

High Blood Pressure



High blood pressure (hypertension) is something that most people associate with humans. It is also described as 'the silent killer' as often high blood pressure may be present for a long time without any symptoms, and the problem may only be discovered when a doctor or veterinarian check the blood pressure.

The most common causes of high blood pressure in animals are hyperthyroidism, Cushings disease, kidney disease and adrenal

gland tumours.

Effects of High Blood Pressure

Eyes:

Swelling and bleeding into the eyes can result in blindness. Detachment of the retina can also occur and cause blindness.

Kidneys:

The kidneys act as a filter to rid the body of waste. Over time, high blood pressure can narrow and thicken the blood vessels of the kidneys. The kidneys filter less fluid, and waste builds up in the blood. The kidneys may fail altogether.

Arteries:

Over time, the arteries may harden, this, in turn, causes the heart and kidneys to work harder.

Brain:

High pressure can cause a break in a weakened blood vessel, which bleeds in the brain. This can cause seizures, stroke or coma. If a blood clot blocks one of the narrowed arteries, it can also cause a stroke.

Heart:

The heart has to pump harder and over time this can cause the heart muscle to become enlarged and thickening of the left ventricle, and increase the risks of developing congestive heart failure.

How to test for blood pressure?

An inflatable cuff is placed on the front leg, similar to that used on humans. In humans a stethoscope is also used, this isn't possible in animals and a doppler or oscillometric device is used instead. Our veterinarians will also do a complete physical examination to determine how much damage has been done to organs as a result of this condition.

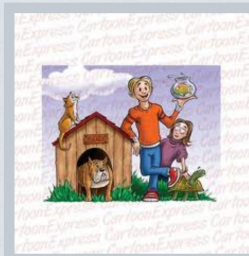
How is high blood pressure treated?

Identifying and controlling the underlying disease which is causing high blood pressure such as hyperthyroidism or kidney disease.

Medication which helps reduce blood pressure, these are usually calcium channel blockers, beta blocks, ACE inhibitors and diuretics. Medications won't cure high blood pressure, but will assist in controlling it.

Our veterinarians may also recommend a low sodium diet.
Our veterinarians will also monitor your pets blood pressure regularly.

Children and Safety with Pets



Growing up with a pet can be a wonderful experience for children. A pet will provide hours of fun and entertainment as well as an opportunity for children to learn to love.

By far the majority of family pets are dogs and cats. Some other pets include rabbits, guinea pigs, fish, birds, horses and reptiles. Whether the animal is big or small has fur, gills or scales, the best way for children to learn how to properly care for it is by following the right example.

Children do not always appreciate that animals do not follow 'human rules' of

behaviour, therefore the more you understand animal behaviour and habits, the better you can model the correct ways to care for your pet.

Most children who are injured as a result of dog bites are under the age of five years. Whilst some dog bites occur in public places the majority of children injured by dogs are bitten by their own dog or another familiar dog in someone's home. It is important to remember that all dogs irrespective of breed can bite.

Health risk to children:

Bites and scratches from cats and small mammals, e.g. rabbits, guinea pigs, rodents.
Handling of birds, particularly those from the parrot family.
Children eating dirt that contains animal faeces.

Although less likely, a cat curled up beside a sleeping baby in a cot could potentially result in the child being smothered. Children have been known to drown in fishponds that have not been secured with wire netting and children who live on farms are at a higher risk of injury when not supervised around farm animals.

Reduce the risk of dog bites by:

Always supervising children near dogs.
Ensuring your dog is properly trained to sit, stay, drop and come.
Choose a breed that is suited to your families lifestyle and environment
Remember irrespective of breed all dogs have the potential to bite.

Teach your child to:

Always ask permission from the owner before approaching an unfamiliar dog.
Avoid approaching dogs that are sleeping or eating
Stand still like a statue if approached by a strange dog and do not squeal or jump.
Avoid eye contact with a dog by looking at their own feet.

Be prepared

Clean litter trays daily and keep out of reach of children.
Keep the cat out of the nursery.
Install firm wire mesh over a fishpond.
If visiting or staying on a farm, closely supervise children. Provide a safe play area that is separated from work areas.
Choose an older horse (over 5 years) for a child or beginner.
Have children wash their hand after handling animals and before eating.

Puppy School and K9 Good Manners



Bannockburn Veterinary Clinic runs Puppy School and K9 Good Manners classes throughout the year.

All puppies deserve the chance to become wonderful family pets. Puppy classes are fun for both puppy and the handler.

Children are encouraged to attend.

Our instructor Pam Flynn is also available for home consultations.

Contact this clinic for further information, we are happy to help.

Fast Fact

Research has found secondhand smoke is as dangerous for cats and dogs as it is for humans, making them twice as likely to contract cancer than pets in a smoke-free home.

A study conducted by the Tuft College of Veterinary Medicine in the US has found exposing cats and dogs to secondhand smoke causes virulent cancers.

The study detected a strong link between passive smoking and mouth cancer in cats. Dogs are at a greater risk of lung and nasal cancer.