

Cassie Hoffman

Hi! My name is Cassie and I was born and bred in Albury. I was brought up as a bit of a "tom boy" with my family travelling far and wide racing Go-karts. I gave the boys a run for their money and was always getting into mischief with my older brother Tyson.

I have always had a passion for animals from the influence of my beautiful mother Jeanette, growing up with anything from dogs and cats to turtles and rabbits – I knew that I always wanted to work in the animal industry.

After gaining 18 months experience at another clinic, I have found myself working with the wonderful staff at Family Vet Centre this year and I couldn't be happier. They are supporting me with my study of Certificate IV in Veterinary nursing and I am half-way to completion. My future goal is to further my study and one day work with tigers at a zoo.

I have two gorgeous men in my life (four-legged of course). "Bot" and "Nahla" are my beautiful two Russian Blues and are very much like my children. I could not

imagine coming home without them there after a hard day at work.

I am looking forward to many more years here with the Family Vet Centre family and meeting you all and your furry little friends.



Cassie

HEAT STRESS with Dr. Raquel Stoll

Now that the heat of summer has sprung upon us it is very important to keep our pets cool. Dogs and cats do not have the ability to sweat through their skin as we do, they release heat through panting and sweat through their foot pads and nose which limits how efficiently they can cool down. Dogs that are overweight and brachicephalic dogs (dogs with short noses) i.e. bulldogs, pugs and boxers are much more prone to heat stroke due to the smaller size of their nostrils & airways. Heat stroke can be fatal and prevention is the key.

The signs to look out for

- excessive laboured panting which may lead to an inability to breath
- drooling excessively
- dark red gums which may progress to blue gums
- disorientation
- collapse
- unwillingness to get up

Heat stroke can progress to heart failure, kidney and liver damage/failure, muscle breakdown, respiratory arrest, seizures, coma and death if left untreated.

What you can do

1. Remove from heat
2. Cool down by applying wet cool towels (not ice cold) and a fan
3. Contact the Vet as they will often require intensive treatment which will include being put on a drip.

Enjoy the summer!!

Prevention

- Ensure your animal is not overweight
- NEVER leave your animal in a car, especially in the hot sun
- Avoid exercise in the warmest part of the day and decrease the amount of exercise in hotter weather
- Take water with you when you are going on a walk or travelling in warmer weather
- Always ensure your animal has plenty of water and shade
- Do not leave your animal in a hot house, if you would have the fan or air conditioner on then you should leave it on for your animal.
- Clip your animal during the hotter months if they are overweight, have a long thick coat or suffer from heat stress
- A kiddies pool is often a great way for a dog to cool down
- Frozen ice cubes or water with a small amount of stock for your animals to lick



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FAMILY VET CENTRE

A happy arrangement: many people prefer cats to other people, and many cats prefer people to other cats. ~ Mason Cooley



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Welcome...

Time just gets away from you doesn't it? John, who used to do some fencing on the family farm called in the other day. Dad thought it was a good ten years ago that John worked for him. It wasn't until we pulled out a few old diaries that we realised it was more like the early 90's - a good twenty years ago now.

And in the same way 2012 is about to be packed away on the shelf. It's a bit hard to believe that the clinic on Thomas Mitchell Drive has been open 4 years, that it has been 5 years since John retired, and almost 10 years since I first returned to Albury to start at Family Vet.

So what news from Family Vet? Bec has returned to nursing following the birth of Olive last year. Naomi & her husband Brendan celebrated the birth of Sage, a sister for Sienna, and Nicole and her husband Brad with older brother Lucas have welcomed daughter Imogen. Both Nicole and Naomi have also returned to nursing and it is great to have them back on board. Meanwhile Lauren is currently on leave after welcoming with Edie into the world with her husband Darryl as a little sister for Fletch.

We celebrated Raquel's engagement earlier this year and wish Raquel & fiancé Brett all the best for their wedding to be celebrated in February. Sammy V is now Sammy T after marrying Liam in Spring. Wow, what a list!



Xavier and Seamus

To cap things off Tabitha and I have our hands full with Seamus, a little brother for Xavier who joined us in May. Xavier is generally quite pleased to have a little brother, although no doubt will enjoy the idea more when he can take his brother around the farm. Xavier himself grows each day - at the moment he is a big fan of blue ice cream when we're on Dean St, and will let Mia the cat into the house and then walk behind her asking how did kitty-puss

get inside. Mia is very tolerant, although it would be fair to say that she is a little wary of mischievous toddlers!

Meanwhile back at the ranch! Life at the clinic has been busy. It has been a particularly bad time for snakes, perhaps the most number of snake-bite cases here on the Border for a number of years. And then as we head into Summer there are all the usual suspects to take caution with - heat-stroke, grass-seeds, parvovirus - 'tis the season.

Earlier this year we conducted a survey and it was wonderful to receive positive responses that affirmed our work. There were several key ideas for us to focus on. One significant suggestion was to update our website, and I'm excited to announce that as this goes to print, so too will our new website come online. With staff profiles, information on our services and a photo tour of the clinics and boarding I hope you have the opportunity to take a look - www.familyvet.com.au (or better still use the QR code on the back page!). Whilst online don't forget to look us up on Facebook.

Other suggestions from the survey include some practical changes such as hitching rails at the kennels, but also for us to work to reduce waiting times. We are always interested in knowing what you believe we can improve on - feel welcome to contact Peter or myself if you would like to provide any feedback.

The photo you see below is Buster, who received chemotherapy over 12 months ago. Buster's mum Jenny sent me this photo and it is absolutely wonderful to see him enjoying life to the full. As a vet, that means so much to see such a photo!

I hope you and your family have a safe and enjoyable Christmas. Wishing you all the best for 2013 and and we look forward to seeing you on your next visit to the clinic.

Until next time,
Cheers,



Buster Hindle, 6 months after treatment

Justin



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FAMILY VET CENTRE
BOARDING

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- We seek to grow relationships with families that enhance their pets' lives through professional, quality and caring health-care.
- We seek to be the voice for all pets.

Your family Vet



Snake Season

We experienced a truly "Silly Snake season" this past spring. It is well known that snakes are particularly potent in the beginning of the season following hibernation. What made this spring worse was the sheer numbers of snake bite cases presented to our practices. The most common types of snake envenomations were due to Browns and Red Bellied Blacks. Signs that could be associated with an envenomation include collapse, vomiting, salivation, urination, defecation, trembling, dilated pupils, muscle weakness or paralysis and respiratory distress. This could sometimes be followed by a temporary recovery.

On arrival at the practice a suspected snake bite victim could be monitored or a blood clotting test could be performed. Other tests could include a snake venom detection test or a blood test for muscle damage.

Some patients may not have been bitten or may have received a "dry bite". In patients presenting with clinical signs we mostly recommend intensive therapy including antivenom, oxygen therapy, intravenous fluids, and pain relief amongst others.

We have had quite a few clients commenting on positive experiences with the use of snake repellents. Common sense would also dictate in keeping the yard clean and to walk your dogs on a lead and to have "snake savvy pets"!

Wildlife at Family Vet Centre

Family Vet Centre works closely with Riverina WIRES and several wildlife shelters to help look after the local wildlife. We see on average a minimum of 3 wildlife cases a week for which we provide free consultation. It is not uncommon for a kangaroo joey to be sitting in a 'pouch' in hospital on IV fluids for diarrhoea, or for an electrocuted possum or baby bird to be sitting in our humidicrib.

In recent times we have pinned a fracture on the broken leg of a juvenile Boobook Owl, helped nurse a Sea Eagle with a spinal injury which was then released and are planning to reconstruct a non-healing wound on a Squirrel Glider- although we are letting her finish raising her twin joeys first!



Dr Nadine & local Wildlife carer Hazel with a Squirrel Glider



"Koala Lou"

Earlier this year we were fortunate to be entrusted with the welfare of a young female koala and her little male pouch young after they were hit by a car. 'Koala Lou' had a general anaesthetic for a full examination and x-rays which revealed ligament damage in her left knee and a broken facial bone with an overlying open wound. She was placed on pain relief and antibiotics. Her joey escaped with a grazed bottom. The pair are now living permanently at Western Plains Zoo in Dubbo as 'Lou' cannot be released with her knee injury. We hope they both make a full recovery.

Our vets and nurses enjoy the challenge of wild life work and gain great personal satisfaction with a sense of 'giving something back'. The Border is so fortunate to have amazing wildlife carers who give so much of their time to helping our furry and feathered natives.

Glaucoma

It shouldn't be a surprise, but a lot of conditions that we hear about in humans also affect our pets. For instance, did you know that glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness in dogs?

Glaucoma is caused by an increased fluid pressure within the eye (increased intra-ocular pressure). The fluid inside the eye is known as the humour. As there is no blood vessels to the cornea or lens of the eye, it is the role of the humour to supply these structures with oxygen and nutrients. This fluid is produced by cells within the eye and the fluid drains out of the eyeball where the cornea meets the iris.

With glaucoma the intra-ocular fluid does not drain correctly leading to a build up of fluid. High intra-ocular pressure leads to damage to the retina leading to blindness. Not only leading to blindness, glaucoma can be quite painful. Diagnosis and early treatment of glaucoma is imperative to saving vision and minimizing pain.

It is important to recognize glaucoma as early as possible. Signs include eye pain – this may be characterized by loss of appetite, or pawing at the eye, a dilated pupil, cloudiness within the eye, a blood-shot eye or loss of vision. Breeds that are predisposed to glaucoma include Blue Heelers, Corgis, Dalmatians, Great Danes, Labradors, Poodles, Spaniels and West Highland White Terriers.

The goals of treatment of glaucoma are to reduce the intraocular pressure, reduce the amount of humour being produced and to increase the drainage. There are several different medications that help decrease fluid production and to increase fluid drainage from the eye.

Each clinic at Family Vet Centre now has a digital tonometer which helps accurately measure intra-ocular pressure. Feel welcome to ask about having your pet's eyes checked at their next health check.

Ghost and the Piece of Rope

Ghost is a 4 year old, cheeky and energetic cockatiel who loves playing with his toys in his cage, flying around the house... and smooching his best friend Doofus the budgie! Ghost is a very lucky bird and is feeling so well today due to the careful observations of Jacqui his owner.

Jacqui noticed several days before bringing Ghost into the clinic that her chatty cockatiel had become much more quiet, and she had seen him regurgitating (bringing up) fluid.

On examination Ghost was found to be very underweight and had a firm object palpable in his crop- the food storage organ in his neck. Ghost was rehydrated and given nutritional supplements to prepare him for surgery the following day. Under anaesthetic an incision was made into the crop and a 5cm piece of cotton clumped together was removed. Ghost made a speedy recovery and put 15 grams of weight back on in 2 weeks- which is a lot considering the average cockatiel weighs 80 to 120 grams!

The cotton that was blocking Ghost's digestive system was from a rope ladder that he loved to play with. Jacqui has since removed all cotton rope toys from the cage to ensure Ghost cannot eat it again.

Safer toys for Australian native birds like cockatiels and budgies include branches of native trees such as bottle brush for them to tear leaves and flowers from, clumps of grass from the lawn to forage through like wild birds, thistles, fruit and vegetables hidden to challenge your bird ie twisted inside some brown paper bag and hard

acrylic or wooden toys (thrown out at first sign of damage).

Try to avoid toys with small weak metal chains that may be broken and eaten, or with links that toes or feet could be caught in, rope/cotton toys and weak plastic toys that can have pieces broken off and ingested. Most of all your bird will love spending time with you, being talked and whistled to, being trained to talk and perform tricks, and exercised out of the cage under supervision.



Ghost, Doofus and their owner Jacqui



A First For Border Veterinarians

Recently Rolf, a 3 year-old German Shepherd crippled by osteoarthritis had stem cells implanted into his knee joints. The procedure went well and we eagerly anticipate his improvement.

Rolf has a congenital condition in his stifle joints (knees) known as osteochondrosis where pieces of defective bone and cartilage loosen and can float off into the joint. Rolf had a surgery as a young puppy to 'clean up' his joints with arthroscopy at a Melbourne specialist surgery. Unfortunately he still suffers from a progressive degenerative joint disease which has resulted in severe osteoarthritis of his stifles.

Prior to the stem cell injections Rolf had received numerous conventional and natural therapies but still found it hard to rise from

sitting, could not go for long walks and became sore after bouts of jumping or other vigorous activity. Not much of a fun life for a 3 year old!

His owners were keen to try stem cell therapy although it is still a developing treatment modality. Research has showed that with intra-articular (joint) injection, 96% of dogs with osteoarthritis respond with 60% of those showing significant improvement. 79% of dogs show improvement with intravenous injection.

The stem cells are derived from adult canine fat tissue in a Monash University laboratory. Depending on the environment the cells are placed into they can respond by developing into cartilage, bone, ligament, vascular or tendon cells to help repair the surrounding

tissues. The cells also release 'trophic' factors, which communicate to other cells that it is time to become active and start healing.

Rolf will have repeat injections and the hope is for long-term improvement in his pain levels and mobility, and a reduction in his reliance on other medications. We wish Rolf and his owners all the best of luck!



Rolf?