

**JULY
2026**

The Better Pet Gazette

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comfort through the
cold

caring for senior pets in winter

As pets age, colder weather can make arthritis and joint stiffness more noticeable.

During winter, a few simple changes around the home can help keep senior pets comfortable, warm, and moving more easily.

Bedding placement is especially important. Keep your pet's bed away from cold tiles, windows, and draughty doorways. Raised beds or thick orthopedic bedding can provide extra cushioning for aging joints while also helping retain body heat. Adding soft blankets can make resting areas even cosier.

Warmth strategies can also make a big difference. Heated pet mats or microwavable heat packs designed for pets may help soothe sore muscles and joints — just be sure they are used safely and according to manufacturer instructions. For pets with thinner coats or reduced mobility, indoor pet jumpers

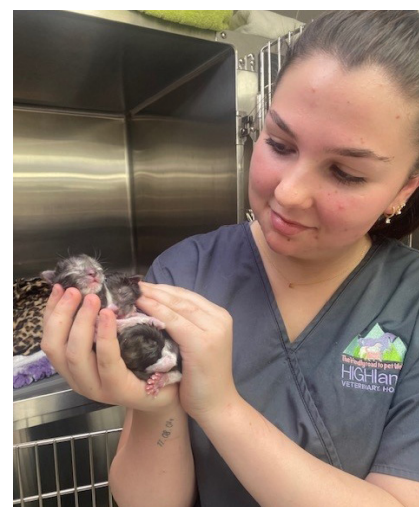
can provide additional warmth during particularly chilly days and nights.

Cold drafts can worsen stiffness and discomfort in older pets. Check for areas where cold air enters the home and try to block drafts where possible. Keeping your pet in the warmest part of the house, especially overnight, can help them stay more comfortable.

Regular gentle movement is also important during winter. Short walks, light play, and encouraging your pet to change position regularly can help maintain mobility and circulation.

If you notice your senior pet slowing down, struggling to rise, or appearing uncomfortable during colder weather, our team is always here to help with advice and tailored care options.

Did you know that 19–25 July is Veterinary Assistant Week — the perfect time to celebrate the huge hearts behind the gentle care our tiniest patients receive.



The Better Pet Gazette is a monthly newsletter full of informative articles and tips on pet health as well as updates on what's happening at the practice. We hope you enjoy the read!

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need an appointment?
BOOK ONLINE



Book Your Pet's
6-month Checkup!



As pets enter their golden years, regular preventative care becomes even more important. Six-monthly health checks can help detect problems early and keep your senior pet feeling their best.

These visits allow us to monitor dental health, manage weight and mobility, and identify signs of arthritis or other age-related conditions. Wellness blood testing can also provide valuable insight into organ function, immune health, and hidden illnesses such as kidney or liver disease — often before symptoms appear.

Early detection means earlier treatment and better long-term outcomes. Combined with an annual senior blood profile, regular check-ups are one of the best ways to support your pet's health and wellbeing as they age.

need an appointment?
BOOK ONLINE

small signs, big problem

understanding UTIs in pets



Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are more common in cats and dogs than many pet owners realise. They can cause significant discomfort and, if left untreated, may lead to more serious complications.

The good news is that when caught early, UTIs are usually straightforward to diagnose and treat.

What Causes a UTI?

UTIs occur when bacteria enter the urinary tract and multiply, leading to inflammation and irritation. Some pets may be more prone to infection due to factors such as age, underlying health conditions (like diabetes), bladder stones, reduced immune function, or changes in normal urinary habits.

Signs to Watch For

Symptoms can vary, but common signs include:

- **Straining or difficulty urinating**
- **Frequent attempts to urinate**
- **Accidents in the house or outside the litter tray**
- **Blood in the urine**
- **Strong or unusual-smelling urine**
- **Excessive licking**
- **General discomfort or behavioural changes such as restlessness, hiding, or irritability**

Cats and Dogs May Show Different Clues

In cats, urinary issues are sometimes mistaken for stress or behavioural problems, particularly if they stop using the litter tray or begin toileting in unusual places. However, these behaviours can be an important

warning sign of underlying urinary disease and should never be ignored.

In dogs, owners may notice increased urgency, more frequent toilet breaks, or unexpected accidents—even in well house-trained pets.

Why Early Attention Matters

UTIs can worsen quickly if not treated. In some cases, what appears to be a simple infection may also be linked to bladder inflammation or crystals, which can increase the risk of blockages or recurrent issues. Early veterinary assessment helps identify the underlying cause and ensures the most effective treatment plan.

When Is It an Emergency?

If your pet is straining but unable to pass any urine, this is an emergency. Urinary blockages can become life-threatening very quickly, especially in male cats, and require immediate veterinary attention.

What Should You Do?

If you notice any of these signs, book an appointment as soon as possible. Prompt treatment helps relieve discomfort and prevents complications.

If you are concerned about your pet, our team is here to help. **Call us on 4872 1144.**



This month's heroes are a courageous Burmese mum and her beautiful kittens, who recently made a dramatic entrance into the world via an emergency C-section here at the clinic.

When complications arose during delivery, mum showed remarkable resilience, and her tiny kittens proved just as determined from their very first moments. Thanks to swift veterinary care and their fighting spirit, both mum and babies came through beautifully.

These little "chocolate" Burmese kittens may be light in colour now, but their rich chocolate coats will develop over the coming weeks. We're delighted to report that mum and her kittens are thriving.

A wonderful reminder that heroes come in all sizes!

upcoming

f LIVE TALK

breeding ethics

should some breeds still exist?

facebook.com/highlandsveterinaryhospital

f LIVE Highlands Veterinary Hospital
08 JULY • 2026 • 12:30PM

Veterinarian Dr Diederik Gelderman will cover the ethical concerns surrounding selective breeding, the health challenges faced by some modern dog and cat breeds, and whether appearance should ever come at the expense of animal welfare.

Join us on your lunch break:
08.07.26 @ 12:30pm

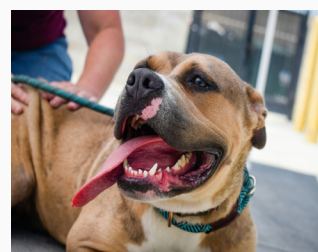
Join Dr Deiderik for an engaging upcoming live talk exploring the ethical considerations of selective breeding practices, including how certain physical traits have been prioritised over health and welfare in some popular dog and cat breeds. The talk will also examine the common health challenges seen in selectively bred animals today, such as breathing difficulties, joint problems, and other inherited conditions. Dr Deiderik will also address the debate around whether breed appearance and standards should ever take precedence over long-term wellbeing..

Please listen in on Wed, 8 July at 12.30pm on our Facebook page **here**. If you are unable to attend this Facebook talk, you can find the recording in the Live section under the More menu for up to one month after the live - or click **here**.

JUNE FACEBOOK LIVE TALK RECAP

"The Hidden Signs of Stress in Dogs"

Dr Deiderik explains that dog behaviour is often misunderstood, particularly when it comes to signs of stress. People frequently interpret behaviours as friendliness, happiness, or obedience when they may actually be subtle indicators of discomfort, anxiety, or conflict. It's important to recognise a dog's body language—such as posture, facial expressions, movement, and avoidance behaviours—in context rather than relying on assumptions. Learning to identify these often-overlooked stress signals can improve communication, welfare, and safety for both dogs and the people interacting with them.



This livestream video is available until the 10 July, to watch **click here**. To view any of the clinic's videos, just go **here**.

feeding smarter

common nutrition mistakes

We all want what's best for our pets, which is why it can be hard to hear that what you're currently doing may not be the ideal care for your pet's wellbeing.

Common Nutrition Mistakes

Did you know that up to **60%** of cats and dogs are overweight or obese? This can be overfeeding their regular diet, too many treats, or too much human food. Excess weight significantly increases the risk of osteoarthritis, meaning prevention is not only better for your pet's comfort and long-term health, but more cost-effective than treating chronic disease later in life.

If you suspect your pet may be overweight, it's important to seek veterinary advice rather than attempting to manage it alone. There are specially formulated diets designed to support controlled, healthy weight loss under supervision. Sudden weight gain or loss can signal underlying issues and shouldn't be ignored. If you notice any rapid changes, please book in an appointment with us as soon as possible.

Failure To Adjust Diet To Changing Needs

Keeping your pet on the same diet throughout different life stages may mean changing nutritional needs

are not being met. That's why we recommend maintaining twice-yearly visits with us as we can continue to review your pet's diet to support their overall wellbeing. Tweaking their diet can often be the key to helping your pet with things like their digestion, coat health, weight management, and energy levels. Reassessing your pet's nutrition is particularly important in households with multiple pets.

Ignoring Veterinary Advice Or Depending On Unreliable Information

Just like human diets, there are often multiple voices saying different things about how to best care for your pet. There are some great resources online that we may recommend, but your primary guide to your pet's health should always be our advice in practice.

Trend-based diets and unregulated feeding practices are not always supported by veterinary evidence. It's important to remember that not every dog and cat have the same nutritional needs, so following unverified advice can mean that not all your pet's individual dietary requirements are met. We can provide evidence-based guidance tailored to your pet's specific health, age and lifestyle needs.

**your dog still
needs protection
in winter!**

Many people assume fleas, ticks, and worms disappear during winter — but parasites can still be active during the colder months, especially indoors and during warmer winter days. Continuing your dog's parasite prevention year-round is the best way to keep them protected and healthy.

This winter, we're making it even easier to stay on track with your pet's protection. **Purchase 6 months of NexGard Spectra and receive 1 BONUS month FREE!**

NexGard Spectra provides broad protection against fleas, ticks, mites, heartworm, and intestinal worms in one tasty monthly chew.

Speak to our team to find the right protection plan for your dog this season.



**NexGard
SPECTRA®**