



### **Gawler Animal Hospital**

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## **Pet Care Newsletter**



### **Dr Steve's Clinic Update: What's New at GAH and Animalia!**

We hope this newsletter finds you well!

As always, we are committed to providing your beloved pets with a wonderful level of care and attention, and we're excited to share some fantastic updates with you.

From changes to our team to enhanced services and more, we have a lot of new developments to tell you about, as well as the growing transformation taking place at Animalia Vet Clinic and Gawler Animal Hospital.

## **Meet Our Talented Team of Veterinary Professionals**

We are thrilled to introduce you to several incredible veterinary professionals who are here to provide your pets with exceptional care and ensure their health and happiness. Our team is composed of many skilled veterinarians, each with expertise across a range of general practice areas. Some of our veterinarians, however, have special interests that allow them to focus on specific areas of care.

Here's a closer look at the experts available to care for your pets:

- Dr. Michelle our Veterinary Mentor and Training Coordinator and resident feline expert. With her vast knowledge and love for cats, she ensures that your feline friends receive the most tailored care possible, addressing their unique health needs and providing them with the very best treatment.
- Dr. Alyssa our Hospital Veterinary Coordinator and expert on almost everything pet-related. She brings a wealth of clinical experience in all sorts of areas like surgery, internal medicine, ophthalmology, dermatology, dentistry and more.
- Dr. Steve and Dr. Bec F-D are our highly skilled orthopaedic veterinarians, both bringing years of experience in treating musculoskeletal conditions. Whether your pet is dealing with a fracture, joint issues, or any other orthopaedic concern, they are the trusted professionals for the job. Their precision and compassionate approach make them a vital part of our team.
- Dr. Carolyn has been in the veterinary industry for 22 years and has a special interest in Canine and Feline behaviour, dermatology, chronic disease and arthritis management. Carolyn has been apart of the GAH family for 17 years and her passion for the industry is very inspiring to our team.
- Dr. Luisa, along with Dr. Olivia and Dr. Sabrina, is part of our skilled ultrasound diagnostics team. Their expertise in using ultrasound helps us gain deeper insights into your pet's health and detect underlying issues that may not be immediately visible. We're especially excited to announce that Dr. Luisa will be returning from maternity leave in April, starting one day a week, with additional availability on Saturdays. We look forward to having her back on the team to assist with all your pet's diagnostic needs.
- Dr. Christo has a special interest in exotic animals with over 30 years of experience in the industry, ensuring that we are properly equipped to provide expert care for reptiles, birds, small mammals, and more. His passion for exotic pet care means that even the most unique pets receive wonderful attention and treatment.
- Dr Felipe and Dr. Kate are also integral members of our team, both expanding our ability to provide wonderful care to the animals that visit us. Their skill sets span many general veterinary areas, and they're always ready to provide personalized care for your pets.

## **New faces to the team**

- Dr. Sabrina, who joined us in September 2024, has 15 years of experience in the industry. Her expertise spans general surgery and ultrasound diagnostics, ensuring that we continue to offer the highest level of care and innovation in our practice.

- Dr. Roy Choi is our new graduate who joined our team on February 17th. Dr. Choi is excited to begin his career with us, bringing fresh enthusiasm and a desire to learn. We are confident that his dedication and eagerness to grow as a veterinary professional will have a positive impact on the care we provide for your pets.

- Dr. Rebecca Churchill joined us on February 24th, bringing her extensive knowledge and expertise to our clinic. We look forward to welcoming Dr. Churchill into our team, knowing that her contributions will enhance the exceptional care we provide.

### **A Growing and Evolving Team**

As we continue to grow, we want to take a moment to reflect on the exciting changes happening at Animalia Vet Clinic and Gawler Animal Hospital. While some of our team members have moved on to pursue new opportunities in emergency and specialist fields, we remain committed to providing training and career development opportunities for our new staff members. The addition of Dr. Roy Choi and Dr. Rebecca Churchill marks just the beginning of this exciting phase for us, and we can't wait to see how our expanded team will continue to evolve and serve your pets.

### **Our Full Range of Services**

We are proud to offer a comprehensive range of veterinary services to meet your pets needs, ensuring that they receive the very best care in every area. Here's a reminder of the services available to you:

- Preventative Care: Vaccinations, parasite control, routine health check-ups to ensure your pets stay healthy and protected.
- General Surgery: We offer both soft tissue and orthopaedic surgeries, helping your pets recover from injuries or surgeries with the best possible care.
- Dentistry: Regular dental check-ups, cleanings, and treatments to keep your pet's teeth and gums in optimal condition.
- Diagnostics: Our in-house lab, blood tests, radiography, and ultrasound help us accurately diagnose a range of health concerns to ensure your pet gets the care they need.
- Emergency Care: We are here for you and your pets when unexpected health concerns arise, offering immediate care for urgent issues.
- Nutrition and Weight Management: Our team is equipped to help manage your pet's weight and nutrition, ensuring they maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Behavioural Consultations: We can assist with behavioural issues, providing strategies and support to ensure your pets thrive in their environment.

#### **Changes at the Clinic**

It is with mixed emotions that we announce the departure of Dr. Jen & Dr Rasika, who have decided to pursue new opportunities in general practice, and Dr. Jaimie, who will not be returning after her maternity leave. While we are sad to see them go, we are excited for them regarding the new adventures they are embarking on and grateful for the exceptional care they provided to our patients over the years. We wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

## **Thank You for Your Continued Support**

We would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt appreciation for your ongoing trust and loyalty. Your support means the world to us as we navigate these exciting changes and continue to grow as a clinic. As always, please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns, or if you'd like to schedule an appointment with any of our talented team members.

We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to care for your pets and look forward to supporting you in their health and happiness for years to come.

Warm regards,

Dr. Steve and the Team



## **Feeling the pinch? Helping pets with vet anxiety**

Unfortunately, naturally more anxious pets or those who have previously suffered a severe, painful illness or injury may develop a fear of vet visits. This can manifest as “fight or flight” behaviour, where pets try to escape handling or show defensive aggression to keep the perceived threat at bay.

If your pet has become anxious, even for routine veterinary visits such as vaccinations, try not to worry – there's lots we can do to help minimise stress and still achieve your pet's healthcare goals.

### **Gentle handling and distraction**

For mildly anxious pets, proceeding slowly with low-stress handling may be enough to allow most treatments to be performed.

This can involve:

- Gentle hug-holds or towel-wrapping by you or our nurses
- Distraction with frequent treats
- The application of a basket muzzle filled with cream cheese for your pet to lick
- Being examined outside the clinic building

## **Pre-emptive anti-anxiety medications**

For moderately anxious pets, we recommend using pre-emptive anti-anxiety medications. This may be a single medication or a combination of several, depending on your pet's level of distress. Don't be discouraged if we need to try a few options before finding the right one!

## **Sedation**

Severely anxious pets may require the administration of a stronger sedative (usually given as an injection) so that we can properly examine and treat them without undue stress to them or danger to our team. In these cases, we may discuss a "bundling" of several procedures where appropriate (e.g. physical examination, vaccination, nail trim, and any required grooming).

## **Desensitisation and counterconditioning**

It's ideal for any anxious pet to be referred to an appropriate behavioural specialist vet or qualified trainer for assistance with gradually "retraining" your pet's brain to remain calm for veterinary visits.

For more advice on pet anxiety, consult our calm and confident team.





## **When is vaccination NOT recommended?**

To help prevent our beloved patients from suffering the effects of preventable diseases, we generally recommend regular vaccinations for every cat and dog.

However, there are a few medical exceptions where a pet's vaccines may need to be temporarily postponed or permanently withheld. Here's when we'll pull our vaccination punches for pets.

### **Vaccine selection**

If your dog or cat goes outdoors or has contact with others of the same species, we recommend keeping them up to date with at least their core vaccinations. This includes the C3 vaccination for dogs (protecting against parvovirus, distemper, and infectious hepatitis) and the F3 vaccination for cats (protecting against herpesvirus, calicivirus, and panleucopaenia).

Depending on your pet's individual risk factors and lifestyle (e.g. the geographical areas they live in or visit), we will make personalised recommendations for any additional relevant vaccines.

It's important to remember that pets attending boarding facilities must be up to date with their core vaccines, plus any additional vaccinations for common illnesses they may be exposed to—such as kennel cough for dogs.

## Unwellness

Before vaccinating a pet, we perform a health check to ensure they're not showing signs of any significant illness that could make vaccination unsafe.

For instance, if your pet is showing symptoms of lethargy or a fever that may suggest an active infection, we will advise postponing their vaccination until further diagnostics or treatment have been completed and they have recovered.

Pets with a history of significant autoimmune disease, such as immune-mediated haemolytic anaemia (where the immune system mistakenly attacks and destroys red blood cells), may be advised against continuing a regular vaccination schedule long-term. Instead, they may undergo intermittent blood tests to check their immunity and have their infectious risk managed accordingly.

For personalised advice on the safest and most effective vaccination schedule for your cat or dog, please consult our disease-diligent team.



## Pancake the pug feels flat – A lesson on parvovirus

*(This fictional story is for educational purposes only and does not depict a real pet, owner, or clinic. It highlights the risks of buying pets from unregulated sources and the importance of vaccinations in preventing parvovirus.)*

When Michelle saw an advertisement online regarding pug puppies for sale, she didn't hesitate, as she had been wanting a cute canine companion for months.

However, when she attended the listed property to meet her pup, things felt a little off. A tiny male puppy was brought out to her, without her seeing the parents or any of the facilities, and with no ongoing diet or vaccination paperwork provided. Still, Michelle couldn't resist the cute little pup in front of her (whom she had decided to name Pancake) and took him home.



Pancake was a bit quiet that day and didn't eat much of the puppy food Michelle offered. By the following afternoon, he had developed foul-smelling, reddish diarrhoea, and rapidly became very lethargic. Panicked, Michelle called her local veterinary hospital for help, and was told to bring Pancake straight in.

Pancake was examined by the vet (who wore gloves and a protective gown) and was found to be dehydrated. Given his symptoms and incomplete vaccination history, she also collected a poo sample for parvovirus testing, which came back positive. The vet stated that Pancake was likely exposed to parvovirus before being obtained by Michelle. Unfortunately, this virus can cause severe illness affecting the gut and immune system, and can be life-threatening even with veterinary treatment.

Michelle immediately agreed for Pancake to be admitted to the vet hospital, where he would need to be kept in a special isolation ward (to prevent the spread of the very contagious virus).

Luckily, with intensive supportive veterinary treatment over the next few days, Pancake turned the corner and began to improve. After five days, he was able to go home on a special bland diet, and Michelle saw his little tail waggle for the first time.

Parvovirus can be prevented with regular C3 vaccinations, involving an initial puppy series and then regular boosters thereafter. Consult our vets regarding parvovirus protection for your canine companion.



## **Animal News In Brief**

### **Verify your pet's microchip details to ensure safety**

Following the sudden closure of HomeSafeID, a major pet microchip registry, Australian pet owners are urged to verify and update their pets' microchip information. The RSPCA warns that without current data, reuniting lost pets with their owners becomes challenging. To check your pet's microchip status, visit



petaddress.com.au. If your pet was registered with HomeSafeID, promptly re-register with alternative registries.

Click [here](#) for more tips at SBS News.

### **Abandoned dog family seeks help in orchard**

A small dog and her two puppies, abandoned in an orchard, ran up to a passing car, pleading for assistance. The driver, moved by their desperation, immediately contacted a local rescue group. "They were clearly seeking help," the rescuer noted. The family is now safe and receiving care, with plans to find them loving homes.

Click [here](#) to read the full story at The Dodo.

### **Blind dog Mavro's unyielding independence**

Mavro, a lively dog diagnosed with progressive retinal atrophy, refuses to let blindness slow him down. He confidently navigates his home and favourite outdoor spots, relying on memory and instinct. "He still runs, plays, and explores like any other dog," his owner shared. "You wouldn't even know he's blind just by watching him." His adventurous spirit remains strong, proving that vision loss doesn't stop a dog from living life to the fullest.

Click [here](#) to read the full story at ABC News.



## **The puppy particulars: What to expect at vet visits**

When our vets see puppies for vaccinations (usually at 6–8 weeks, 10–12 weeks, and around 16 weeks old), we're not just giving them a quick jab and sending you on your way. Puppy consultations are an important opportunity to check for common health issues and ensure you're confident in managing their ongoing care.

Here are some key checks we'll diligently tick off during a puppy visit.

### **1. General health check**

At any vaccination appointment, we always perform a thorough check-up to ensure your puppy is healthy enough to receive their vaccination.

At a minimum, this includes checking their mouth, eyes, ears, lymph nodes, heart and lungs, joints, skin, and overall body condition. We also feel their tummy and observe their movement. If they are not too stressed, we may take their temperature to check for inflammation or infection that could affect their response to the vaccine.

## **2. Puppy specific issues**

When our vets examine puppies, they check particularly closely for common puppy health issues. These include:

- Abnormal tooth positions
- Ear infections
- Heart murmurs
- Abnormal joints (such as loose kneecaps)
- Evidence of parasites such as fleas

We'll also discuss health issues associated with particular breeds, such as potential breathing issues in flatter-faced dog breeds or hip dysplasia in large-breed pups.

## **3. Health care routines**

After your pup has been checked over and received their vaccination, our vets will chat with you about ongoing recommended health care routines. This includes:

- Parasite control
- Appropriate diet options
- Desexing
- Any breed-related specific care your pet may require

Most importantly, your pup will receive lots of cuddles, pats, and treats. This not only helps with socialisation, but our vets love it, too!

For more information on pawsome puppy health care, consult our puppy-proficient team.



**Extreme weather decimates Pilbara turtle hatchling populations**



A combination of record-breaking heat and intense rainfall from Tropical Cyclone Sean has devastated turtle hatchling numbers in Western Australia's Pilbara region. Rising sand temperatures have made nests unviable, while flooding has washed away eggs or left hatchlings struggling to survive.

"The combination of soaring temperatures and unexpected downpours has been devastating for our turtle populations," said marine biologist Dr Jane Smith. Scientists and conservationists are monitoring the long-term effects, as repeated climate events could threaten local turtle populations.

Research is now underway to explore protective measures, such as shading nests or relocating eggs to cooler areas, to boost survival rates.

Click [here](#) to read the full story at ABC News.



## **Feline parvovirus?**

When asked about the F3 feline vaccination, most owners are aware that it provides protection against two of the common causes of cat flu — feline herpesvirus and calicivirus. But what's the third component?

Here's the low-down on feline panleucopaenia (FPL), the feline version of parvovirus and the “third Hemsworth brother” component of the F3 vaccine.

### **What is FPL?**

FPL is a virus from the parvovirus family. It is spread through contact with an infected cat's faeces, urine, or other bodily fluids, either directly or through

contaminated surfaces such as bedding or bowls.

Like canine parvovirus, FPL is highly contagious and is a very tough type of virus, requiring strong disinfectants to kill it.

### **What symptoms does FPL cause?**

FPL virus weakens the immune system and can damage the gut. This means that affected pets may show symptoms such as:

- Lethargy
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea, which may be bloody
- Fever
- Neurological signs such as wobbliness
- Signs of other infectious diseases, such as cat flu

Kittens are at the highest risk of severe illness from the FPL virus and can, unfortunately, die suddenly before showing any other symptoms.

### **Can FPL disease be treated?**

Because it is a virus, there is no specific treatment for FPL. Instead, ill pets generally require support with fluid therapy to prevent dehydration, as well as management of other symptoms such as nausea. They may also need antibiotics for secondary infections that have developed whilst their immune system is weakened.

### **How can pets be protected against FPL?**

The good news? The F3 vaccination stimulates pets to develop strong protective immunity against FPL. Kittens are usually vaccinated at 6-8 weeks old, 10-12 weeks old, and around 16 weeks old. They should then receive regular boosters thereafter, every one to three years, depending on the vaccine used and the pet's lifestyle.

For more information on protecting your cat from common contagious illnesses, contact our infection-informed team!

This email contains comments of a general nature only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional veterinary advice. Please always consult your vet for specific advice on your pet's individual needs.

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