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## Founder and Laminitis

With spring here, it is a good time to start founder and laminitis prevention. While the signs of founder are easy to recognise, prevention starts well before then. Usually laminitis is treatable, but has the potential to result in permanent severe lameness and sometimes even euthanasia.

The signs seen start with a reluctance to move because the horse is sore in its feet. As all four feet get sore the horse will walk with short steps appearing stiff. At rest he will lean back with his front legs out in front of him as he tries to decrease the weight on his front.

Frequently he will shift weight from side to side to reduce discomfort. It becomes very difficult to pick up either front leg as he doesn't want to take weight on the opposite foreleg. As the pain worsens he may spend a lot of time laying down.

There are two forms of founder: an acute form that comes on suddenly and a chronic form that affects ponies and overweight horses on rapidly growing pasture or after too much concentrate feed. The chronic form is a recurring problem that shows up when the horse is allowed to get overweight, eat rich food or his feet get too long. In both cases the damage is done early on and builds up over time. It is very important that founder is recognised early and treated to prevent long term damage.

Prevention involves weight management, feed control, and there is a product called Founder-guard that can be added to a small amount of feed to help prevent episodes. Corrective foot trimming can help ease problems and keeping the horse on soft ground also provides relief. An xray can give an indication of severity of the episode.

Laminitis is a painful condition so needs to be attended to rapidly to reduce suffering.



# CHB VETS



Veterinary newsletter

September 2019

## Aggression between dogs:

Recently we have been seeing a lot of dog bite injuries to other dogs. These injuries can be very serious and in some cases even life-threatening. The damage done is often worse than what you can see from the outside and the wounds are infected due to the bacteria in a dog's mouth.

Inter-dog aggression occurs much more frequently in non-neutered male dogs. Common signs usually start appearing when the dog reaches puberty (between six and nine months old) or becomes socially mature at 18 to 36 months. Generally, inter-dog aggression is more of a problem between dogs of the same gender.



### SYMPTOMS AND TYPES OF AGGRESSION IN DOGS

The most common symptoms of inter-dog aggression include growling, biting, lip lifting, snapping, and lunging towards another dog. These behaviours may be accompanied by fearful or submissive body postures and expressions such as crouching, tucking the tail under, licking the lips, and backing away. Typically, before a severe inter-dog aggression incident in the same household occurs, more discreet signs of social control will become noticeable. One tactic a dog may use is staring and blocking the other dog's entrance into a room. A specific condition sometimes triggers the aggression, even though the dogs normally get along well.

### CAUSES OF AGGRESSION IN DOGS

The causes of this condition vary. A dog may have become overly aggressive because of its past experiences, including abuse and neglect. For example, it may not have socialised with other dogs as a puppy, or it may have had a traumatic encounter with another dog. An owner's behaviour may also influence a manifestation of the condition (e.g., if an owner shows compassion for a weaker dog by punishing the more dominant dog). Other reasons for aggression are fear, wanting to protect territory and social status, or a painful medical condition.

### HOW TO HANDLE DOG AGGRESSION

There is no real cure for inter-dog aggression. Instead, treatment is heavily focused on controlling the problem. Owners must learn how to avoid situations that encourage aggressive behaviour in the dog, and to break up fights quickly and safely when they occur. In situations where aggressive behaviour is more likely to occur (e.g., walks in the park), the dog must be kept away from potential victims and be under constant control. The owner may also want to train the dog to feel comfortable wearing a protective head halter and basket muzzle. Castration may help in male dogs.



**September is animal pain  
awareness month—because their pain is our  
pain.  
Talk to us about recognising your animal's  
pain and what we can do to manage it.**



## Docking lambs

As we approach docking/tailing time, a few reminders about what we should be doing are timely. Removal of a lamb's tail has the potential to affect many aspects of the animal's life as well as being a painful procedure. There are impacts on the anatomy and behaviour as well as susceptibility to dag formation and urine staining which can lead to flystrike. Therefore it is important that the procedure is done well and the benefits outweigh the harms.

The recommended length of docked tail is long enough to cover the tip of the vulva in a ewe lamb and a similar length in a ram lamb (known as medium length). This length has been decided on following many studies into the impacts of different tail lengths.

Experiments investigating tail length and dag formation in New Zealand lambs have shown little effect of tail length on dag scores. Urine staining in ewes is less common in ewes with medium tail lengths compared to short or long docked tails. It has also been shown that shorter tail lengths predispose animals to flystrike and these animals had significantly higher levels of flystrike. It is thought that the medium length tail retains the muscles needed to allow the tail to twitch and possibly deter flies. There are many different factors that impact on conditions such as flystrike and tail length is just one of them.

Short tails also appear to compromise animals in other ways such as slower healing of the docking wound and predisposes the sheep to cancer of the tail region – mainly of the vulva. Rectal prolapse is more common in both male and female lambs when the tail is short although there doesn't appear to be any correlation with vaginal prolapse (bearings) and tail length.

It seems in New Zealand that most lambs are docked quite short, with little or no tail. This is in contrast with the recommendations of both national and international animal welfare authorities.

### References

M W Fisher, N. G. (2004, Vol 64). Justifying the appropriate length for docking lambs' tails - a review of the literature. *Proceedings of the New Zealand Society of Animal Production*, 293-296.



## FLEAS< FLEAS< FLEAS

New Zealand's climate is mild enough to support flea populations year round, and their numbers do well in our cosy heated homes even throughout the winter months. However it's at this time of year, with warmer weather just around the corner, that flea numbers can explode indoors and out... and within days your pets and family can be in the middle of a flea infestation you'll wish you could have avoided! Anyone who has been there will tell you it's much easier to prevent than to treat.

Seresto® collars are made from an innovative solid polymer matrix material which allows a slow, controlled release of proven active ingredients. These diffuse into the fatty layer of your pet's skin in low, safe doses, and only replenish when required. Best of all, fleas and ticks are killed on contact with your pet's skin and coat, so they suffer less of those painful bites, and a great help if your pet suffers from Flea Allergic Dermatitis. Pets can even swim and be bathed without needing to remove the collar – perfect for all summer long.

- ◆ 8 months protection in one easy treatment – That's the longest treatment length of any flea and tick product available.
- ◆ Safe, convenient, odour-free and water-resistant.
- ◆ Available in one size for cats and two sizes for dogs.
- ◆ Imidacloprid kills fleas on contact – they don't have to bite to die.
- ◆ Kills 99-100% of fleas before they lay eggs and kills flea larvae in the pet's environment.
- ◆ Flumethrin ensures that ticks are repelled and killed, preventing them from attaching to your pet.
- ◆ A predetermined break point and emergency release ratchet system allows the collar to loosen or break without injury to your pet.



Seresto® is totally unique as flea treatments go, so ask for it at the clinic now! We have a special promotion running for a limited time with **\$10 off each Seresto® collar.\***

\*Conditions apply – for T&Cs see in-clinic for details.

As a general rule, most cats are excellent at hiding their pain. Fortunately, there are lots of signs you can look for that indicate possible pain in your cat. Know what to look for so you can prevent your cat from suffering in silence.

*Cats are masters at disguising pain. It's a survival instinct.*

## Signs of Pain in Cats

Chances are that while caring for your cat, these signs will be more obvious to you (even when they're subtle) if you have a good idea of your cat's "normal." This includes their normal attitude, energy level, gait, appetite, thirst, sleep patterns, and other physical and behavioural patterns. After all, if you don't know what's "normal" it's much more difficult to recognise what's not.

**Biting and Scratching:** Cats in pain are more likely to bite and scratch. This is particularly true when a person touches or moves the painful area, or if the cat anticipates you touching or moving the painful area.

**Breathing Changes:** There's the possibility of a faster and more shallow breathing pattern than normal. They may also pant.

**Heart and Pulse Changes:** Cats with discomfort will often have an increased heart/pulse rate. The rate often noticeably speeds up when the painful area is touched or moved.

**Purring:** Just because your cat is purring does not mean they aren't in pain. If your cat is purring while showing any of the other signs here, the purring may be pain related. In fact, purring may actually increase in a cat experiencing pain.

**Eye Changes:** The eyes can be very telling in cats with pain. Often times pain elsewhere in the body will result in larger (dilated) pupils, while pain in the eye(s) can result in either larger or smaller (constricted) pupils – depending on the underlying injury or disease process, and whether one or both eyes are affected. Squinting may indicate pain. Similarly, a "bloodshot" appearance can indicate pain in the affected eye(s).

**Food and Water Changes:** You may find them eating and drinking less.

**Grooming Changes:** You may notice an overall decreased amount of self-grooming in a cat experiencing generalized or illness. However, a cat with a wound may excessively groom the area.

**Energy Level Changes:** Most cats in pain will generally be less active. Many cats will hide when in pain – choosing to spend time under beds or couches, or in closets.

**Mobility Changes:** Cats experiencing pain often move around less. But depending on what hurts, they may still move around the same amount, just differently.

**Bathroom Changes:** Cats who have back pain, for any reason, may have trouble getting in position to go number two. Because of this struggle to go to the bathroom, they will sometimes become constipated. Cats with joint or bone pain may also have difficulty getting to their toilet spot, so they may start urinating and/or defecating in unusual places.

**Body Contour Changes:** Swellings could be an indication of a painful condition.

Reference: [painfreecats.org](http://painfreecats.org)

