

# The Better Pet Gazette

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4

things to look out  
for this autumn



Autumn brings subtle changes, but winter can have a bigger impact on your dog's routine. Now is the perfect time to make small adjustments before the colder months set in...

To help your dog transition comfortably, here are a few things to keep an eye on in the coming months.

**1. Parasites:** Fleas do not disappear when the weather cools, in fact, they love warm homes. Make sure to continue using your dog's parasite prevention regularly, and vacuum areas where your dog spends time to help keep your home flea-free.

**2. Skin and coat changes:** As we head into the colder months, your dog may shed their lighter summer coat and start growing a thicker winter coat. Increasing brushing can help support this transition. If your dog is prone to dry skin, you might also consider an additional skin and coat supplement.

**3. Weight gain and activity changes:**

Your dog may naturally become less active as it gets colder, especially if you're taking them for fewer walks. Encourage movement and mental stimulation with new toys and extra playtime. You might also consider adjusting their diet and nutrition to help maintain a healthy weight and energy levels throughout the season.

**2. Allergies:** Autumn is prime time for allergies: dust from heaters, pollen from grasses and weeds, and mould from damp conditions. Common symptoms include sneezing, itchy skin and red, irritated eyes. If you suspect your dog is affected, bring them in for a check-up so we can diagnose properly.

*Little Ewan, the West Highland White Terrier (Westie) puppy, was in for his vaccinations recently and handled it like a champ... although we suspect he believes he was here purely to model for photos and collect cuddles!*



*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**



## Show Off Your Pet in Our **PET GALLERY**



*We know your pet is something special—and we'd love to feature them in our online Pet Gallery!*

*Send us your favourite photo, along with a fun detail about their personality, habits, or favourite things to do. Whether they're goofy, cuddly, or full of energy, we want to celebrate what makes them unique.*

*Check out the gallery [here](#). We can't wait to see your furry (or feathered!) family members.*



## *why is my pet* **shedding** *so much?*

**A**s the seasons change, many pet owners notice an increase in shedding around the home. Autumn coat changes are completely normal—but understanding why they happen can help you manage them more easily.

### Seasonal Coat Changes

One of the main reasons pets shed in autumn is the change in daylight hours and temperature. Pets' coat cycles are hormonally controlled, meaning their bodies respond to shorter days rather than just cooler weather. As daylight decreases in autumn, dogs and cats begin adjusting their coats in preparation for winter.

During the warmer months, many pets carry a lighter summer coat. In autumn, they shed this coat to make way for a thicker, insulating winter coat that will help keep them warm as temperatures drop.

For pets with double coats—such as many dog breeds—this can result in noticeable hair loss over several weeks. While spring shedding is often heavier, autumn shedding is still very common and can last up to six or seven weeks. Australia's climate also plays a role. Even in milder regions, fluctuating temperatures between warm days and cooler nights can trigger coat changes.

Pets that spend time outdoors are more likely to experience clear seasonal shedding patterns, while indoor pets exposed to artificial lighting may shed more consistently

year round, with a slight increase during seasonal transitions.

### Breed and Coat Type Matters

Breed and coat type also influence how much shedding occurs. Long haired and double coated breeds tend to shed more noticeably, while short haired or single coated pets may shed less but still go through the same natural process. Although seasonal shedding is normal, regular grooming during autumn is essential. Brushing helps remove loose hair, prevents matting, and supports healthy new coat growth. A balanced diet and good overall health also contribute to a healthy coat.

### When to Be Concerned

If shedding appears excessive, patchy, or is accompanied by skin irritation, it's always best to consult us to rule out underlying health concerns.

### Autumn Grooming Tips

- **Brush more often:** Regular brushing helps remove loose fur and supports healthy winter coat growth.
- **Use the right brush:** De-shedding tools are especially helpful for thick or double coats.
- **Keep an eye on skin:** Excessive hair loss, redness, or itching isn't normal — contact us if you notice changes.

While autumn shedding can feel like a lot, it's simply part of your pet's natural cycle—and with the right care, it's easy to keep their coat healthy and under control.



*Not every hero wears a cape—some start out as pets who simply can't stand having their paws touched.*

At HIGHlands, we find that a gentle, patient approach helps build trust and makes grooming or health checks much easier:

- **Start slow.** Let your pet see your hands and approach them calmly. Begin by touching areas they're already comfortable with—shoulders, legs—before moving toward the paws.
- **Pair touch with something positive.** Soft praise, treats, or a favourite toy can help your pet associate paw handling with good things.
- **Use brief, light contact.** Hold the paw for just a second or two at first. Gradually increase the time as your pet relaxes.
- **Watch their body language.**

If they pull away, stiffen, or look uneasy, pause and give them space. Short, frequent sessions help normalise the experience and reduce sensitivity over time, taking your pet's tolerance from zero to hero!

# upcoming

## f LIVE TALK

*should all cats and dogs be*  
**desexed?**  
the great snip debate

Join us on your lunch break:  
06.05.26  
@ 12:30pm

@ facebook.com / highlandsveterinaryhospital

**f LIVE** Highlands Veterinary Hospital  
06 MAY · 2026 · 12:30PM

Veterinarian **Dr Diederik Gelderman** will explore the pros, cons, and potential health and behavioural impacts of desexing, challenging the idea that every cat and dog automatically needs the procedure.

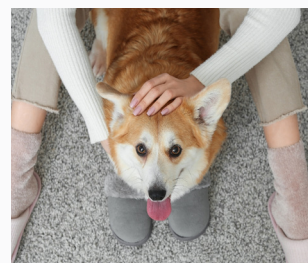
Desexing is often recommended in Australia—and for good reason. It helps prevent unwanted litters, reduces pressure on shelters, and can minimise behaviours like roaming, fighting, and hormone-driven stress. But it's not always a one-size-fits-all decision. While desexing can lower the risk of some health issues, it may increase the risk of others. Factors like breed, lifestyle, and overall health all play a role—so the “right” choice can look different for every pet. Join Dick's upcoming livestream, where he'll break down the pros, the cons, and the latest thinking—so you can make a confident, informed decision.

*Please listen in on Wed, 6 May 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](#).*

### APRIL FACEBOOK LIVE TALK RECAP

#### “Pets on Pills: Are Behaviour Problems Being Medicalised?”

In his latest livestream, Dick explored the growing use of behavioural medications in pets. While these can be vital for severe anxiety or trauma, he highlighted that many common behaviours—like chewing or scratching—are often natural responses to boredom or unmet needs, not medical issues.



One of his key messages was that not all “problem behaviours” are medical - they are often pets simply expressing natural instincts, or responding to boredom or an environment that isn't meeting their needs. Sometimes, small changes at home can make all the difference.

*This video is available until the 19 April, to watch [click here](#). To view any of Dr Deiderik's past live sessions, just go [here](#).*



**N**ational Rescue Dog Day is observed annually on 20 May in Australia. Even if you can't adopt a pet right now, there are still so many meaningful ways you can support animal rescue...

### Foster a Pet

Fostering gives pets a safe, loving home while they wait for adoption. It also helps rescue organisations free up space to save more animals. Even short-term fostering (a few weeks) can be life-changing.

### Donate (It All Adds Up!)

Rescues rely heavily on donations to cover food, vet bills, medications, desexing and emergency surgeries. You can donate:

- Money
- Pet food
- Bedding & towels
- Toys & enrichment items

Even a small contribution helps more than you think.

### Share, Like & Comment

Sharing adoption posts on social media helps pets reach a bigger audience. That simple "share" could connect an animal with their forever family.

### Support Responsible Pet Ownership

Encourage desexing, vaccination, microchipping and preventative care.

Reducing unwanted litters and preventable illness is one of the biggest ways we can help reduce rescue numbers long-term.

### Volunteer Your Time

Many organisations need help with:

- Walking dogs
- Cleaning Enclosures
- Transporting animals to vet appointments
- Fundraising events

A few hours a month can make a huge impact.

### Organisations to Contact

If you'd like to help support rescue animals, here are some organisations that would love to talk to you:

- Animaid
- Little Beans Cat & Kitten Rescue
- Paws & Reins
- Green Paws Animal Sanctuary

At Highlands Veterinary Hospital, we see firsthand how much rescue groups do for our community. Whether you foster, donate, volunteer or simply spread the word — you're helping save lives.

You don't have to adopt to make a difference!



## Helping Paws

HIGHLANDS VETERINARY HOSPITAL

Our Helping Paws fundraising initiative was created to meet an urgent need — to raise money to help support pets and their owners when money is tight or when treatment can't be postponed until a "better time." With some medical emergencies, that better time never arrives, and animals needing care can't wait. Helping Paws provides help when it's needed most.

We invite local community members and businesses to back this cause by donating items for the gift baskets we give away as prizes in our regular raffles. To everyone who has donated prizes or purchased tickets, your support has made a real difference — thank you!

One ticket costs \$4, or three tickets for \$10 — tickets can be purchased at our reception.