Woof!...I mean, Welcome to the very first issue of Amber Times. I can’t believe we’ve actually got this great new way to stay in touch—and that this newsletter will be published once every quarter or three months (or two years in doggie time.) It’s been fun putting this issue together, especially cause I know that everything you’ll be reading about in these pages really centres around me and the well-being of my furry friends.

I love to explore the world, and trying to eat everything you do is just my way of being curious. But there’s one food item my master won’t ever feed me, even though he loves it a lot himself. It’s sweet and comes in all shades of brown, from a light fudge to a very dark ochre. Yes, it’s CHOCOLATE! In the main feature, you’ll learn why I love to explore the world, and trying to eat everything you do is just my way of being curious. But there's one food item my master won’t ever feed me, even though he loves it a lot himself. It's sweet and comes in all shades of brown, from a light fudge to a very dark ochre. Yes, it's CHOCOLATE! In the main feature, you'll learn why it's made. Thereafter, individual ingredients that were previously fed to your dog can be gradually added, one at a time, to determine which is causing the allergy. Dogs with recurring skin and/or ear infections commonly have allergies, especially when these are evident from a young age.

Dr. Brian Loon

Dogs with recurring skin and/or ear infections commonly have allergies, especially when these are evident from a young age. When a dog has allergies, the immune system is hypersensitive and overreacts to food ingredients or environmental particles, causing inflammation in various organs such as the skin and ears, which results in secondary infections of these areas. When medications are needed to treat these secondary infections, it is also essential to figure out what allergens your dog has, otherwise the primary cause remains untreated and the infections will resurface again once medication ceases. Allergens are generally grouped under food or environmental sources. An elimination food trial is usually recommended to rule out orally in-gested allergens first, as environmental allergens are harder to avoid. Allergens related to the skin and digestive tract.

IS THIS A SPA?

Our editorial team were slightly confounded when we received what we initially thought were images of a spa. It took us some time to recognise that these are in fact interior shots of Amber Vet at Burnfoot Terrace in Siglap. Looks very stylish, yes? We just had to share these great photos with our readers. If there was a prize for most beautiful veterinary premises, this one wins hands down!

HAYDEN SAYS HELLO!

Oh yes, as Amber Vet's mascot, I'm happy to say that we'll be showcasing a member of the team in every issue. Who better to start with than my master, Dr Brian Loon. You can read all about why he started Amber Vet – aren't I lucky? I also attended a talk that he delivered on pet longevity...but I didn’t listen to what he said. I was too busy making new friends! If you want to know more, read about it under Amber Events.

Sometimes, it is difficult to tell you exactly what’s wrong. Us dogs don’t really know how to say when something is bugging our health, so I got my master to write the article for the Q&A section, which is about addressing skin and ear infections. I hope you enjoy reading Amber Times. Paws UP!

Amber Q&A

My three-year-old Shih Tzu is always itchy and has had skin and ear infections for the last two years. It goes away with some medication from the veterinarian, but recurs after a few months. Is there anything else I can do?

Dr. Brian Loon

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It is important to recognise that allergies in dogs can be challenging to diagnose and manage, but close consultation with your veterinarian to rule out other skin parasites, systematically eliminate the offending al-lergens and develop a customised management plan will ensure that your dog leads a much happier and itch-free life.
DOGGONE IT!

WHY CHOCOLATES ARE A NO-NO FOR DOGS

If, like us, you have a sweet tooth, there should be no shortage of chocolate in all forms around your home, but don’t ever share these treats with your beloved pets — the results could be fatal!

Chocolate is one of the most common causes of canine poisoning. Chocolate should never be fed to your dog. Dark chocolate and baker’s chocolate are riskiest; milk and white chocolate poses a far less severe risk.

WHY IS CHOCOLATE POISONOUS TO DOGS?

Chocolate is made from cocoa, and cocoa beans contain caffeine and a related chemical compound called theobromine, which is the killer component. Dogs metabolise theobromine a lot more slowly than humans. While the rush we get from eating chocolate may last 20 to 40 minutes, in dogs it lasts many hours. After a day, about 40% of the theobromine a dog has consumed is still in the system. Theobromine is also toxic to cats, though there are few cases of theobromine poisoning in felines because they seldom eat chocolate. Dogs tend to gobble just about anything.

Small chips of chocolate can cause stomach trouble to dogs, while larger quantities can cause hyperactivity, high blood pressure, tremors, a rapid pulse, seizures, respiratory failure and cardiac arrest.

CHOCOLATE: HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

The more theobromine a cocoa product contains, the more poisonous it is. The table (right) shows potentially dangerous amounts of chocolate. (Please note that these are approximate.) Every animal has varying levels of sensitivity to theobromine. Caffeine will enhance the toxicity of theobromine. Some brands of chocolate have more caffeine than others (e.g.: Nestle’s milk chocolate has 19 mg caffeine per oz versus Hershey’s milk chocolate, which has 8 mg caffeine per oz).

DOGS USUALLY RECOVER WITH AGGRESSIVE SUPPORTIVE THERAPY UNDER THE DIRECTION OF A VETERINARIAN. IF THE INGESTION AND THE TREATMENT ARE PERFORMED IN THE FIRST 4 HOURS, THE PROGNOSIS IS GOOD. NONETHESLESS, HEART FAILURE, WEAKNESS, SEIZURES, COMA AND DEATH CAN OCCUR 12 TO 36 HOURS AFTER INGESTION AND CONSTANT OBSERVATION IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED.

There are iTunes and Android apps to help calculate and assess if a dog has consumed a harmful amount of chocolate or methylxanthines. Search “choc tox” in your app store.

REFERENCES

Goswiler, Gary D., Methylxanthine alkaloids, Toxicology (The national veterinary medical series for independent study), Williams & Wilkins 1998.

YOUR DOG ATE CHOCOLATE: NOW WHAT?

After consuming a potentially toxic amount of chocolate, dogs usually develop diarrhea and start vomiting. If the dog isn’t vomiting, a veterinarian may advise inducing vomiting immediately to keep as much theobromine as possible from entering the system. The dog may be fed a solution of 3% hydrogen peroxide and water or else syrup of ipecac, both of which induce vomiting. Symptoms of theobromine poisoning generally occur within four to 24 hours after chocolate is eaten.

If your pet shows signs of hyperactivity and agitation or is having seizures, the faster you get it to the veterinarian the better. Still, there is no specific antidote for chocolate poisoning.

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Number of OUNCES of CHOCOLATE a Pet Would Need to Ingest for SEVERE TOXICITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight of Pet in Pounds</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>70</th>
<th>80</th>
<th>90</th>
<th>100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milk Chocolate (oz)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Chocolate (oz)</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baking Chocolate (oz)</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally, less than half an ounce of milk chocolate per pound of body weight is considered to be toxic.
INTERVIEW WITH DR BRIAN LOON

Principal Veterinary Surgeon

1. WHAT BROUGHT YOU ROUND TO YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

Being a veterinarian for several years, I have seen how pet owners treat their pets as beloved family members. I was yearning for an avenue to provide veterinary care to all pets and their owners to the best of my abilities. This led me to open Amber Vet in 2011, where I could create an optimal environment for pet owners to share concerns about their pets with me, and where I am equipped to provide them with the necessary diagnostic capabilities to ensure the best health for their precious furry friends.

2. WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE THING / THE MOST REWARDING THING ABOUT WHAT YOU DO?

I feel blessed when I am able to play a role in bringing a pet back into good health. As a veterinarian, I also feel privileged to be able to attend to various types of animals and treat their ailments. This spurs me on to continually upgrade my skills. For example, I recently pursued PennHIP certification to better help diagnose and manage dogs with hip dysplasia in Singapore. (Ed: see Get Hip! on page 8)

3. DO YOU KEEP A PET? WHAT DO YOU FIND IS THE BEST THING ABOUT HAVING ONE?

I have a three-year-old Miniature Schnauzer named Hayden, and an eight-year-old rabbit, named Rabbit, both of whom were adopted as abandoned pets. I am lucky to be able to take Hayden to work with me, and seeing my pets indulging in their joyful carefree world allows me to smile even after a stressful and challenging day at work.

4. WHAT’S THE ONE THING YOU’D LIKE TO SAY TO PET OWNERS?

Enjoy and cherish every single day you have with your pet. They bring us priceless joy and inner peace that only pet owners will understand, and it is our responsibility to ensure that we in turn provide them with the best care and welfare.

5. HOW CAN WE MAKE SINGAPORE A MORE PET-FRIENDLY SOCIETY?

Everybody in Singapore should be given equal opportunity to have a pet, provided they are ready for the commitment and have the space and time appropriate for the pet. Pet owners should also be allowed various public places to spend time with their pets, and pet owners in return must be socially responsible for their pet while in public areas.

CHATTER BOX

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AMBER EVENTS

THE LONGEVITY TALK

30 March 2013: Over 30 pet owners, many with pets in tow, squeezed into Batter Fluffy Flaps at East Coast Road to listen to Dr Brian Loon of Amber Vet deliver an hour-long talk on tips for pet longevity.

Dr Loon spoke on the importance of paying attention to various aspects of pets’ lifestyles. “Besides chocolate, you should avoid plying your dog with chicken bones as these small bones can become lodged in the animal’s digestive tract and cause obstruction and discomfort. If your dog loves to gnaw, give it larger bones, such as lamb shank.” Pet owners were also taught about keeping tabs on DUDE, which stands for Defecation, Urination, Drinking and Eating. Any irregularities should be noted as pets do not usually voice out or show that they are in discomfort.

The talk also addressed pet vaccination, sterilisation, dental health and care and common ailments, including ticks and fleas and canine allergies. Omega 3 was recommended as a good supplement, as it helps strengthen an animal’s joints.

Pre- and post-talk, a hearty buffet lunch was served. The event made for a most enjoyable and informative afternoon.

Stay in touch with us.
For information on our latest events, scan this code.

AMBER TIMES

06

WHEN AND HOW TO CUT YOUR DOG’S NAILS

Like human nails, dog’s nails grow constantly. Nail trimming should be an essential part of a dog’s regular grooming routine as excessively long nails can cause health hazards such as profuse bleeding caused by broken nails and even long-term joint problems.

GAUGING WHEN TO TRIM

The frequency of trimming depends very much on the dog’s lifestyle which can change with age. One of the easiest ways to gauge is when the nails grow to come into contact with the ground when your dog is in its standing position. Nails any longer will cause discomfort during walking.

For more active, outdoor dogs that run often on gravel or rougher grounds, their nails are naturally “filed” or worn down short and usually do not require much nail clipping except for the dew claw which are on the dog’s inner leg and slightly above the paw. Less active dogs or “lapdogs” will require more regular trimming of their nails.

TRIMMING WITHOUT BLEEDING

In each nail there lies the quick - a blood vein which grows together with the nail. It is thus important to ensure that the nails do not grow for too long without trimming as a long quick can prevent nails to be shortened to a comfortable length. Only with regular nail trimming close to the quick can it recede and allow a deeper cut without drawing blood.

The quick is usually visible for dogs with light coloured nails. Clip fast and accurately leaving around 1 to 1.5mm distance away from the vein and round the sharp corners with a nail file.

For dogs with dark nails where the blood vein is almost not visible, take extra care and clip bit by bit observing the centre of nail. When a black dot is noticed in the middle of the nail cross section, stop and round the corners with a nail file. The dot indicates that the quick is near.

Nails should always be filed after a trim to reduce the possibility of scratch injuries on you and the dog itself.

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WHAT MAKES A MEOWLY GOOD MEAL?

OUR FAQ SECTION LOOKS AT THE INS AND OUTS OF A CAT’S DIET

Q CAN CATS BE ON A VEGETARIAN DIET?

A Vegetarian diets are definitely not recommended for cats as they are pure carnivores and require several essential nutrients that they can only derive from a meat-based diet, such as taurine, niacin, arachidonic acid and vitamins A, B1 and B12. A deficiency in these nutrients can lead to severe long term health issues.

Q IS DRY OR WET FOOD BETTER FOR MY CAT?

A Both good quality dry and wet food should be balanced for your cat’s nutritional needs. However, dry food tends to contain more carbohydrates than is needed and may contribute towards obesity. Dry food also lacks moisture and can result in chronic dehydration if your cat does not drink enough water. A good quality canned food may thus be more suitable for overweight or dehydrated cats. Fresh deboned meat such as boiled/streamed chicken or fish is also a great way to provide some good quality, fresh nutrients to your cat.

Q MY CAT IS OVERWEIGHT AND INACTIVE. HOW DO I GET IT TO LOSE WEIGHT?

A Domesticated cats are prone to obesity, especially those who live indoors with a sedentary lifestyle. Their ancestors hunted for their food in the wild, and this is the best way to feed all cats. While we do not expect you to release live prey for your cat’s meals, you can hide their dry food in pet toys or little containers with holes where food can be hidden within and slowly released as the cat plays with it, sprinkle food over an egg tray, place wet food at the bottom of an open jar, or place food at various locations within the home for them to hunt down. This will stimulate their hunting instincts, slow down their speed of food consumption and increase their exercise levels. Your cat will love it!

Q MY CAT IS PICKY WITH FOOD. HOW DO I INTRODUCE NEW FOOD TO MY CAT?

A Cats are an interesting species. Whatever it is you want them to do, they must think they are making the choice for themselves. When introducing new food, place the new food in a separate bowl beside the current food. Allow your cat to choose. Even if it only prefers the current food, do not give up. Continue to offer fresh portions of both food options daily for up to a week, and some cats may start to accept the new food gradually.

Q MY CAT DOES NOT LIKE TO DRINK WATER. WHAT CAN I DO?

A There are various ways to get your cats to drink more water. You can get a cat water fountain. Your cat’s water bowl should also be fairly big, such that its whiskers do not touch the edge of the bowl. Big dog bowls are ideal. Water can also be added to food to increase water intake. Lastly, ensure that the water source is not placed near to the litter tray or in areas of the house that are noisy or where your cat may get a scare.

Q GET HIP!

IF YOUR USUALLY ACTIVE PET IS HAVING DIFFICULTY MOVING AROUND, HIP DYSPLASIA MAY BE THE CAUSE.

Hip dysplasia is an abnormal development of the hip joints, where the ball and socket joint of the hips does not form normally as a puppy grows. This results in a shallow socket which does not fit the ball well, causing wear and tear of the joint leading to painful arthritis.

The condition most commonly affects large breed dogs such as Golden Retrievers, Labrador Retrievers and German Shepherds, but smaller breeds such as Cocker Spaniels and Shetland Sheepdogs as well as cats can be affected.

WHAT SIGNS WILL MY DOG DISPLAY IF IT HAS HIP DYSPLASIA?

Hip dysplasia causes arthritis in the hips resulting in joint pain. Affected dogs will not usually cry or whine. Instead, they express their pain with reduced activity, limping, difficulty rising, lying down or climbing stairs.

Young dogs with severe hip dysplasia may show these behaviours at 6 to 18 months of age. Many dogs with mild to moderate hip dysplasia only show similar signs of joint pain when they are older as the joints wear down over the years.

Hip dysplasia, and related conditions such as osteoarthritis and hip arthritis, are painful conditions that can affect dogs of all ages and sizes. If you notice your dog limping or having difficulty moving around, it is important to consult a veterinarian for a proper diagnosis and treatment.

PennHIP is a diagnostic tool to assess the risk of hip dysplasia in dogs. It involves x-rays to evaluate the hip joint and determine the severity of hip dysplasia.

To find a PennHIP veterinarian in your country, please visit pennhip.org, or surf into ambervet.com for Singapore.

As of June 2013, pets in Singapore will finally have access to PennHIP services.

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MY DOG HAD NORMAL HIPS IN X-RAYS WHEN IT WAS YOUNGER, BUT STILL DEVELOPED HIP DYSPLASIA LATER ON. WHY IS THIS SO?

There are two methods involving x-ray studies to assess for hip dysplasia:

1. OFA/BVA method

This method uses the extended hip x-ray view to assess for hip laxity. This x-ray is assessed by several radiologists who subjectively grade the hips based on a set of guidelines. This method can only be done on dogs from 2 years of age. Dogs graded with good to excellent hips initially could have a different grade when re-assessed later on in life.

2. PennHIP method

PennHIP uses three different x-ray views to assess the hip for laxity. Two of the views involve assessing the hip joints in their compressed and fully distracted states. PennHIP x-rays can only be performed by certified veterinarians who have received specific training and special equipment for the technique. These x-rays are submitted to the University of Pennsylvania, where objective measurements of the hip joints are taken to arrive at a distraction index of the hips. Tighter fitting hips have lesser distraction, and are correlated with a lower likelihood of developing hip dysplasia.

PennHIP is currently widely accepted as the best predictor for hip dysplasia, and can be performed on dogs from 16 weeks of age. It is recommended for breeding dogs so that only the dogs with the tightest hips are bred to help eliminate the disease over generations. PennHIP is also recommended for pet, agility or working dogs so that those prone to hip dysplasia can have their diet, exercise levels and weight specifically managed to help prevent or delay the onset of debilitating arthritis.

As of June 2013, pets in Singapore will finally have access to PennHIP services.
PET-A-PORTER
Haydon loves these – and your furry friend will too!

1 CLASSIC KONG
The ball’s red natural-rubber compound is super-bouncy and chewie-friendly. Kong® Toys can clean teeth and condition the gums! Toys can be stuffed with your dog’s favourite treats, dog biscuits or peanut butter for hours of exercise and chewing fun. Recommended by Veterinarians, Trainers, Dog Professionals and satisfied customers worldwide!

2 KONG WOBBLER
Fancy a picnic or a long walk by the river with Mr. Bear? This cute quick filling and easy clean-up. Made of FDA food-approved, non-toxic rubber, this toy is durable and lick-proof! Toys can be stuffed with your dog’s favourite treats, dog biscuits or peanut butter for hours of exercise and chewing fun.

3 2 KONG WOBBLER
Recommended by Veterinarians, Trainers, Dog Professionals and satisfied customers worldwide!

4 CATT DESIGN SENSE PLAY CIRCUIT
Cats see and hear sights and sounds that are beyond our perception. Catt Design Senses products are made with your cat in mind and designed to appeal to all of your cat’s senses. This Play Circuit incorporates sight, sound and touch to entice, engage and entertain a cat while appealing to its natural hunting instincts. Designed with a curved and peek-a-boo track, your cat can see, chase and swat the swirled ball. There are multiple layout possibilities and additional tracks can be purchased separately.

5 FERPLAST DAYTONA PADDED HARNESS
Equipped with a soft padding for maximum comfort, the Daytona nylon harness for dogs is ideal for dogs of all sizes. Strong, it can be fastened to your friend’s body, but offers maximum comfort. The plastic hook means it is safe and reliable while the regulation buckles allow for a perfect fit.

6 ANIMAL SERIES CROCHET SQUEAKER TOY
100% handmade with cotton; various animals available to excite you and your furry friend! Designs Piggy, Bunny, Bear, Doggy, Giraffe, Frog

All items featured in this section can be found at http://www.bubbly-petz.com/.
Why choose Natural Pet® range of supplement and product

- 100% pharmaceutical and human grade ingredients
- Imported ingredients mainly from Japan, Europe and USA
- Original patented ingredients and well-known brands
- Clinical proven ingredients
- Unique formulation with enhanced palatability
- Manufacture in accordance to PIC/S GMP standard
- Quality assured to ensure safe and effective products
- High customer satisfaction

For more information on our products, please visit us at: www.naturalpetworldwide.com