

JULY 2020



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**CAT WHISKERS.** The experts say that there are exactly 24 whiskers on a cat, that means 12 on each side of their face. These whiskers are used for hunting and navigating around their surroundings. Veterinary neuroscientists noted that a cat's whiskers are connected to a part of their brain that is like the visual cortex. In other words, a cat can almost 'see' with their whiskers. This comes in handy for hunting in close quarters as the whiskers will point towards their prey. These experts also noted that if your cat has damaged their whiskers, they will have difficulty catching their prey. Your cat will also use these stiff hairs to sense whether they will fit through a tight space. To your cat, their whiskers are an important tool!

**TIP: When travelling with your pet, ensure you visit us and get them [microchipped](#) before you go. If they get a scare and go bush, they can be Returned safely to you.**



## BENTLEIGH Veterinary Clinic.

Winter is well established now, with temperatures plummeting while summer is but a dim memory. Older pets may need a vest or coat to combat the winter chill, and all animals will welcome a new, deep, cozy bed. Active pets will require a little extra food to boost their energy, especially dogs who are active outdoors. But even an indoor pet can still maintain an exercise program. If you have stairs in your home, tossing a toy up and down the stairs for your dog to chase should burn off a few calories. A hallway is also good to covert for an impromptu hurdle course. Cats LOVE boxes, so a series of boxes plus a few tempting treats to find will keep them active. Dogs do need regular exercise, or they can become destructive inside. Cats are more content to doze by the fire. But both require a little extra incentive to engage in some behavioral training. Remember to lead with kindness and reward and your pet will be willing to play your silly games!



## WINTER REMINDER ABOUT A PET HAZARD

Every winter I issue warnings about this pet hazard during winter. My pet peeve (pardon my pun) is with Antifreeze. Ethylene glycol is the main chemical which compounds the problem because of its sweet taste. Animals are attracted to this product. If you spill this on your driveway, it only takes a teaspoon for a smaller animal or 50 ml for a larger dog to cause your pet a fatality. If you know your cat or dog has consumed antifreeze, bring them into us immediately as we can administer drugs to induce vomiting. Activated charcoal is given to bind the chemical in your pet's system and slow the absorption rate. Intravenous fluids will help to keep your dog hydrated. But prevention is best, so be aware of this pet hazard and be vigilant during winter.

## WHY YOU SHOULD TRIM YOUR DOG'S NAILS.

Most dogs usually need their nails clipped at four to six weeks, but many dogs are wary about having their feet handled. Long nails need to be trimmed because they can put a lot of pressure on their paws when your dog walks. It is like walking in shoes that are too tight, your feet hurt! Long nails can affect the way your dog walks, leading to bones and joints becoming out of alignment. If your dog's nails touch the ground while they are standing in front of you, they are too long. Don't expect to cut all your dog's nails in the first sitting. Take time to get your pet used to you touching his paws, let them sniff the nail clipper and play with it a bit. Get them used to the sound of the clipper without cutting at first. Then after several days of this, just try cutting one nail. If your dog lets you, give them lavish praise and a few treats. Avoid the quick (the blood vessels in the pink part of the nail) at all costs as it will hurt your dog and scare them. Take your time to build your dog's confidence. But if you are nervous, [bring your dog into us](#) and we can show you the right way to trim your dog's nails.

**TIP: Winter weather can mean less venturing outdoors. Schedule in some playdates for your dog so that they can practice their social skills and at the same time, they can burn off some energy!**

## Tips about Pet Health



### A Little Touch of Humour

A duck, a skunk and a deer went out for dinner at a restaurant one night. When it came time to pay, the skunk did not have a scent, the deer didn't have a buck, so they put the meal on the duck's bill. 😊

**TIP: Safeguard your pet's health by vaccinating them from diseases and be diligent about updating their shots! [Contact us](#) to arrange this.**

### FRESH BREATH PET TREATS.

2.5 Cups of oats -blend until fine  
Add in one egg and mix thoroughly.  
Add in ½ cup freshly chopped mint  
Add in ½ cup freshly chopped parsley  
Combine all the above with ¼ cup water  
Add 2 tablespoons melted coconut oil  
Mix well together, roll out and cut into shapes  
Bake at 180 degrees Celsius for 40 minutes till crisp.  
Let cool before giving to your pet.  
We also have a great range of pet [food and treats](#) available. Call in and pick up some tasty treats for your pets.



**DO FLEAS SURVIVE THE WINTER?** Contrary to popular belief, fleas do survive in winter, therefore do not drop your guard with your pet flea treatments. It is only when the temperature drop (usually around freezing point) for a long period of time that the flea will go dormant and eventually die. The hardy flea usually looks for a warm place to camp out the winter, and your pet is their ideal mobile home. Not only do they have the warmth of your dog/cat and your home, but they have food on tap. The battle with the flea is never over. Your pet needs to continue their flea treatments right through winter or you will be cursed with an infected dog and an infected home. Once the flea is established, it is hard to eradicate them completely from your pet and home. So keep up the [flea treatments](#) and you will have a happy dog.

**CAN CATS OR DOGS DRINK COFFEE?** Short answer – No! The reason being that Caffeine is toxic to your fur babies. Okay, if they lick up a small spill, they are probably safe, but while a hot cup of coffee is a great lift to us, a cup full could be life threatening to your pet. Symptoms include rapid breathing, elevated blood pressure, and an elevated heart rate. Vomiting and seizures will occur, followed by collapse. If your pet shows these symptoms, immediately bring them in to us for help. Remember, human food is not good for our pets as their system responds differently to our food.

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### THE ANXIOUS PET & HOW YOU CAN HELP THEM.

Anxiety is created when your pet becomes so fearful that it begins to affect everyday living. Many pets get anxious about loud storms, staying at home alone, or even a car ride. So how can you help your anxious pet? The answer is to build some strategies that will help your pet through their anxiety. As an example, if your dog fears storms, there are special vests that you can get for them that are a snug fit and give them a feeling of protection (Thunder Vests is one example). Fearful cats and dogs can be brought into a room with the curtains drawn and soft music is playing which can help distract from a storm. Do not get angry with them or their anxiety will only worsen.

If your pet is afraid of being home alone, train them to get used to it by making that time fun. Once again, soft music instead of dead silence helps, a window or balcony with a view so they can see outside or provide them with a well-stuffed food dispenser toy to keep them busy. Start by leaving them alone for 5 -10 minutes, then slowly increase the time alone. Perhaps getting them a buddy will overcome their loneliness. Rotate their toys so they have something new to play with or get one of those robotic toys on a timer to chase. Look at what is bothering them and find a way to overcome that situation preferably when it starts. If your pet is suffering anxiety, come in and talk to us – we can share a few tips and strategies that may help your fearful pet become a bit more relaxed and happier.

*“Show a Dog an ounce of love and he'll be your friend for life!”* Stuart & Linda Macfarlane.