

# Peanut's Paws

## The Vet Clinic



### Lovely Lanky Luca Longlegs



Meet Luca, the beautiful (but silly) greyhound. Luca was rushed to the clinic one evening after being found to have fallen down a flight of concrete steps in his backyard. His Mum was understandably extremely worried as he seemed to be unable to stand up. Fearing the worst, she and some tradie mates brought him to the clinic comfortably sandwiched between two boards cleverly ratchet strapped together!

Dr Claire immediately assessed the situation and diagnosed Luca as being an overly dramatic and wimpy greyhound, albeit somewhat bruised and sore!

After some encouragement, Luca was able to stand with some support, though his front legs were very weak and he was unable to walk on his own. Despite this, Dr Claire was confident that Luca had only some temporary nerve damage, and would recover within a week or so.

Luca gradually improved over the following days, and is now back to normal and living his best life with his very relieved Mum!



### Nurse's Pick of the Pics

A wild emu presented to us by Barossa Wildlife Rescue



### Animal Fun Facts

Blue whales make the loudest sound of any animal!

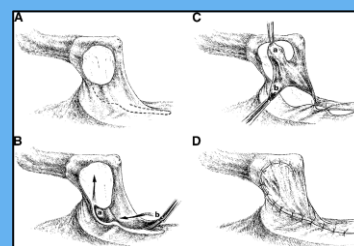


## NEWS

★ Dr Kate has recently returned from a super engaging and interesting orthopaedic workshop. She has been excited to share her new skills with the team, and we are keen to share them with you! We are looking into purchasing a range of state-of-the-art specialised equipment and surgical instruments so that we can offer a greater range of orthopaedic surgeries with Dr Kate. Watch this space!



★ Dr Claire has also just returned from a workshop, this one focusing on learning how to perform skin grafting, skin flaps, and the surgical repair of complex wounds. Dr Claire does enjoy the challenge of removing large and/or difficult tumours, and carefully closing the defect afterwards.



★ Nurse Courtney will shortly be back with us following her year of maternity leave. Welcome back Courtney!

★ Dr Veronica has left us for greener pastures, so you may be seeing some new faces over the coming months as we will have several locum vets to cover her absence. We wish her well in her new endeavours.

# DISEASE IN FOCUS

## Feline Idiopathic Cystitis

- **Feline Idiopathic Cystitis** (formally known as FLUTD) is a common condition affecting both male and female cats. Anatomical differences make it a far more serious condition in male cats
- In short, it is similar to cystitis in humans in that it involves inflammation of the bladder and urethra, leading to frequent and painful urination, difficulty urinating, blood in the urine, and general discomfort
- Whilst often referred to as a UTI (Urinary Tract Infection) it is important to understand that the two conditions while related, are NOT the same thing. The **vast majority of cats with FIC do NOT have an infection**, and thus antibiotics will be ineffective and are not indicated in most cases
- Instead, the inflammation and resulting pain has **many underlying causes**. Stress has been found to be a huge risk factor, as is obesity, genetics, diet, and boredom
- In most cases the bladder irritation itself is a direct result of the inflammatory effects of large numbers of microscopic mineral crystals within the urine. These crystals form a gritty sediment within the urine, which when combined with other inflammatory products such as blood and mucous, can form a 'plug' of material that may obstruct the flow of urine through the urethra, resulting in a **'blocked bladder'**
- In male cats the urethra is long and narrow, around 1.3mm in diameter and around 10-12cm in length. This makes it very prone to obstruction
- Whilst female cats can suffer from the same condition as males, it is very uncommon that they develop a urethral obstruction due to their short and wide urethras
- **A 'blocked bladder' is a medical emergency!** Sadly, male cats can die within 12 hours of becoming 'blocked'. While a catastrophic bladder rupture can occur, this is uncommon. The real concern is the build-up of toxins that would usually be eliminated in the urine. These include substances that can lead to organ damage and even sudden cardiac arrest
- **Prevention** is key for those cats who have already suffered from an episode of FIC. The best strategies are weight reduction, stress reduction, and the feeding of a specialised prescription diet to help prevent the formation of urinary crystals
- If you see your cat with the following signs, contact The Vet Clinic or an ER **without delay, especially** if your cat is male!
  - Straining to urinate
  - Crying in the litter tray
  - Multiple small urinations, especially with blood
  - Frequent urination
  - Urinating in unusual places
  - Painful and/or firm abdomen



# The Back Side (aka Peanut's Pants)

## What's the deal with buying pet medications online? (And why is the price so different?)

- All prescription medications in Australia be they human or animal, are controlled by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA). In turn, the Veterinary Surgeon's Board (VSB) of each state oversees the supply and dispensing of these medications to animal owners
- Veterinary clinics and Veterinarians as individuals must pay annual fees in order to practice and to continue to dispense medications, as well as paying for professional indemnity and other insurances
- Veterinary clinics must charge a prescription fee for the time and knowledge it takes for the Vet to decide (or sometimes even research) a medication plan, dosage, formulation, physically type up the script, print it and sign it as a legal document. The prescription fee also includes the overheads of printers and stationery, and takes into account professional fees paid by the practice in order to hold prescribing rights
- Human medical practices also charge script fees but they are incorporated into the cost of the visit AND these fees are heavily subsidised by the government
- It can often take some time for Vets to research the specifics of a human medication for an animal. Different strengths, formulations and additives mean that not all human products are safe for animals, even if the active ingredient is the same drug
- Human pharmacists are of course NOT knowledgeable in veterinary medicine, and it is not uncommon for them to unknowingly dispense products that are actually harmful to pets, even when provided with a clear & specific script
- Many human medications are subsidised through the PBS, even when prescribed for animals. Veterinary clinics and medicines have no such subsidy
- Many human medications have a generic alternative; this is often not the case for veterinary medicines
- The research that goes into the development and production of human medications is vast, with many billions of dollars of funding and support. Veterinary medications on the other hand have comparably little R&D, and therefore costs per unit are higher
- Online pharmacies have very few overheads. They will generally have a warehouse and a small office, with no brick and mortar storefront or staff to maintain
- Online pharmacies are not regulated, and even veterinary dedicated pharmacies are not required to have a vet on staff, therefore, there is a general lack of understanding of what can and should be available for purchase online. Unfortunately, there are many medications easily available through online pharmacies that are legally labelled for supply to veterinary surgeons or clinics \*only\*, and have a great potential for harm if used by owners without veterinary advice and prescription
- Online pharmacies can afford to keep a vast range of medications in their warehouse without worrying that it will not sell. Clinics must also stock a wide range of medications, including some on the off chance they may be needed at short notice. For these kinds of medications, it is not uncommon for them to expire before they are used, which results in an unrecovered cost
- Online pharmacies legally require the original physical paper script signed in ink by the prescribing vet, meaning Veterinary clinics must print and mail a script to the pharmacy as well as providing a copy to the pet owner
- The least complicated explanation however, is simple economies of scale. Larger company chains such as Chemist Warehouse, and many online pharmacies naturally have greater buying power and may order and stock 100,000 bottles of a particular item, whereas your local clinic may only order 3!
- Buying in bulk also means that an order is often able to be placed directly with the manufacturer, cutting out the middle-man (wholesaler), which saves significantly on costs. Substantial discounts or price deals/negotiations are also available to these companies when ordering in bulk; these opportunities are generally not available when buying from veterinary wholesalers