium foods are complete and balanced so you don't need to add extra supplements for healthy joints or skin. They are high in antioxidants for a strong immune system. They have a fixed formulation unlike cheaper foods, which may alter their ingredients depending on what is cheapest. A fixed formulation makes tummy upsets less likely. Premium foods are also more digestible meaning less poop to scoop!

# Dislocated Hips

*Peter Heslip (Veterinarian - Balclutha)*

We see dislocated hips in dogs regularly. Most of these injuries are in farm dogs, as a result of being run over at low speed by utes or quad bikes in paddocks. Most of these dogs have no other significant injuries.

Treatment is to anaesthetise the dogs, X-ray the hip to identify the direction of movement of the ball of the hip and then replace it. We have to make sure there is no bone chip off the ball or socket, as replacement is not possible and surgery will be required.

The leg is bandaged in an Ehmer Sling. This bandage holds the foot off the ground and rotates the leg inwards to stabilise the hip. We hold the dog in the clinic for a week and each day check the hip is staying in position. After a week the bandage is removed and the dogs are kept quiet for another fortnight to allow full healing of the supporting tissues.

The hip stays in position in 75% of dogs. These dogs can go back to work and owners report that use of the leg is 100% normal or close to that.



**Bernie and Dash both in with dislocated**

# Is That Gall Bladder Normal?

*Catherine Copland, (Veterinarian - Balclutha)*

The gall bladder is a small organ tucked deep among the liver lobes. Bile is produced by the liver, moves through the bile ducts into the gallbladder where it is stored. When food enters the stomach the gallbladder contracts, pushing bile through the main bile duct into the small intestine to digest fat.

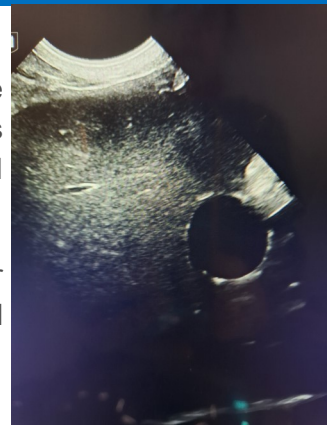
Before ultrasound scans were available in general practise, we rarely diagnosed gallbladder disease. Now that we commonly use ultrasound on patients, we see lots of abnormal gallbladders! The trick is deciding if that gallbladder is going to cause a problem.

Free moving, sand like sludge in the gallbladder is a common finding, and does not cause problems. If the sludge begins to solidify and form attachments to the gallbladder wall it becomes a mucocele. A mucocele can obstruct the bile duct and stop the gallbladder from emptying. If the gallbladder can't empty it will eventually rupture causing bile peritonitis which is often fatal.

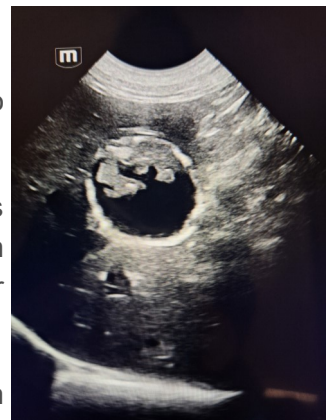
Gallstones are another incidental finding that again may cause no issues or may lead to gallbladder obstruction.

Infection of the gallbladder causes thickening of the gallbladder wall (cholecystitis) that is visible on ultrasound. The patient is usually very unwell and in pain, often with a high temperature and vomiting. These clinical signs can be caused by a number of other conditions so an ultrasound scan is an important part of the diagnostic process.

Changes to the gallbladder wall can also indicate fluid overload or anaphylaxis, so an ultrasound scan of the gallbladder can give lots of useful information!



**Normal gall bladder shows as an empty black circle with a thin white wall**



**Abnormal Gallbladder shows a thick white wall with white material within the black circle**

# Equine Health Checks And Dentistry

Regular dentistry is essential for horses as they have a unique dental structure- their teeth continue growing well into old age. They rely on a side-to-side chewing motion for grinding tough grasses and wearing their teeth down. Wild horses have high fibre diets which require lots of chewing and therefore wears their teeth down. However, if the teeth don't meet precisely with each chewing motion, they won't receive enough wear and sharp ridges and points can form. Hooks, ridges and uneven wear patterns can cause severe discomfort for the horse. These sharp teeth can cut against their cheek and tongue causing ulceration and infection. **We recommend horses receive a dental at least annually.**

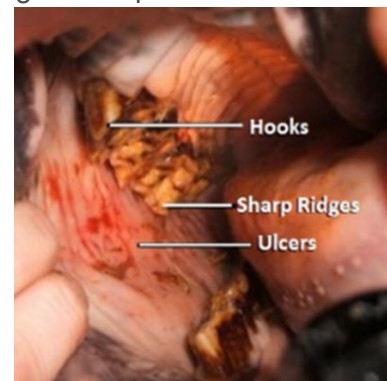
## Common signs of dental issues in horses include:

- Dropping feed or difficulty chewing
- Bad breath or drooling
- Nasal discharge
- Head-tilting and tossing
- Bit-chewing and tongue lolling
- Weight loss

During a dental exam, we will sedate the horse for comfort and safety then examine its mouth with a dental gag. We will "float" the teeth which means rasping or filing down the sharp edges and points with a motorised instrument.

## While visiting for a dental we can also offer:

- Free Sheath cleaning for the boys
- Selenium testing - NZ grasses are typically VERY LOW in this essential element!
- Faecal egg counts and advice on deworming
- Vaccinations for Tetanus and Strangles



## Joke Corner

### The Oldest Profession

A trio of professionals were arguing about which was the oldest profession.

The surgeon spoke first "When God created Eve he took a rib from Adam and that was the first ever surgical operation, so surgery came first".

The architect claimed "God created order out of chaos, and to do this he must have needed the services of an architect, so architecture came first".

The civil servant settled the argument with the clincher "Ah, but who created the chaos?"

### Famous quotes from Yogi Berra (yes - a real American baseball player))

"Cut my pie into four pieces. I don't think I could eat eight."

"When you come to a fork in the road, take it."

"Never answer an anonymous letter."

"You can observe a lot just by watching."

"Why buy good luggage? You only use it when you travel."

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