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Your pets provide companionship, unconditional love and plenty of smiles, but they also make you healthier just by living with you. The health benefits of owning a pet are both physical and psychological, and they extend throughout an owner's life.

### 2 MANAGING FELINE ASTHMA

Humans are not the only ones who can suffer from asthma. It is a condition that can also afflict cats.

### 3 CARING FOR AGEING PETS

It's easy to forget that our pets are ageing 7 times faster than us! As our pets get older, they are more susceptible to age-related diseases. The signs of ageing can be subtle, but there are some key signs that show us that our beloved companions are ageing.

### 4 OUR CAT ADOPTION PROGRAM

At Port Kennedy Veterinary Hospital we run a successful cat adoption program and many homeless cats and kittens have found their forever home with the help of our dedicated volunteers.

## Welcome Home! Tips for New Dog Owners

Bringing a new dog or puppy home is an exciting time for the whole family. The first few days are extremely important in forming a bond with your new family member. Your new dog will be confused about where it is and what to expect from you. Setting up some clear structure with your family dog will be paramount in making as smooth a transition as possible.

- We know moving is stressful – and your new dog feels the same way! Give it time to acclimate to your home and family before introducing it to strangers. Make sure children know how to approach the dog without overwhelming it.
- Ensure your new pet is healthy. A consult with your vet is recommended. Your vet will discuss and help you to ensure your pet is up to date with vaccinations, worming, flea- and heart worm prevention.
- It is important to discuss with your vet sterilisation, micro-chipping and getting your new pet registered.

- To help keep your new pet's expenses down, you may consider purchasing pet insurance.
- Make sure you introduce your new dog to any existing pets in a controlled situation under your careful observation.

Training your puppy and (perhaps more importantly) you, the owner, is critical to a long and happy relationship. Our training course will combine basic manners and obedience training with ample opportunities for social interaction. Training your canine companion is an ongoing process!

Learn about inappropriate chewing, mouthing / biting, basic manners, house-training, puppy lead-walking, parasite prevention, household poisons, puppy socialization, including off-lead play, what your dog is telling you with its body language and much more.

The class meets once a week for 4 weeks and space is limited, so sign up today! Please contact Port Kennedy Veterinary Hospital at 9524 6644 or email us at [pkvh1@westnet.com.au](mailto:pkvh1@westnet.com.au) to find out about the upcoming classes.



## Pet Ownership and Your Health

Your pets provide companionship, unconditional love and plenty of smiles, but they also make you healthier



just by living with you. The health benefits of owning a pet are both physical and psychological, and they extend throughout an owner's life. By keeping your furry companion

healthy and happy, you're actually improving your own health and the health of your entire family.

## Pets and a Healthy Heart

While eating right and exercise are important components of maintaining a healthy heart, sharing your home with a pet can be another way to boost your cardiovascular health, according to health research institutes. Owning a pet is linked to lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol levels and lower triglyceride levels.

## Exercise your Pet

If you have a dog, your daily walk together gives both of you needed exercise. Cats often enjoy active play with an owner-controlled string or fishing-pole toy, so it's easy to get small bursts of activity in throughout your day when you've got a feline in the home. Even pet owners with rabbits, hamsters or birds get more exercise than those without any pets because feeding, cage maintenance and playing with your pet are all sources of physical activity.

## Children and Pets

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## Pets and Elder Health

Older adults often have more healthcare needs, but owning pets can help keep them healthier as they age. Adults 65 and older who have a pet are better able to maintain and improve their ability to handle activities of



daily living, which means that owning a pet can help you live independently for longer. Pets also provide social companionship for senior adults, which is vital to psychological health and well-being.

## Household Companions as Monitors

If you have a chronic condition or disability, pets can act as a health monitor and alert you or others to potential problems. In some cases, dogs can alert owners to an impending epileptic seizure or dangerous changes in blood sugar levels, according to a published medical report.

Sources:

National Institute of Health, "Can Pets Keep You Healthy?" News in Health, February 2009

Wells, Deborah L. "Domestic Dogs and Human Health: An Overview." British Journal of Health Psychology, December 2010.

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Ownby, DR; Johnson, CC; Peterson, EL. "Exposure to Dogs and Cats in the First Year of Life and Risk of Allergic Sensitization at 6 to 7 Years of Age." Journal of the American Medical Association, August 2002.



## Managing Feline Asthma

Humans are not the only ones who can suffer from asthma. It is a condition that can also afflict cats. Feline asthma is similar to human asthma, in that it is a chronic inflammation of the airways inside the lungs. During an asthma attack, these airways become constricted, and the lungs create mucus and release it into the airways. This makes it difficult for the cat to breathe.

## Asthma Symptoms



Cats suffering from feline asthma can experience laboured breathing in many forms. Some endure wheezing, rapid breathing, open mouth breathing, or gasping for breath. Others manifest a persistent cough and may gag up mucus while coughing. This can leave a cat with a pronounced lack of energy and put them in a weakened state; cats can die from an asthma attack.

## Asthma Causes

Most cases of feline asthma can be traced to an allergic reaction that occurs when a cat breathes in any substance that stimulates their immune system. The lungs suffer inflammation resulting from an over-reaction by their immune system to the foreign substance in their bodies.

Several common factors can trigger asthma attacks in cats. These include exposure to allergens like pollen, mold, dust, and cigarette smoke. It can be a result of ingesting foods to which the cat is allergic. Other health problems sometimes play a role. Heart problems, obesity, or infection with parasites can exacerbate asthma signs. Stress can also induce asthma attacks in felines.

Asthma typically develops in cats who are two years and older. Female cats have been found to develop asthma in higher numbers than male cats.

## Preventing Asthma

There is no cure for feline asthma, but there are ways to reduce symptoms in your cat. Medication prescribed by a veterinarian is one tool cat owners can use to help their pets manage asthma attacks. Veterinarians can prescribe oral medications, or even have you use an inhaler on your cat.

Cat owners can also make things easier on their pet by reducing their exposure to chemicals and allergens that serve as asthma triggers. Keeping your cat fit through exercise and a healthy diet will also reduce the risk of suffering asthma attacks. Finally, reducing stress for your cat can be helpful as stress tends to worsen asthma symptoms when an attack occurs.

Asthma does not need to lessen your cat's quality of life. Recognising the symptoms and doing your part to prevent and treat asthma attacks will help keep this condition from threatening their life.

Source:  
"Asthma," ASPCA.

### Professional Feline Asthma Care

No treatment of feline asthma is complete without your veterinarian's involvement. If you suspect your cat may be suffering from asthma, taking them in for a checkup is essential.

Your veterinarian can run tests to determine if your cat suffers from asthma. They will perform a physical exam and do specific diagnostic tests to determine what is causing the breathing problem. These tests can include radiographs (x-rays), blood work, parasite tests for heartworm, and bronchial samples.

Once asthma is diagnosed, your veterinarian will prescribe medicine and outline the best therapy for your cat.



## Caring for Ageing Pets

It's easy to forget that our pets are ageing seven times faster than us! As our pets get older, they are more susceptible to age-related diseases.

Many things in life are unavoidable (like taxes!) and ageing has to be on the top of the list for all of us.

Often signs of ageing can be subtle, but there are some key signs that show us that our beloved companions are ageing.

Is your pet showing any of the 7 Key Signs of Ageing?

- Difficulty rising or walking; difficulty going to the toilet?
- Drinking or eating more/less?
- Bad breath?
- Sleeps more than usual?
- Has some lump or bumps?
- Changes in behaviour?
- Urinating more?

The key to a long and healthy life is early detection of serious health issues. Our senior pets can suffer from cancer, diabetes, poor kidney function, liver failure, heart disease, arthritis or obesity.

That's why it's important for your senior pet to have a health exam twice a year.

At your pet's Senior Wellness Exam your veterinarian will perform a physical examination from nose to tail including:

- Joint and arthritis check
- Lumps and bumps
- Eyes and ear
- Teeth and skin
- Temperature, respiratory and pulse check

Contact Port Kennedy Veterinary Hospital and book your pet for a Senior Wellness Check today!

## Our Cat Adoption Program

Stray animals have all spent varying degrees of time living away from human contact and fending for themselves. They may have been abandoned, lost, born on the street, or experienced some kind of abuse or trauma. These events can impact how animals relate to people and can result in them being unsocialised and frightened.



If you have found a stray kitten or litter of kittens it is important to intervene and rescue them as quickly as possible. The younger they are the greater their ability to form

relationships with humans. This, combined with the right handling and care, will offer you the greatest chance to socialise them. Socialisation is extremely important and will affect their quality of life and ability to be rehomed.

PKVH offers an "Adoption Package" for anyone wishing to adopt one of our felines in our adoption program. The cost of the package is \$173.00 and includes standard vaccinations, up-to-date flea-and worm treatments, micro-chipping, sterilisation, and a bag of Hills Science Diet biscuits.

**Meet Petey and Manu!** Our two handsome kittens looking for their own furrever homes. These brothers are approximately 10 weeks old, vet checked, vaccinated, wormed, micro-chipped and sterilized.



Please contact us should wish to meet Petey and Manu and consider them as an addition to your family.

\*All animals offered through the clinic adoption program have passed a strict isolation period and health assessment prior to being made available for re-homing. Places available on this program are strictly limited. We are committed to ensuring that each animal offered for adoption is matched to the most suitable home environment and family. CONDITIONS APPLY.