

~ July 1, 2011 ~

## Welcome to our July Newsletter.

We have a new face at the clinic. Dr. Leanne Betteridge has joined the team. She has come to us from New Zealand.

Leanne graduated from Murdoch University in Western Australia.

Our new website is up and running and we have received great feedback.

Visit the site:

<http://bannockburnveterinarycliniccreatesend1.com/t/r/1/jkthykt/l/1/>

## Ratsak Poisonings

We are still seeing animals with ratsak poisoning. The danger to pets and wildlife comes from either primary poisoning or from secondary poisoning.

**Primary Poisoning** is caused when a pet eats the rat bait directly. The most common way this occurs is when a pet gets into a container of baits that has been incorrectly stored.

**Secondary Poisoning** is different. It occurs when an animal eats a poisoned rat. The residue of bait in the rat's stomach is the cause of the toxicity. Often this occurs when an affected rat, perhaps slower and more lethargic than a normal one and thereby less able to defend itself, falls victim to a dog or cat or to a bird of prey.

**Signs** - If a pet is affected by an anticoagulant poison, the sign of the toxicity may not be evident for several days. The main signs of such toxicity relate to anaemia from blood loss. The blood can be lost from many areas of the body but commonly it is seen in bloodstained faeces, blood appearing in the saliva or appearing from the nose. Breathlessness, from blood pooling in the chest cavity, is another common sign. Weakness is very common and the gums and tongue are usually very pale due to blood loss and the resultant anaemia.

Our veterinarians will treat your pet with Vitamin K and other medications and if the condition is caught early enough, treatment is usually effective.



## Bloat

Bloat is a very serious health risk for many dogs, yet many owners know very little about it. It is frequently reported that deep-chested dogs, such as German Shepherd, Great Danes, and Doberman are particularly at risk.

The technical name for bloat is "Gastric Dilation-Volvulus" (GDV). Bloating of the stomach is often related to swallowed air, although food and fluid can also be present. It usually happens when there's an abnormal accumulation of air, fluid and/or foam in the stomach (gastric dilation). Stress can be a significant contributing factor also. Bloat can occur with or without "volvulus" (twisting). As the stomach swells, it may rotate 90 to 360 degrees, twisting between its fixed attachments at the oesophagus (food tube) and at the duodenum (the upper intestine). The twisting stomach traps air, food, and water in the stomach.

The bloated stomach obstructs veins in the abdomen, leading to low blood pressure, shock, and damage to internal organs. The combined effects can quickly kill a dog.

### Symptoms

Typical symptoms often include some of the following:

- Attempts to vomit, usually unsuccessful
- Significant anxiety and restlessness
- Hunched up appearance
- Bloated abdomen that may feel tight like a drum
- Heavy salivating or drooling
- Pacing
- Heavy or rapid panting
- Pale or abnormal gum colour

### Causes

- Build and physical characteristics
- Rapid eating
- Drinking too much water too quickly (can cause gulping air)
- Exercise before and **especially** after eating

### Prevention

- Do not exercise for at least an hour (longer if possible) before and especially after eating.
- Do not permit rapid eating
- Make meals a peaceful, stress free time
- Feed 2 or 3 small meals daily, instead of just one.
- Reduce the amount of dry feed.



