

February is Heart Month

In keeping with the Valentine's Day theme, we have dedicated the month of February to all things relating to the heart. More specifically, informing you about cardiac disease and heart failure, the signs to look out for and what can be done if signs are detected to ensure your dog or cat continues to lead a long symptom-free life.

For the month of February we are offering a comprehensive

Heart Consultation Package for \$150 (normally \$300) which includes full examination and consultation, full blood test, urine examination and blood pressure evaluation.

Take particular notice of the signs of heart disease below and if you have noticed even just one of these signs in your pet, please book in for a Heart Consultation today.



New Opening Hours:

- From Sunday 13th of January we are now open Sundays.
- Hours of operation:
 - Monday–Friday: 8am-6:30pm
 - Saturday: 9am-4pm
 - Sunday: 10am-2pm

Car Parking On-site:

- Just off Williamson Ave
- Dedicated for our clients only
- No need to try to find street parking.

Understanding Heart Failure

There are two principal causes of heart failure in dogs:

1. Mitral valve disease (MVD)
2. Dilated Cardiomyopathy

Mitral valve disease (MVD) is the most common form of heart disease in dogs. It generally occurs in small to medium sized dogs rather than big dogs. There seems to be a genetic predisposition in some breeds especially **Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Poodle, Schnauzer, Chihuahua, Fox Terrier and Boston terrier.**

MVD is a disease affecting the surface of the heart valve. A normal valve is smooth and forms a perfect seal when closed. MVD causes the edges to become thickened, lumpy and distorted. The seal is now imperfect and when the heart pumps, some of the blood flows backwards. This leaking of blood creates a noise

(called a murmur) that your veterinary surgeon can hear with a stethoscope. Because the heart valves are now leaky, circulation is impaired. For a time your dog's body may make adjustments to allow it to cope. In fact some dogs manage with a murmur for many years.

Dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) is a disease of the heart muscle. DCM is more common in large breeds especially **Doberman, Cocker and Springer Spaniels, Boxer, Irish Setters, German Shepherds, Great Danes, St Bernard and Irish Wolfhounds.** In DCM the heart fails to pump effectively and the heart stretches and enlarges.

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) is the most common acquired heart disease in cats. Like DCM it is a primary heart muscle dis-

ease, however the heart wall becomes thickened (rather than an enlarged sac as seen in DCM).

What are the signs of heart disease?

Signs of heart disease can initially be quiet mild and so may be difficult to pick up. However, as the disease progresses the symptoms can become more severe. These signs occur because of fluid build up or because the vital organs are not supplied with enough blood and hence oxygen.

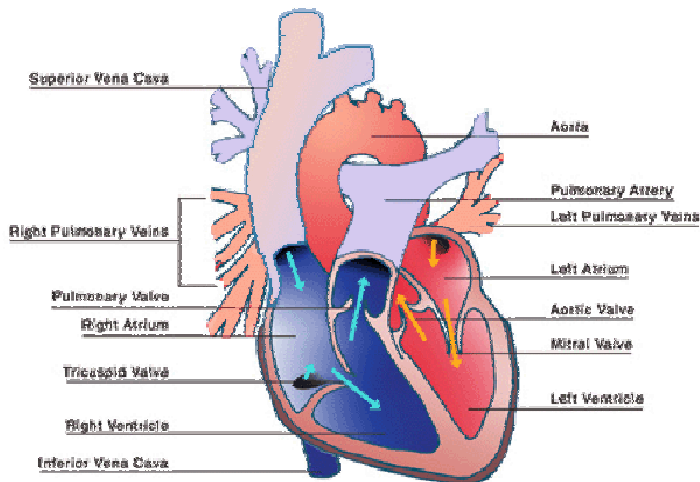
Signs include:

- Lack of energy/ depression
- Poor appetite
- Weight loss
- Laboured breathing
- Coughing
- Weakness
- Fainting
- Swollen abdomen
- Less interest in exercise
- Drinking more water

Inside this issue:

| | |
|---|------|
| February is Heart Month | 1 |
| Understanding Heart Failure | 1, 2 |
| Introducing two new members of the team | 2 |

Understanding Heart Failure (cont).



How is heart disease diagnosed?

Regular veterinary visits are very important for early detection of heart disease and to monitor treatment of a dog or cat with heart disease. A thorough physical examination will provide clues any heart-related problems.

Radiographs (x-ray) will detect fluid on the lungs and increases in heart size that might be present.

Electrocardiograms (ECGs) can record the electrical activity of the heart and can be used to diagnose rhythm problems.

Lastly *Electrocardiogram* (heart ultrasound) examines the heart's walls, chambers, valves and blood vessels in three dimensions. A referral to an internist is required for this procedure.

Introducing two new members to the team

Roanne joined the team in November 2007. She has come to us from a clinic on the North Shore where she has worked as a veterinary nurse for 2 years. She is finding vet nursing a rewarding career change after many years working as a graphic artist and three year studying fine art. Volunteering at the SPCA inspired Roanne to commence a full-time career working with animals and in 2007 he completed a Certificate of Veterinary Nursing through Otago Polytechnic.

Roanne s crazy about cats and lives locally with her partner Brett and their three rescue cat. She is thrilled to be able to live and work in Ponsonby's vibrant community and excited to be part of the Ponsonby Veterinary Center's progressive team.

Kelly joined the team in August 2007 from the UK. She received her nursing qualification in 2000 at the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Nursing course, London. She then worked in a specialist practice for 6 years in Stockport in the north of England before moving to London. For the following two years, Kelly worked with current practice owner, Gareth Dunkerley in private practice in London, before becoming head nurse at a 24-hour emergency clinic.

Kelly is the head nurse at the Ponsonby Veterinary Centre and her special interest is critical care medicine and orthopaedic surgery. When not working, Kelly enjoys many outdoor pursuits including indoor rock climbing, surfing and generally keeping fit.



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The Christmas Hamper Photo Competition was drawn on January 25th and the winner is Emma Rogers and a photo of her cat "Zap".