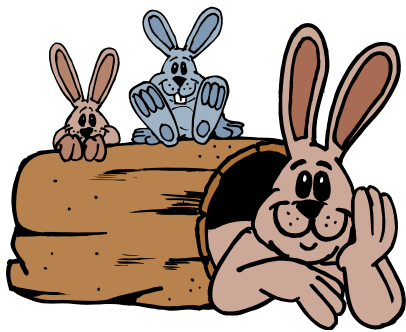




Welcome to our February Newsletter,

We trust you had a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Due to the damp and humid conditions there are an abundance of mosquitoes. In this newsletter we have touched on a few of the problems they can cause.



## RABBITS –

**Myxomatosis** is a virus that is spread primarily through insect bites ( mosquitoes, flies, fur mites and fleas )

Signs and symptoms are oedema around base of ears, conjunctivitis, nasal discharge, lethargy, anorexia and high fever, death occurs within 2 weeks.

There is no effective treatment or vaccine against myxomatosis, and supportive care is generally unsuccessful.

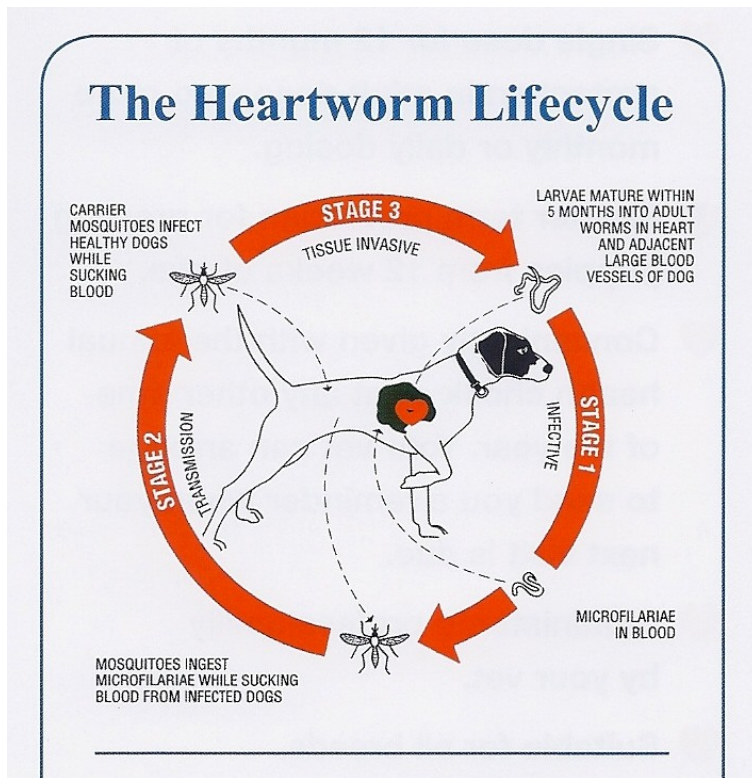
**Calicivirus** is spread by saliva and nasal secretions. Transmission can occur by direct contact, but the main mode of transmission is via mosquitoes, insects and birds.

Signs and symptoms are fever, depression, anorexia, respiratory signs and convulsions. Incubation is 16 hours to 3 days, and the disease is usually hyper acute, with rabbits found dead with blood stained fluid at the nose and mouth.

Control is by vaccination, given from 10 weeks of age with annual boosters.

### Helpful Hints

- Outside hutches need a solid, sloping roof to protect from the elements and should be placed in a sheltered part of the garden. Wire mesh on the sides and top will help protect from mosquitoes.
- Male rabbits shouldn't be housed together as they will fight.
- Rabbits live for up to 10 years
- Rabbits eat pellets, hay and chopped vegetables like carrots, spinach, sweet potatoes and apples.



## Heartworm Disease

Heartworm disease is spread by mosquitoes and has the potential to cause heart failure and death. Your pet does not have to be in contact with other dogs to develop this disease.

More than 65% of the dog population in Australia lives in high heartworm expectancy areas.

It may only take a single bite from a carrier mosquito to infect your dog. The parasite larvae

move through the tissue beneath the skin. These larvae then migrate to the heart and adjacent blood vessels of the lungs where they grow into adult worms. Infection can occur at any age.

In the early stages of heartworm infection, there may be no outward signs of the disease or they may exhibit minimal signs such as occasional coughing, or exercise intolerance.

Heartworm can be prevented by either a once a year injection administered by our veterinarians. Simply arrange to treat your dog as part of the annual health check, or a year round, monthly dose of Revolution.

Revolution also protects your pet against fleas, mange, ear mites and the majority of gastrointestinal worms when used on a regular monthly basis.

## Take advantage of our Revolution Rewards programme:

When 12 months of Revolution has been purchased, bring your validated rewards card to the clinic and receive a 3 pack of Revolution **FREE**

## Gastrointestinal Worms

Because intestinal worms are out of sight most people forget to worm their pets on a regular basis – as a result 80% of dogs and 75% of cats carry intestinal worms. Some worms can lay up to 30,000 eggs per day and some eggs can survive on the ground for up to five years. A recent survey found 60% of owners were unaware that worms could be transferred from their pet to themselves or their children.

Children can pick up worms simply by lying on contaminated ground.

Dog worms in humans can cause a range of health problems not the least are hydatid cysts or unilateral blindness in children. Around 20 cases are reported in Australia each year.

### **Recommendations:**

- ❖ Worm your adult pet every 3 months with a reputable allwormer, use the change of seasons as a reminder. ( puppies and kittens need more regular worming, depending on age) our staff can help you with relevant information.
- ❖ Keep your backyard free of droppings
- ❖ Always wash your hands after playing with pets and encourage children to practice this routine.
- ❖ Don't wait for your pet to show signs of illness before you take action – worms can be life threatening.



## YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

We are often asked the question “what should I be feeding my pet?” and with so many choices, the decision can be overwhelming. Dried food, tinned food, pre prepared pet meat, vegan diets and bones; the list is endless. Many people like to cook for their pets and while this is not entirely a no no, it is difficult to get the balance just right to ensure good health. Check with us before you embark on a Masterchef extravaganza so we can give you some guidance.

Feeding a **balanced** or a **complete** commercial diet recommended by veterinarians is a great option. These premium foods are highly digestible which means your pet produces less waste. Due to their high quality ingredients and excellent quality control your pet will also benefit in the following ways:

- ❖ Optimal health and wellness
- ❖ Great coat quality
- ❖ Reduced chance of an upset tummy
- ❖ Maintenance of healthy weight

Pets need different diets at different stage of their lives or with different diseases. Puppies and kittens have different requirements to an adult dog or cat, and pets with diabetes or allergies sometimes require a specific diet.

### **Feeding tips and tricks**

1. Keep human food and table scraps off the menu
2. Introduce a new diet over 5-7 days, gradually increasing the percentage of the new food to prevent any tummy upsets.
3. To control calories measure out the quantity required, don't just top up the bowl
4. Raw bones are great for your pet's teeth and they act as a natural toothbrush BUT always feed them under supervision and don't leave them lying around as they attract bees. Try raw chicken necks for cats and raw lamb necks for dogs.
5. Cats prefer to be fed ad lib but be careful not to overfeed.
6. We do not recommend feeding vegan diets. These are not suitable for either cats or dogs.

**Cheers from the team at Bannockburn Veterinary Clinic**

