

# Your Pet in the Top End

**Caring for pets living in the tropics requires special consideration - our extreme temperatures, humidity and rainfall creates the perfect breeding ground for nasty pests and diseases. Here are some hints and recommendations to help keep your pets healthy and safe in the Top End!**

## **Worming...**

We recommend monthly worming for all four intestinal worms (roundworm, whipworm, hookworm and tapeworm) all year round. Use a good quality all wormer like Drontal or Cazitel, to ensure you are covering all four intestinal worms, and weigh your pets regularly to make sure you are giving the correct dose. Feel free to come in and make use of our weigh scales!

## **Heartworm...**

Heartworm is prevalent in the Northern Territory, as it is transmitted by mosquitoes. If your dog is currently not on heartworm prevention, a quick blood test performed by your vet is required before starting. We stock a range of preventatives at University Avenue Vet Hospital, from monthly tablets and chews, to convenient yearly injections.

## **Leptospirosis...**

This organism is found in still waterways where your dog may swim. It is contracted by dogs coming into contact with urine from infected rats and mice, through drinking water or through open cuts. Leptospirosis is a nasty disease that is potentially fatal, but can be prevented by a vaccination course and yearly boosters. The NT strain is *Leptospira Australis* - interstate vets often vaccinate against a different strain, so be sure to arrange a vet consultation to have your dog's vaccinations updated when you arrive in Darwin.



## **Parvovirus...**

This virus occurs throughout Australia, and is rampant in the Top End, surviving in the soil for years and exacerbated by our warm, wet climate. To ensure your dog is protected against parvo, keep up to date with yearly vaccinations, and have new puppies vaccinated at 6-8 weeks, then 10-12 weeks, and 14-16 weeks of age. Remember, they will not be fully protected until two weeks after their third

vaccine, so please avoid taking your new puppy to public places such as parks and beaches. Ask our veterinary nurses about the best way to reduce the risks to your new puppy.

## Ticks & Fleas...

Ticks and fleas affect the Territory all year round, some months worse than others. While we do not experience the paralysis tick here, a heavy burden of bush or cattle ticks can make your dog extremely anaemic, and just one tick can transmit blood diseases like babesia and erlichia. University Avenue Vet Hospital offers a tick and flea hydrobath service, and we stock a variety of flea and tick medications to help keep your pets pest free in the Top End.



## Skin & Ear Conditions...

Damp and humid conditions in the NT mean that our pets suffer from ear and skin complaints more than our southern furry friends. Skin and ear irritations can be caused by allergens such as pollens, grasses and food. They can also be a result of allergic reactions to flea saliva, overgrowth of fungus and yeasts, bacterial infection, and microscopic creatures called mites. Damp coats and skin during the wet season, as well as the shape of their ear canal, predispose dogs to these conditions. Cleaning your dog's ears regularly, especially after swimming, can help prevent ear conditions, and if you notice any abnormalities with your pet's skin or ears, be sure to visit the vet - it doesn't take long for a minor problem to become a big one!

## Cane Toads...

For those newcomers to the Territory who are not familiar with cane toads, there are several first aid procedures you should know. When a dog or cat "mouths" or bites a cane toad, deadly toxins are released from glands on the back of the cane toad, which stick to the mucous membranes of the pet's mouth and tongue. This causes profuse salivation and can progress to seizure and death. The first step is to gently flush and wipe out the roof of the mouth, gums and tongue with water, being careful not to pour water down the throat, and get to your vet as soon as possible. These measures will significantly reduce the absorption rate and effects of the toxins. For advice on how to cane toad proof your yard, check out the website [www.canetoads.nt.gov.au](http://www.canetoads.nt.gov.au)



## Storms & Fireworks...

For noise-phobic dogs, the Territory can be a scary place to live. Territory Day (1st July) and New Year's Eve are celebrated with council-organised fireworks displays, and by locals putting on their own cracker displays in suburban parks, backyards and streets! The monsoon season brings amazing thunder and lightning storms, which can occur throughout the entire wet season. Please ensure your pet is contained (but not tied up) in a secure area to prevent your pet escaping during this stressful time. Prepare early and consult with your vet about measures you can take, and possible medications you can give, to help calm your pets in these stressful situations.



## Heat stress...

Our tropical climate, particularly the wet season, brings extreme temperatures with high humidity. If you are finding the weather oppressive, you can be sure that your furred friends are finding it just as tough! You can help them by providing good shade, plenty of fresh water, a wading pool to cool off in, and by restricting walks and exercise to the cooler parts of the day, such as dawn and dusk. Marlow Lagoon (Palmerston) and Casuarina Coastal Reserve are designated off-lead areas where dogs can exercise and swim. Symptoms of heat stress include excessive panting, red gums, staggering and collapse. If you suspect your dog is suffering from heat stress, cool him down with cold water, ice packs and wet towels in front of a fan or in air-conditioning, and give small amounts of water. Contact your vet immediately—heat stress is a life threatening condition!

### **AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCIES**

**0409 331 682**

The after-hours emergency service is shared between four clinics throughout Darwin.

- **University Avenue Vet Hospital**
- **Parap Vet Hospital**
- **All Pets Vet Hospital**
- **Litchfeild Vet Hospital**
- **Palmerston Vet Hospital**

Please be sure to ask which clinic you have been diverted to

**We hope these hints are helpful in keeping your pets healthy and pest free in the Top End. And above all, enjoy the Northern Territory and all it has to offer both you and your pets!**