

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

Just a very long name for Furballs?

Diet and Nutrition are of increasing interest to cat owners (it has always totally fascinated cats!), and as we all move further from a "natural state", new problems appear. The following is a small segment on a huge topic.

There is no getting away from the fact that the perfect diet for cats is mice. Their predatory powers was what encouraged the Egyptians to accommodate them in their houses and grain silos thousands of years ago, and even today, about one-eighth of Australia's grain crops goes into rodents rather than the international markets! However, most modern town cats lead a rather more regal existence, and hunting is a recreation rather than a *raison d'être*, so humans must recreate a diet which fulfils all of a cat's dietary requirements.

First came the tinned foods, and cats trained their owners as to which were worthwhile purchasing (by refusing to consume lesser quality offerings). Feline nutritional needs are much more highly refined than dogs or humans, particularly in regard to protein quality and quantity – it is not metabolically worthwhile for a cat to eat a food of less than 20% protein (of "dry matter" – if you look at tinned food, it is 80% water, so the protein quoted is really quite high in the better quality products). The move to dried foods has resulted in production of high proteins levels to reflect this requirement also. Now comes the interesting part. In order to entertain owners and cats, colourings, flavourings and preservatives have been added to most tinned and dried foods, particularly the cheaper "supermarket" products. In fact, often the "flavour" is only sprayed on the outside of the biscuit, to minimise the use of the expensive parts of the formula.

Cats can cope with a lot of things, but it seems that they draw the line at "additives". Vets are seeing an increas-

ing number of cats who vomit up their food (and some of the colourings in the dried food actually stains the carpet, so what is it doing to the cats' intestines?), and who only need to be converted to a high quality, (preferably **preservative free**) dried food to improve.

The cats often start out by **vomiting more furballs than usual**, then start vomiting food. Some then progress to the near-cancerous stage of IBD, and some of those go on to develop cancerous (usually lymphoma) lesions in the bowel. Pretty serious stuff. Food Trials are the main diagnostic tool, and usually starts with 'roo meat and Hills Prescription Z/D or Royal Canin Hypoallergic diet. It is readily accepted by most cats (and those with IBD tend to be fussy because of the nausea created by the condition). Royal Canin, Nutrience, Whiskas Professional and Hills Science diet (particularly Sensitive Stomach variety) are all high quality diets, with very small amounts of preservative, so are fine except for the really sensitive cat (who has usually been sensitised by eating the highly coloured varieties of food rather than starting and staying on a premium diet). **The hallmarks of IBD are frequent vomiting (weekly or more) with weight loss.** There are other conditions which cause similar symptoms, so any loss of weight or increased frequency of vomiting (more than once every week or two) needs to be checked out thoroughly.

Foods to avoid: any tinned or sachet / pouch foods, supermarket Pet Mince beef or milk (including Cat Milk) fish especially tuna

OK to eat: turkey, kangaroo (pure), chicken (usually), pork, lamb (usually)

Going away over Xmas?

If you are even **THINKING** about going away over Christmas, **PLEASE** make your preliminary boarding booking **NOW!** All the catteries around Sydney, not just us at Cat's Pyjamas, are fully booked by the beginning of September each year!

Phone us at 9417 6613 ASAP!



If you want to receive these newsletters and other items of interest by email, please send your cat's name and your name in an email to catclinic@catclinic.com.au All seminar and other information goes out electronically first!

East Chatswood Cat Clinic Ph: 9417 6613

329 Penshurst St. Willoughby NSW 2068

EASY PARKING - REAR LANE W22 ACCESS OFF VICTORIA AVENUE AND OPEN 7 DAYS



Produced by Rayzor Sharpe Designs

Ph: 02 9869 3664 • Email: rayzor@bigpond.net.au • 7a Park St. Epping NSW
If you like the look of this Newsletter, then contact Ray and let him do it for you too!



Exclusively
for cats

329 Penshurst St.
Willoughby NSW
2068

The CAT Clinic Catalyst

East Chatswood Cat Clinic Ph: 9417 6613

July 2005

www.catclinic.com.au

DO YOU SUFFER from your CAT'S HALITOSIS? Does her cat breath bowl you over?

CATS NEITHER BRUSH THEIR TEETH NOR CHEW ON MICE EVERYDAY ANYMORE so it is not surprising that poor dental hygiene and bad breath are reaching epidemic proportions in our domesticated feline friends. The Really Interesting thing, though, is that feral cats in Kakadu also have dental tartar and bad teeth at about the same rate as pampered pussycats in the urban world! Come to think of it, before **PEOPLE** started **BRUSHING** their teeth in the 1920's (plus fluoride of course), most people expected their grannies to have no teeth! Some girls even had their teeth removed 'for their wedding' - presumably so they were 'low maintenance' for their new husbands!

Cat's teeth are a very different design to ours. Humans (and horses) grind their food, while carnivores like dogs and cats slice their meat straight from the bone. The pressures that the cutting molars ("carnassial teeth") can reach means that the products used to repair human teeth just pop off

cats' teeth, especially as feline teeth are much smaller and more brittle than ours. Human dentistry techniques have, however, been found to be very useful in horses, and many of the major stake winning horses now have full scale dental crowns and fillings done to improve their race performance - apparently they run much faster when their mouth is not sore!

Still, what this means for cats is that very little restorative dentistry has long term value, so **PREVENTION, as is often the case, IS THE CATCHCRY!**

There are three stages of tooth problems in cats, and they fairly neatly align with the age of the cat..

Young cats (< 1 YEAR) tend to have Gum Disease primarily, especially cats who come from colonies or catteries. The gum disease seems to be virus-initiated, but then perpetuated by bacteria which thrive in the 'pockets' formed in the gums by the viral damage. At some point, the teeth start to erode,

continued on page 2



news & views

THE DOG PRODUCT 'ADVANTIX' KILLS CATS

It has Permethrins in it which are fine for dogs, but make cats very ill. Advantix IS NOT THE SAME AS Advantage nor Advocate for cats.



Senior cats Mark your calendar

Kidney Health Check Week is on again! August 8th – 14th. Over the last couple of years, the Cat Clinic has found that 40% of felines over the age of 8 years have some type of Kidney Problem! Detecting it early could add years to your feline's life – book now for the \$99.00 Kidney Health Check – and save \$150 as well as Kidney function!

And for everyone else – FREE Dental Health Checks August 8th – 14th as well.



Phone 9417 6613 and **BOOK NOW!**

MEET THE NEW TEAM AT THE EAST CHATSWOOD CAT CLINIC

Astrid van der Pol - fresh from the Netherlands, with a veterinary nursing diploma and bubbling with enthusiasm! It will not be long before she has her own local feline resident, but currently is catless :-)

Kristin Sharrock comes to us from a retail and tele-marketing background, so her front desk skills are exceptional. We are teaching her the tricks of the Kitty Trade and she is soaking them up rapidly! She has a couple of furry feline Human Resource Managers at home to keep her on her toes.

Alana Howard comes to us from a New Zealand background. She is a fully trained veterinary nurse with a strong interest in cats - and especially their behaviour! Wise woman. She is being skilfully managed by her new (Aussie) cat!

Bronwyn Larcombe remains a mainstay of our week-end team. She is travelling currently but she loves to come and look after your cats here when she is in Sydney. Her life revolves around her two feline furrpersons.

Vetwise, you still have the choice of **Dr Kim**, (especially for Behaviour problems) and **Dr Barry Nielsen** with his acupuncture and other extra skills! The Cat Clinic also brings in the specialist skills of Dr Richard Malik to do Echocardiography (heart ultrasounds) and Dr Elaine Cebuliak can repair teeth and gums that we used to just give up on!

And a **BIG THANK YOU** to all of you who have completed surveys for the Cat Clinic: Dr Kim presented the results of the 2004 effort to much acclaim at the National Veterinary Conference on the Gold Coast last month. You can still help us with the 2005 version by emailing her at catclinic@catclinic.com.au It is all interesting stuff!

Do you suffer from your CAT'S HALITOSIS? cont.

and the lesions become painful. Early intervention, including DENTAL X-RAYS and possibly removal of the affected teeth, can halt the process, and certainly make your cat more comfortable. At the Cat Clinic we now enjoy the services of a veterinary Dentist - Dr Elaine Cebuliak - on a regular basis for restorative work if needed. There are also several new products which also help repair the teeth - especially a new barrier application called ORAVET. It gets applied after a full Dental Pruphylaxis (done under anaesthetic - cats just don't like water sprayed in their mouths!). Maintenance is then a weekly paint-on of the screening gel. This prevents plaque bacteria and probably viruses from irritating the gums, so improving the whole oral situation. If you have time to brush your cat's teeth everyday, then there is special tooth-paste to help you (and it does make a BIG difference).

Chicken wings, necks, chunky pieces of kangaroo or beef, and lamb hearts (raw, twice weekly) are also helpful, as is the Dental & Digest complete Diet from RC Waltham, or the old favourite T/D (=Tooth Diet) from Hills - 6 TO 12 pieces each day, chewed, (in place of some regular dried food) keeps the teeth polished very easily.

Once cats reach 3 - 4 years of age, periodontitis sets in for about 85% of cats (this does include the Kakadu cats). At this point, a scale and polish of the teeth under anaesthetic, followed by some form of maintenance

(Oravet, tooth brushing or T/D) will keep the remaining teeth healthy for a few more years. We always take the opportunity to check the kidneys as well. Many cats need their teeth attended to once or twice during the middle years. **Dental Pain** is much underdiagnosed, and we have seen many cats recover from things like Diabetes, general grumpiness and poor coats after their teeth are attended to!



OVER THE AGE OF 10 YEARS, however, it is the cat's metabolism and kidneys which become the main focus, and 'saving the teeth' becomes less critical. At this age, the bacteria in the plaque in the mouth are being filtered through the kidneys, causing lowgrade damage on their way out. This is now thought to be a major contributor to the high incidence of kidney failure in old cats. Additionally, any anaesthetic becomes a bigger risk as a drop in the blood pressure can lead to sudden renal failure and early death. Thus, any older cat needing dental work needs to have a general health check and possibly blood profile done, plus an I.V. drip during the procedure to maintain blood pressure. This

makes an anaesthetic a 'big deal', so if the owner is unable to maintain the teeth of an older cat (brushing is preferred), then we will probably recommend that more teeth come out than stay in, to avoid having to repeat the procedure every 6 - 12 months. The front teeth remain, so their face is the same, but as the bad breath and focus of infection is gone - we may be 'buying' an extra two years of 'kidney time' if we're lucky!

YES, CATS HAVE TEETH AND THEY DESERVE ATTENTION!!!

TRIVIA...

Did you know that fish isn't a "natural" food for cats? Cats origins are in the desert where you don't eat fish. The reason cats eat fish is that during World War II, meat was expensive, hard to get and carefully rationed. Leave it to the cats! Fish is still won't hunt for fish except for one cat breed in Indonesia called the Javanese Fishing cat.

Is your CAT having difficulties getting around?

There was a time when we believed that cats did not get arthritis, but really it was just that cats didn't used to live long enough to show signs of arthritis! With longevity comes joint troubles!

The main places that cats get arthritis is their elbows and their lower back.

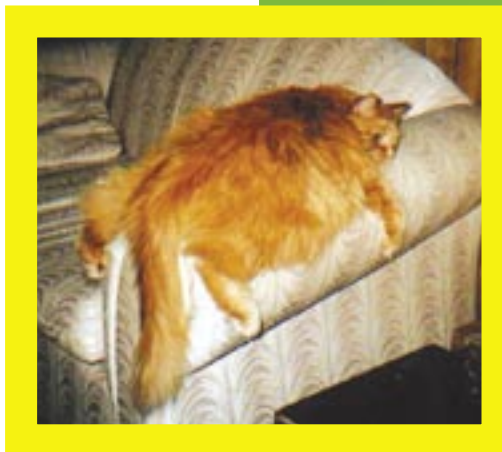
Jumping up less?

The main symptom of spinal arthritis is the cat will no longer easily jump up onto high places - they can get onto a bed but not onto a tall chest of drawers. They also are no longer flexible enough to get around to lick and groom the lower spinal area. This means that little 'tufty' knots start to form as the dead hair clumps because the cat can't reach back to remove it. The main symptom of elbow arthritis is the cat does not like to jump down from places, and is often slower going down the stairs.

Since it is often older cats who get arthritis, the symptoms seem just to be of a cat getting older and 'lazier'. Because they move around less, they also tend to put on weight as well.

Younger cats can 'slip a disc' in their spine and show similar symptoms, but more often will suddenly complain about their owners trying to touch their back.

In days gone by, there were no really good drugs to help cats with arthritis - aspirin, ibuprofen (Nurofen) and paracetamol kill cats by destroying their kidneys and liver. It was not until recently (5 - 8 years) that really good painkillers have become available for cats, and now it is possible



Sleeping more?

to see how much of a cat's 'laziness' is due to pain. Once on medication, many cats start to run around like kittens again, and start jumping up again, so it is nice to think we can relieve what used to be an 'invisible suffering'.

What are these NEW Medications that make her comfortable?

NSAIDS (same family as Ibuprofen but refined for cats) - Rimadyl and Metacam are the main ones, one comes as tablets and one as drops. Metacam, in particular, has made a huge difference to many cats, turning them from crabby old cats to comfortable elderly feline friends again. They can cause gastric irritation in some cats, but in general are safe and effective.

Polysaccharides - Cartrophen (Pentosan) injections which improve the lining of cartilage (and the bladder as well). This is useful for cats who will not take medications orally, and if it works, keeps the cat comfortable for 6 -

12 months. The cat usually has to have 4 injections, each a week apart.

Glycosamines - extracts of green lipped mussels, fish oil supplements, such as Benelox, and also Deer Velvet tablets are palatable and natural products that can be used in conjunction with the others and helps mend cartilage as well.

Prednisolone - cortisone in various forms. This used to be the only safe painkiller for cats. Its use for this function has declined since the other products are available. However, sometimes if the cat has several problems going on together, cortisone is powerful enough to modify arthritis as well as other conditions.

It used to be hard to know what a cat in pain looked like. Now that there are very effective medications to alleviate the pain, it is really nice to see the improvements it makes in a lot of cats' lives.



And another thought about Jumping

Since humans came down from the trees, we have ignored all the spare space up above our heads which cats would LOVE to own! And, significantly, it is thought that the lack of Climbing - with all the energy that that entails - is part of the Obesity Epidemic among our cats. Whoever saw a fat mountain climber eh? Chubby swimmers, even runners, but not the ones who go Up for Entertainment! While Dr Kim agrees there is no downside to being a Fat Cat (till they become Diabetic), a little aerial manoeuvring may bring untold benefits to your city-living feline cohabitant! So have a look and see what kind of interesting Cat Tree to the top of the bookshelves or cupboards you can create. Go on - you might as well give up aesthetics for feline satisfaction!

find too many fish, but more rodents and birds and insects. One supposition of why cats have become such happy fish to the cat food manufacturers to find a cheap source of protein. They started to use fish in cat food. In the wild, cats