

# THE KNOX BOX

What's new at the Knox Vet Clinic

## Spruce ups

The front section of the clinic is currently getting its makeover, aren't you excited to see how the new waiting room will look?

Please note for all appointments and visits we are asking clients to park around the back of the clinic on Henry Rd and call us so we can direct you when we are ready for you (as we currently do not have a waiting room).

As the weather cools and daylight savings time ends, us animal lovers should shift our focus to observing how our pets move, especially the older ones. Cats are subtle creatures and may just seem like they're sleeping more!



## Ask Dr. Knox



*Ever wondered why dogs chase their tails or if a product is worth it? Well now you can send in your most pressing questions! Feel free to engage your curious kids as well!*

### **Q: Why do cats go crazy at night?!**

A: Lots of cats and kittens have pent-up energy and need to routinely expel this with some zoomies. Sometimes they don't have enough to do during the daytime, and after sleeping all day, play time is when you come home! Just like ball throwing or walking a dog, playing with your cat is also essential for good health. Spend time on active play sessions engaging them in a 'hunt', then feed them dinner afterwards to meet their instinctual needs. Rotating toys to keep them exciting or offering a small meal before bed to make them sleepy may also help.

# FEATURE TOPIC:

## Desexing – why and when?

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Tag us @knoxvetclinic with a photo of your pet's postop to enter the draw!



Last time we had a feature on puppies and kittens. How about when they grow older? Australia has one of the highest proportions of pet ownership in the world and the majority of them are desexed. But do you know why it is done?

Veterinarians have always recommended desexing to reduce the risk of cancer associated with the reproductive organs (prostate, testicular, ovarian, mammary), and pyometra in females, an infection of the uterus which may result in severe sepsis, shock

and possibly death if missed or untreated. Behavioural benefits include reduced humping by male dogs, territorial urine marking or spraying, and restlessness during heat cycles by females. Reduced cost and negative welfare impact to the stray and shelter populations is also a plus. It is a good thing to adopt, not shop, but we can take things a step further by reducing the number of unwanted litters (or unplanned, because food and care cost more than you may think!).

There has been more discussion regarding the best time for desexing. The short answer is that there is no one size fits all. Research has recommended different desexing times for different breeds and genders. They evaluated the impact of desexing on the development of issues such as joint disease (e.g. cruciate or ACL tear, hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia), cancer or urinary incontinence.<sup>1</sup> Most breeds are unaffected, but vulnerability to desexing before 1 year of age was seen mostly in large breed dogs. However, it is hard to allocate complete blame to their desexing time, because these breeds are more predisposed to joint disease and particular cancers regardless. Have a discussion with our vets if you would like to understand more!



Cats are more straightforward regarding the age of desexing.

There has been no evidence of increased anaesthetic risk, behavioural or health issues with cats that were desexed early. Historically the standard has been 6 months of age, but puberty in female cats can be as early as 4 months old, so if they are at least 1kg they can be done. Early-age desexing may in fact be beneficial in terms of shorter healing times and earlier socialization.<sup>2</sup>

# Pets of the Month



This month we are featuring one of our special staff pets - Luna, a 6 year old Australian Cattle Dog cross. Luna is always a happy and active girl, slightly derpy but loves life on her owner's semi-rural property running around with the horses.

It is with this character that has possibly led to her scary accident last year, when she was kicked in the head by a horse! For people who have not been around horses much, horses can be quite skittish animals and you should never approach them from the back or do anything around their legs where they can kick you. Poor Luna had a wound on her forehead in between her eyes that bled a little, but no obvious changes to her behaviour after that so her owner half-jokingly said, "She'll be right".

Luckily she still decided to bring Luna in to get it checked out, because it had swelled up the next day and the wound turned out to be much deeper than expected, travelling down all the way to the front of her skull. Luna was a very lucky dog as the kick had missed both of her eyes and had not been severe enough to fracture her skull. It was also important that it was not left alone for days, as an infection would have likely set in and caused much more damage to the surrounding tissues and organs. The attached photo is a mild snapshot of what it actually looked like.

Luna had to undergo surgery to stitch up the wound, but she was a great little patient and recovered uneventfully from the procedure. Ideally some imaging of the head should have been done as well to make sure there were no other consequences, but we were happy to monitor Luna for the moment given how well it looked in surgery. In the days that followed the swelling from the inflammation gradually reduced and Luna, happy as Larry and not bothered by it, continued to go about her business.

These days, Luna is more careful around horses and is a little head shy, but continues to be a happy sweet and active girl in her paddocks!

