

# Care Vet Group newsletter

ISSUE 5

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winter  
warmth

**Winter has arrived with a blast of icy wind! Time to rug up and sip the soup.**

For those of you that haven't checked out our website for a little while we have added a brand new "On-line Veterinary Database". This is a great source of information ranging from basic pet care information through to client handouts covering arthritis, diabetes and many more.

As most are aware from July 1, 2009 the council has introduced compulsory micro-chipping for all animals under 12 weeks or when ownership changes.

Visit [www.localgovernment.qld.gov.au/Laws/LocalGovernment/ManagingCatsandDogs.aspx](http://www.localgovernment.qld.gov.au/Laws/LocalGovernment/ManagingCatsandDogs.aspx) for a full list of Terms and Conditions.

**To assist you in complying with these new regulations without "breaking the bank" we have a special offer available to our clients.**

**If you make an appointment and mention this offer before 15 July, 2009 you will receive a microchip and registration\* (including local anaesthetic) for the special price of \$29.75 (normally \$35).**

**Visit [www.carevetgroup.com.au](http://www.carevetgroup.com.au) for more information.**

*\* not including council registration.*



Rebecca Ireland



Dr. Hugh McIntosh

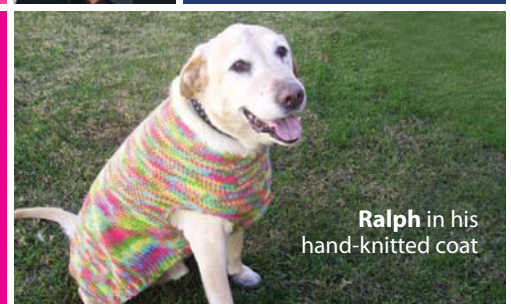
## Hugh's News

**This month's focus is the effects of arthritis and how this debilitating disease can affect our four legged friends.**

Libby and I speak from personal experience as we have a golden Labrador named "Ralph", as some of you may remember from our television campaign approximately 4 years ago.

Ralph is now just over 13 years of age, unfortunately winter is taking its toll on him this year despite his designer wardrobe. Ralph regularly steps out in a coat of many colours lovingly hand-knitted by his mother. Hand-knitted coats are perfect for fire side snuggling, while using the oil skinned "weatherbeeta"<sup>™</sup> raincoat for those misty days (contact our surgery for the full range of weatherbeeta's<sup>™</sup>).

Ralph is fortunate that he has really only been affected during the last 12 months. We attribute this to keeping his weight in check with the aid of Eukanuba<sup>™</sup> dog food and utilising natural therapies such as cartrophen<sup>™</sup> (anti-inflammatory injections) and a regular low impact exercise program.



Ralph in his hand-knitted coat

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### Winter coats

**Bbbrrrrrr, during the cool season it is important to remember the smaller members of our family, they too feel the cold and for those who are not allowed to venture inside it's important they are kept warm and cosy as well.**

At Care Veterinary Group we cater for all seasons, so this season we have a wide range of weatherbeeta coats™, in all shapes and sizes and a range of colours to suit the boys and girls. Coats for the inside and outside family member. To help with the right fit, our friendly staff are available for complimentary fitting when you purchase a weatherbeeta coat™.



Nicole Hardy

### To clip or not to clip?

Just because the temperature drops, that doesn't mean your pet doesn't need to be kept looking their best. The "Grooming Room" at South Toowoomba Vets is open all year round – rain, hail or sleet! We offer hydrobaths with warm blow dry's through to full body clips, a lot of pet parents believe that clipping and grooming should not be done through the cooler months because their pet may feel the cold more, especially our fluffy little mates.

Remember our short coated friends don't have much covering and they get along just fine (with the help of a warm weatherbeeta coat™ and regular bathing). It is also very important to brush out your pet if a coat is worn during the winter (this is also a service we provide), as the coat can cause matting to the fur due to the friction between the fur and the dog coat.

**So, phone South Toowoomba Vets on 4635 3616 and make an appointment for a "fluff and buff" with our grooming team to keep your four legged friend looking and feeling their very best all year round!**



## wellness tip what can I do about my pet's arthritis?

### Key points

Signs of osteoarthritis may be subtle and easy to miss

Early treatment is critical to slow progression of the disease

Maintaining lean body weight is absolutely critical for arthritic patients

Newer concepts of arthritis management involve proper exercise to maintain muscle mass and decrease pain

Structure-modifying agents are most effective when started early and maintained long term

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory and analgesic drugs, acupuncture, and physical therapy may be recommended for later stages of the disease

### What is Osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis is a chronic degenerative disease that may affect any joint but is commonly found in a pet's hip, elbow, shoulder, stifle (knee), carpus (wrist), hock (ankle) or intervertebral joints (in the spine). It occurs when cartilage in the joint is damaged, either following a traumatic event or with wear and tear that increases in athletic animals, obese animals, or when the joint is congenitally abnormal.

Cartilage decreases joint stress by reducing impact on the ends of the bones in joints, like a gelatinous shock absorber. When cartilage is damaged, a cascade of inflammatory changes occurs, eventually leading to destruction of the cartilage and subsequent damage to the underlying bone. Cartilage contains no nerves – if your pet is showing any signs of pain, the damage and changes in underlying bone have already begun.

### Signs of arthritis include

Reluctance to take walks of usual length

Stiffness (that may disappear once the pet has 'warmed up')

Difficulty climbing stairs, climbing in the car, on the bed or a sofa

Difficulty rising from rest

Limping

Abnormal gait

Licking of a single joint

Acting withdrawn, spending less time playing with family (which is often misunderstood as a sign of 'aging')

Soreness when touched

Rarely, aggression when touched or approached

### What can I do?

**Weight Reduction.** Ask your doctor about your pet's body condition score (BCS), which should be normal (5/9) or slightly underweight (4/9). If your pet is overweight, discuss a weight loss diet with your veterinarian.

**Controlled Exercise.** Low-impact exercise is best; swimming or walking through shallow water is ideal. Leash walking and controlled jogging are also acceptable.

**Nutraceuticals.** Synergistic combinations of nutraceuticals such as glucosamine/chondroitin sulfate contain compounds that support cartilage structure, prevent further deterioration, suppress inflammation, and reduce free radical damage.

**Injectable Chondroprotective Agent.** Talk to your veterinarian about an injectable agent such as cartrophen, that may also help preserve cartilage in the joints.

**Prescription Drugs.** Drugs are available that can reduce inflammation and suppress pain in dogs with more advanced disease. Side effects can be minimized by monitoring your dog's blood work regularly.

*By VIN Community Contributors.  
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**Chandlers Animal Hospital**  
**> 4636 2233**  
cnr Alderley & Ramsay Sts Toowoomba

**South Toowoomba Vets**  
**> 4635 3616**  
366 Stenner St Toowoomba

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# Knitted Dog's Coat



## Knitted Dog's Coat (RSPCA Shelter Pattern)

Use 8 ply wool

(I use acrylic - as it washes like a rag in the machine and can even be tumbled dry if necessary).

- 1 pr #10 needles for a small dog
- 1 pr #8 needles for a medium dog
- 1 pr #5 needles for a large dog

Beginning at the back cast on 80sts

1<sup>st</sup> row: Knit into the back of all the sts

2<sup>nd</sup> row: Knit

Repeat 2<sup>nd</sup> four times

7<sup>th</sup> row: Knit

8<sup>th</sup> row: Knit 5, purl to last 5sts, knit last 5sts

Repeat 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> rows three times

Increase at each end (inside 5 garter sts) on the next row and every following 6<sup>th</sup> row until there are 86sts, then every following 4<sup>th</sup> row until there are 104sts. Work 9 rows.

### Divide for opening

Next row, knit 16, turn. Work 26 rows on these 16sts. Break off yarn. Join yarn to remaining sts, knit 72sts, turn. Work 26 rows on these 72sts. Break off yarn. Join yarn to remaining 16sts and work 27 rows. Next row purl across all sts. Next row knit 5, knit 2 together to last row. Work 8 rows.

### Proceed as follows

1<sup>st</sup> row: knit 5, purl to last 5sts, knit 5.

Repeat 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> rows 14 times, then first row once. Cast off loosely.

### Make up

Do not press. Using a flat seam, join seam for 22 rows. Turn back the 31 rows collar section.

**Note** Because Ralph has a thick neck I do not turn back the collar section. Ralph has been known to put holes in his jumper - I repair them by attaching a crocheted Granny Square - not so chic but it covers the hole!

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