

Dr. Steve Heap
BVSc. CertVOphthal
Dr. Michele McMaster
BVSc.
Dr. Catherine Morganti
BVSc. CertSAM. MRCVS
Dr. Kirsty Thompson
BVMs.
Dr. Sara Hodgson
BVSc. BSc.



Cnr Hoon Hay Rd & Coppell Place
Christchurch
Ph (03) 338 2534
Fax (03) 339 8624
Email mcmasterandheap@yahoo.co.nz
www.mcmasterheap.co.nz

OPEN 7 DAYS

Welcome to WINTER!

We have just escaped to Berkeley, near San Francisco, for the school holidays to see our eldest son Connor who is at college there. A great break away where we got the chance to see Connor play tennis, meet his friends and just get to know the place he'll call home for the next 3 years. We also visited Alcatraz, rode bikes over the Golden Gate Bridge, hiked in the Yosemite National Park and explored a little of the Sierra Nevada's. I must say the USA surprised me. People were overly friendly and interesting, the country is massive and actually quite beautiful and drivers on the roads are so courteous. Great to be back home again with our animals. Lola holidayed in Whangarei with Steve's mum and the cats shared the room up stairs at the clinic. We were all pleased to see each other. Dylan has just arrived home from Beijing where he played 2 International U18 tennis tournaments. He won and 13 out of 17 matches played over 14 days and made the doubles final with another kiwi Finley.

We would really love you all to LIKE our Facebook page. We are now posting interesting cases weekly, videos and great giveaways monthly. We want to be able to share with you all the amazing things that are done by our super team and share pet information we think is important.

We'd also like to welcome three super new nurses to the McMaster and Heap family - Jaime, Megan and Katie. All of them have just slotted into the McMaster & Heap way of doing things and seem to enjoy the busy workload and daily adventures to be had.

We have a new addition to the Heap household.....Maximus, a little ginger boy who took Steve's fancy. Spartacus was looking depressed after losing his old mate Piper so Steve was on the hunt for a ginger playmate (had to be ginger!!). We desex Cats Protection League kittens now so we have a selection of cute little critters to choose from. Spartacus was dubious at first but is now teaching him " the ways". They are so cute together.

Congratulations to Sonya and her black Labrador Brave (son of Dart), who recently in April won his first Novice walk up trial in Auckland. At only 1 year of age, he was the youngest dog in the Championship and quite frankly the biggest star. We are so proud of them both. The long hours of training in all weather certainly has paid off.

Look after yourselves and your pets this Winter. We welcome any feedback on ourselves and what we do and we're always here for advice or just a chat. Thanks all your support and loyalty the past 18 years. We do appreciate it.

Michele, Steve, Lola and the team



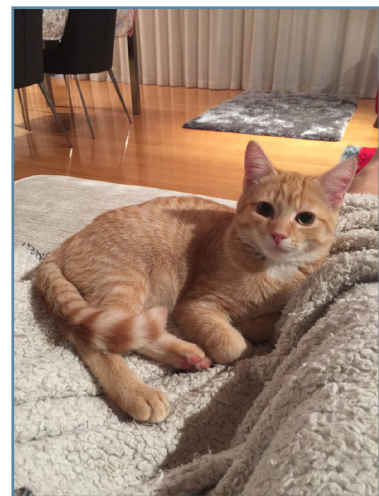
Steve at Berkeley



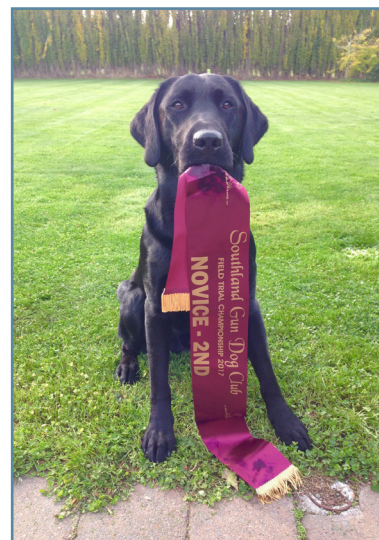
Steve and his boys at Berkeley



Finley and Dylan runners up in ITF doubles in Beijing



Our kitten MAXIMUS



Brave the champion

THE IMPORTANCE OF BALANCED NUTRITION IN PUPPIES

Recently we examined a gorgeous 8 week old German Shepherd puppy called "Ted", as his new owners were concerned with how he was walking and that he had just hurt his mouth playing with their other dog. Ted was the result of a caesarean birth and his 14 year old mother never had milk let down so Ted was raised on a raw meat diet very early on.

On examination we discovered that Ted's walk was very strange and he appeared underweight. He appeared weak and flaccid and his legs and joints were very sore and swollen all over. Extension of his joints hurt. Just playing with the other dog had resulted in his upper jaw (maxilla) fracturing. Ted had been weaned from his mum very early and put onto an exclusively raw food diet by the previous owners. This combination of early nutrition resulted in Ted not getting enough calcium to strengthen and grow healthy bones causing abnormalities and predisposing him to brittle bones and stress fractures, bowed legs, luxated and very painful joints. Basically a life of pain, suffering and not able to enjoy the freedom of being able to run and play normally.

Ted was fully examined and bloods, urine and radiographs were taken. Ted was the perfect little patient allowing us to handle him without sedative. He had some abnormalities in the blood screening but mostly these pointed to muscle damage and possibly some bowel absorption issues due to the diet he was on. His kidney and liver function appeared fine.

The radiographs confirmed our suspicions of generalised osteopenia. Osteopenia is decreased bone density but not to the extent of osteoporosis. This decreased bone density will lead to bone fragility and the breaking of multiple bones if not successfully treated.

Ted's entire skeleton was lacking in calcium. We could see large gaps within his joints where bone had failed to be formed yet. A very different radiograph to puppies raised on their mothers and then placed onto a premium, commercial, balanced puppy food when weaned.

We decided to realign and suture Ted's jaw under anaesthetic immediately so he would be able to eat the correct nutrition for his life stage at home and so that he wouldn't be as painful. Lucky he hadn't suffered any damage to his teeth. He was discharged from our hospital on tramadol pain relief, antibiotics, STRICT cage rest (avoiding all exercise and play) and a canned premium puppy food to start off with.

Within just a week we saw a very different Ted back! He was walking extremely well, his jaw was healing and he had grown and gained 650gm! He looked great – happier and less painful.

A diet of high quality puppy food was continued and he was fed the recommended requirements for his weight and age. Extra oral calcium supplementation was not needed due to his balanced puppy food diet. We didn't want to unbalance the calcium/phosphorus ratio by adding in other supplements. A further two weeks later he was back for follow up radiographs and to check that his upper jaw was healing.

Again he looked incredible! The damage caused by an unbalanced diet initially was being corrected and the bones appeared denser radiographically and he was walking much more fluidly! His jaw was healing and now had some strength in it, so he could play rough and tumble like all puppies should without worrying about bones breaking!

With so many pet food options out there it can be confusing and difficult to know what is marketing hype from pet food manufacturers and what Veterinarians really recommend. You cannot determine suitability of a food



TED, the pup fed an unbalanced diet



An alert looking Ted



Xray of Ted showing brittle bones

by just looking at the pictures, Youtube videos or the marketing claims. Instead, you have to look for the AAFCO approved statement on the pet food label. This is the Association of American Feed Control Officials – a non-profit organization that sets standards for pet foods ensuring they provide adequate, balanced nutrition for your pets certain life stage.

Dietary requirements of puppies differ from those of adult dogs. They have different requirements for calcium and phosphorus, which are required for bone growth, and puppies have a higher calorie and protein requirement than adult dogs as they are growing so rapidly.

It's recommended that "growth" diets are fed until the puppy reaches approximately 80% of their expected adult size. This generally occurs at around 12 months of age for small and medium-breed dogs, and around 18-24 months for large and giant-breed dogs. So an adult diet should not generally speaking be fed to a puppy.

So far the prognosis for Ted long term would appear very good as long as he continues to be fed the prescribed diet until at least 80% of his growing is done. Recovery is usually rapid once the correct nutrition is fed provided no severe bony abnormalities have occurred in the interim. Improvement in skeletal mineralization is typically apparent within 3-4 weeks of instituting diet therapy. He is still on antibiotics and pain medication until his jaw fracture is completely healed and stable. He resents us opening his mouth but seems to have no trouble eating on his own. Ted is a work in progress but so far he's trekking in the right direction.

This article hopefully stresses the importance of discussing puppy nutrition with your health professional, so that you thoroughly understand the pros and cons of certain pet food diets on the market today and to make very sure you are doing the right thing by your new puppy. Check out the video on Facebook or on our website.

ABSCCESS IN A SNAKE NECK TURTLE

Yes we treat all creatures great and small! We had the pleasure of examining and treating 'Valeta' a 10 year old Snake Neck Turtle.

These are amazing animals and have really long necks which they can not pull back into their shells so they have to tuck it sideways for protection. They are aquatic and very placid, have webbed feet and a flattened grey/black shell to swim well in fresh water.

Valeta's owner had noticed she had a swelling on the side of her head which wasn't going away.

We suspected it was an abscess but needed to be sure, so we proceeded to take an xray of her skull and neck to see what was going on inside. The xray confirmed it was a soft tissue abscess so we could proceed with surgery.

We then anaesthetised her in a quiet warm room and surgically removed the deep abscess. She had a quick and unevenful recovery and she will feel a lot better now it has been removed and will heal over the next few weeks.

Our days are never dull and we love meeting the huge variety of peoples amazing pets.



Arrow highlights the abscess radio-graphically



The abscess visible right side face



Turtle undergoing anesthetic



Valeta being examined

UC DAVIS VETERINARY COLLEGE

Steve, Isaac and myself recently spent time at UC Davis in California, the #1 Veterinary school in the world. For 2 years running it has received this huge accolade and when you are there you can see why. It operates and is the size of a mini CHCH Public hospital. They are a teaching hospital as well as seeing referral patients and first opinion clients. Their specialities include 24/7 emergency and critical care, cardiology, neurology, ophthalmology, oncology and surgery. They were originally set up to see 5500 patients per year, last year they saw 50,000 patients.



UC Davis Vet school

Steve spent 2 days tagging along with Ophthalmology specialists, residents and students on rotation. First and second year students get at least 2 weeks of ophthalmology per year (27 years ago when I studied at Massey, 1 day was dedicated to "eyes"). He really enjoyed the collegial discussions on cases, sussing out all the latest equipment, chatting to the students and doing rounds with them. Steve came away pleased with his skills and expertise in ophthalmology, although a few pieces of equipment caught his eye, namely a new phacoemulsification machine for cataract surgeries.

EYE SURGERY IN AN OWL

Please watch the video on our Facebook page of Dr Steve Heap operating on Mr Owl, from Oxford Bird Rescue.

Mr Owl was attacked by a cat 2 weeks ago. There was a nasty scratch on the owl's cornea.

The eye was leaking due to the iris protruding through the corneal hole. Surgery was required to save the eye. Mr Owl needs 2 functioning eyes to hunt.



Steve and Mr Owl



Steve operating on Mr Owl

EYE TUMOUR

"Denny Crane", a 10 year old Affenpinscher, presented to Dr Steve Heap for a long standing, chronic 2 year problem with his right eye. It was originally thought Denny had suffered a scratch to the eye and that was why his eye often appeared sore, red and mucky.

Courses of antibiotics placed in the eye seemed to hold things at bay, but the eye was never right.

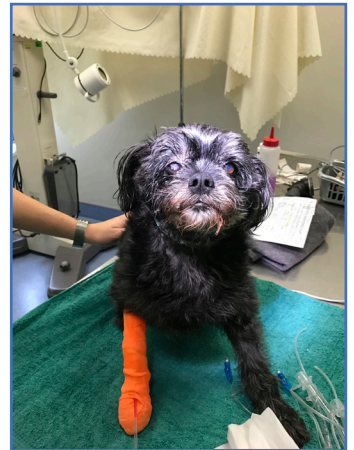
On closer examination of Denny's eye using a slitlamp microscope, Steve could see that the central portion of Denny's cornea had a raised, uneven fleshy looking growth attached. Steve, a small animal ophthalmologist for over 20 years now, has accumulated a lot of experience and knowledge and has seen a lot of weird eye diseases. Denny's growth looked particularly unusual and Steve had his suspicions about a squamous cell carcinoma (cancer) being the culprit.

Steve performed surgery to get a biopsy sample and sure enough, squamous cell carcinoma was confirmed. Steve wanted to ultimately try to save Denny's eye (the other option being enucleation where the eye is removed), so a fairly difficult conjunctival surgery was undertaken. This complex surgery involved carefully dissecting away the tumour and placing a graft (conjunctival pedicle flap) to reinforce the cornea and allow improved healing.

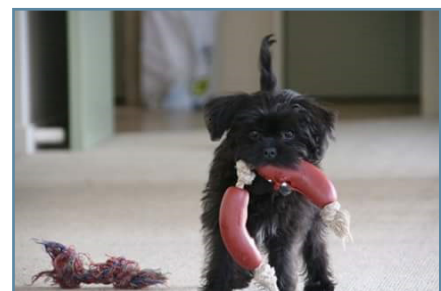
The surgery was a success and Denny recovered well on antibiotics, pain medications and anti-inflammatories. There is a very good chance he will keep his eye and it will be functional and comfortable for him.



Denny's eye tumour



Denny looking a little "spaced out" before surgery



Happy Denny



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