



**MARCH  
2026**

# The Better Pet Gazette

highlandsveterinaryhospital.com.au



**Noticing patchy hair loss or red, irritated skin on your puppy can be worrying—but the cause is often something far less scary than it looks. One common culprit is Demodex, a microscopic mite that most dogs live with quite happily.**

### What is Demodex?

Demodex are microscopic mites that live in the hair follicles of dogs. The good news? They're normal residents on the skin of most dogs and usually cause no problems at all.

### How Do Puppies Get Demodex?

Puppies pick up Demodex from their mum during the first few days of life. It's not contagious to other dogs or people. In young pups, their immune system is still developing, which can allow the mites to multiply and cause hair loss, redness or mild crusting—often around the face, legs or body.

### How Is Demodex Treated?

In many mild puppy cases, Demodex

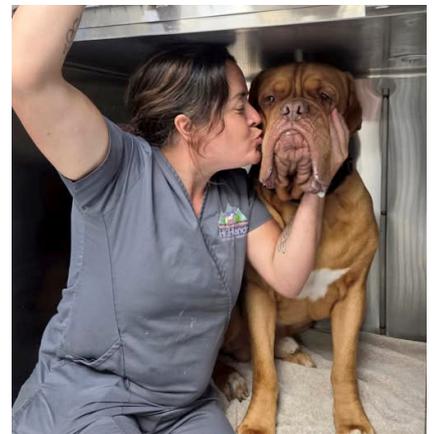
can resolve on its own as the immune system matures. If treatment is needed, we use safe and effective medications to reduce the mite numbers and support skin healing. We also look for and manage any underlying issues that might be slowing your pup's recovery.



This microscope image (left) show just how small (and sneaky!) these mites are—but with the right care, affected pups usually make a full recovery and grow out of it happily.

If you notice hair loss or skin changes in your puppy, it's always worth having it checked early.

*If you suspect your puppy or adult dog may have mites, call us today on 4872 1144 to book an appointment.*



*Deluxe cuddle package administered by Nurse Mel to Maverick, who took it all like a champ during his surgery recently — tough on the outside, but secretly loving the attention!*



*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**

# NexGard Spectra special

Keep your dog protected and save at the same time!

For a limited time, when you **buy 6 months of NexGard Spectra**, you'll receive a **BONUS month FREE!**

NexGard Spectra covers your dog against: fleas, ticks, mites, heartworm and intestinal worms.

One tasty monthly chew = complete peace of mind.

Pop in and see our team to grab yours, or give us a call if you'd like to put one aside. Your dog will thank you! This great-value offer won't last forever, so don't miss your chance to stock up and save.



## pet poison panic!

*what's toxic,  
what's not,  
and what to do!*

March is Pet Poison Prevention Awareness month. Did you know that many everyday household items can be dangerous to pets, and poisoning remains one of the most common veterinary emergencies we see?

**F**oods that are perfectly safe for humans—such as chocolate, grapes, raisins, onions, garlic, and alcohol—can cause serious illness or even death in pets, sometimes in very small amounts. Xylitol, a sweetener found in sugar-free gum and lollies, is particularly dangerous for dogs and can lead to fatal liver failure.

### Common Household Poisons

Human medications are another major risk. Painkillers like aspirin, paracetamol, and ibuprofen, along with antidepressants and cold medicines can be deadly if ingested by pets. Household chemicals also pose a serious threat, including cleaning products, antifreeze, pesticides, and paints. Products designed to kill pests—such as ant baits, rat poisons, and slug pellets—are especially hazardous.

### Dangers in the Garden

Many common Australian plants are toxic to pets, including lilies, azaleas, sago palm, oleander, and cycads. Even plants often considered harmless, such as daffodils, ivy, and rubber trees, can cause severe reactions if chewed or eaten.

### Safer Alternatives

Thankfully, there are safer alternatives when it comes to both food and greenery. In moderation, foods like apples (without seeds), carrots,

cooked pumpkin, plain rice, and lean meats are generally safe for pets. If you're choosing plants, options such as African violets, bamboo palm, bird's nest fern, bromeliads, rosemary, spider plants, and ponytail palms are non-toxic and pet-friendly.

### What to Do if Your Pet Is Poisoned

Pets that have been poisoned may show signs such as vomiting, diarrhoea, excessive drooling, lethargy, tremors, seizures, loss of coordination, or sudden changes in behaviour. If you notice any of these symptoms, seek veterinary care immediately:

- 1. Stay Calm:** Panicking can make things worse for both you and your pet.
- 2. Remove Access:** Take away any remaining poison and prevent further exposure.
- 3. Identify the Substance:** If possible, determine what your pet ingested—this helps the vet provide targeted treatment.
- 4. Do Not Induce Vomiting:** Do not try to make your pet vomit; some substances can cause more harm if vomited.
- 5. Contact a Vet or Helpline:** Call us at 4872 1144 or the Animal Poisons Helpline (1300 869 738) immediately for advice.



Young puppies and kittens may be tiny, but the courage they show at their very first vet visit is enormous.

Everything is new—the smells, the sounds, the cool exam table, and the unfamiliar hands checking them over. For such small creatures, it's a world of sensory overload.

Yet they face it with wide eyes and trusting hearts. Every hesitant paw step, soft meow, or wagging tail is a reminder that heroism isn't always dramatic.

# upcoming

## f LIVE TALK

### pets *on* pills

are behaviour problems being medicalised?

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**f LIVE** Highlands Veterinary Hospital  
04 MAR · 2026 · 12:30PM



Join us on your lunch break:  
**04.03.26**  
**@ 12:30pm**



**Veterinarian Dr Diederik Gelderman** explores whether we're too quick to medicate pets for behavioural issues, and how to tell when medication helps—or when other solutions might be better.

The growing use of medication for pet behaviour has raised questions about whether normal animal behaviours are being medicalised. While medication can significantly improve welfare for pets with genuine anxiety or trauma, it shouldn't replace training, environmental enrichment, and realistic owner expectations. Join Dr Diederik as he explains how to tell the difference between normal behaviour and true distress—and when medication really helps.

*Please listen in on Wed, 4 March 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**.*

### FEBRUARY FACEBOOK LIVE TALK RECAP

#### “Too Hot to Handle: Recognising Heat Exhaustion in Dogs”

Hot days can be tough on pets, and they rely entirely on us to keep them safe. Fresh, cool water should always be available, and shaded, well-ventilated areas are essential. Walk dogs early in the morning or later in the evening when surfaces are cooler and keep exercise gentle. If the ground is too hot for your hand, it's too hot for their paws.



Some dangers are absolute. Never leave a cat, dog, or any animal in a parked car — temperatures inside can skyrocket within minutes. Avoid tying pets outdoors in direct sun, skip long trips in extreme heat, and don't assume a fan is enough to cool them. Watch for panting, drooling, or lethargy, and bring them indoors at the first sign of distress.

*To watch this talk **click here**. To view any of Dr Deiderik's past live sessions, just go **here** - it will be available for one month after the live.*

# 3



## steps to shape you and your pet's 2026 routine

We know how quickly New Year routines can unravel as the year goes on, especially for our pets. As always, we're here to help guide you with the best care for your dog. That's why we've put together our three simple steps to ensure your dog stays at their happiest and healthiest throughout the year.

### 1.

#### Set up your appointments.

Keeping up with regular check-ups is essential for building your 2026 pet care routine. We recommend visiting the clinic twice a year, which will include a dental check-up, as well as ensuring your dog's vaccinations are up to date. We also offer a yearly in-clinic parasite prevention injection, giving your dog a full year of protection.

### 2.

#### Get your at-home care sorted:

Establishing a consistent nutrition and diet plan is key. Just like us, nutritional needs evolve as your dog ages, so ongoing monitoring and small adjustments are important. The right food and other support like parasite prevention, supplements, and at-home dental care can make all the difference. At your regular check-ups, we can go through your pet's current routine and help fine-tune it as required to ensure it's just right for your dog.

### 3.

#### Reassess your dog's needs.

Time moves quickly, and when you see your dog every day, it's easy to miss subtle changes. Now is a great time to check your dog's weight and reassess their energy levels. For example, if your dog has too much energy at bed time, set new daily walking goals. If you have any concerns about their health, think about what information you'd like to discuss with us so we can better understand what you're experiencing at home. This may include changes in activity levels, behaviour, or temperament.

*\*\* It's important to keep an eye out for any physical or behavioural changes in your pet. If something feels off, give us a call or bring your pet in for a check-up. You can contact us on 4872 1144.*



## Helping Paws

HIGHLANDS VETERINARY HOSPITAL

Helping Paws was created to support pets and their people when urgent medical care can't be put on hold due to financial stress. Because in a true emergency, there is no "right time" — there's only the need for help right now.

As you may already know, we like to hold regular raffles that are designed to support pet owners in their time of need. The funds raised through our Helping Paws raffle sales help local pets when life deals a low blow.

Prizes include the following:

- Pet grooming products
- Premium pet food
- Premium treats
- Gift vouchers from local businesses
- Pet toys, plus so much more...

Tickets are for sale at our reception. The cost per ticket is \$4.00 or get 3x tickets for \$10! Thanks go out to all our local businesses who have donated prizes; we appreciate your support.