



Pet News

New Regulations Ban Dog Tail Docking and Dew Claw Removal

Our vets are educating clients about changes to the animal welfare regulations which came into effect on October 1st, 2018. The changes will make non-therapeutic dog tail docking and dog dew claw removal an offence, and the allowance for therapeutic procedures is only extended to those procedures performed by a vet to benefit a dogs welfare.

Veterinarian Dr Nina Field, from VetEnt Ashburton, defines tail docking as 'removing part of an animal's tail, by either reducing blood supply to the tail with a rubber ligature for a few days until the tail falls off, or severing the tail with surgical scissors or a scalpel.'

The docking of dog tails has been a common practice in New Zealand, done mostly for aesthetic reasons, convenience and as a perceived injury prevention method. Research shows that tail injuries are rare, and that there is no close relationship between whether breeds are docked and whether they are used for activities likely to cause tail injury (e.g. hunting). A dog's tail is important for balance, as well as communication with other dogs and humans. Gretchen, a client

at VetEnt Ashburton, and owner of two beautiful Boxers, says 'I couldn't get a dog with a docked tail, as to me it's like taking away their ability to smile, and the use of their tail to communicate.' On balance, given the infrequency of tail injuries and the vital role a tail plays in a dog's communication, routine tail docking has been deemed as unjustified.

A dew claw is the extra digit on the upper, inner part of a dog's foot. If the dog were human, the dew claw would be a thumb.

Dew claws are removed for a number of reasons, both functional and aesthetic. They can be overgrown and require trimming, and they can also catch on objects like fences as the dog is working or playing.

There are two types of dew claws, which dogs use for handling larger objects like bones, and in some breeds for changing direction when running. The first is an 'articulated' dew claw, meaning the claw is attached to the leg by joints and tendons; it's harder and more painful to remove.



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New Regulations Ban Dog Tailing and Dew Claw Removal *Continued...*

The second is a 'non-articulated' dew claw, which is attached by a flap of skin and some tissue, requiring less involvement to remove, but still a good deal of pain for the dog. Dr Field explains 'front dew claws are usually articulated, while rear dew claws are often non-articulated.'

There are benefits to retaining dew claws, and their removal causes undoubted stress and pain. Therefore the new regulations for dew claws are two-fold: front limb dew claws or articulated hind limb dew claws must not be removed at any age; and non-articulated hind limb dew claws must not be removed in a dog four days of age or older. The exception to the regulations is if the procedure is carried

out by a veterinarian who also uses pain relief. The new rules will be of particular note to breeders who are used to removing dew claws without the help of a vet.

Dr Field says 'the potential fines for violating the new regs can be hefty, up to \$3,000'. Vets will also be required (legally) to report any suspect tail docking or dew claw amputation to the SPCA. Field urges dog owners who have questions about dog tail docking or dew claws, or the new regulations, to 'get in touch with your local VetEnt clinic for a chat'.

Patient Profile: Pitch

Pitch the Labrador puppy is very lucky to be alive thanks to his owners quick acting and a bottle of vodka!

The inquisitive little pup was seen drinking anti-freeze from a bucket on one night and rushed straight into Cromwell VetEnt where the team had to act fast, first of all vet Jo ensured Pitch didn't absorb anymore from his

stomach. To do this he needed to have his stomach flushed under general anaesthetic.

Antifreeze contains Ethylene Glycol which can kill cats and dogs in very small amounts. Most pets die from the poisoning but if caught soon after ingestion, intravenous Ethanol can prevent ethylene glycol being metabolised into toxins that can lead

to seizures and kidney failure. Ethanol is very hard to come by but thankfully we have a great readily available alternative... vodka!

Pitch was hospitalised with a continuous intravenous infusion of vodka and, although a bit hungover, looks to be making a great recovery much to the relief of his doting owners Lisa and Hamish.



Email Newsletter

If you're reading this newsletter as a paper copy, did you know we send our newsletters by email too?

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ALLERGIES IN CATS AND DOGS

We are all susceptible to them, even our pets. So what are the main types of allergies in cats and dogs?

Flea Allergy:

Flea allergic dermatitis is the most common skin disease in dogs and cats. For the flea allergic patient, 100% flea control is essential for the pet to remain symptom-free. You may not see them, but that doesn't mean they aren't there. The allergy is caused by the flea's saliva, and it only takes a few bites to induce reaction. Also, the itchy pet often scratches so much that adult fleas are removed, making them hard to find.

“If fleas are the problem, why is my pet still itchy in the winter?”

In warm climates or in our homes, fleas may survive in low numbers year-round. Because flea allergies are so common, we recommend that complete flea control be instituted before proceeding with diagnostics for other allergies and that year-round flea control be maintained for all allergy patients.

Food Allergy:

Some pets develop specific hypersensitivities to components of their diets. The allergen is usually a major protein or carbohydrate ingredient such as beef, chicken, pork, corn, wheat or soy. Minor ingredients such as preservatives or dyes are also potential allergens. The diagnosis of a food allergy requires that we test your pet by feeding special strict diets that contain only ingredients that they have never eaten before. This is often achieved by feeding a prescription diet for a period of 10 to 16 weeks. If the symptoms are relieved a challenge is performed by feeding the former diet and watching for a return of the itching. If this occurs, a diagnosis of food allergy is confirmed.

Atopic Dermatitis:

Atopic dermatitis (AD) is an inherited predisposition to develop skin problems from exposure to variety of commonplace and otherwise harmless substances including

the pollens of weeds, grasses and trees, as well as house dust mites and mold spores. Diagnosis of AD is made based on the results of intradermal skin testing or by in vitro blood testing. Evaluating the results of these tests helps us compile a list of allergens for a “vaccine” to decrease the pet's sensitivity. Sometimes multiple skin and/or blood tests are necessary to accurately assess the patient's allergies.

Can allergies be Cured?

Unfortunately, there is no cure for allergies and they are usually a life-long problem. We seek to control allergies and improve the quality of life for both you and your pet by formulating a personalised programme of management that suits all involved with your pet's care.

Why would you recommend diagnostic testing?

Symptomatic drug therapy can help to reduce itching. Steroids, such as prednisone tablets in particular, are often employed to stop the itch. However, without addressing the underlying cause, the itching will return.

Long-term use of steroids can result in many health problems. This is the reason that we encourage diagnosis of the underlying cause of the allergy and more specific or less potentially harmful treatments.



“Moments Of Awesomeness Award”



Sherry Shi from VetEnt Darfield was the winner of the June “Moments of Awesomeness” award. This is a monthly company award which recognises some awesome contributions from our team.

Sherry is a new graduate at VetEnt Darfield, where she is part of the

VetEnt Graduate Programme and has been working with the team for four months. Sherry had her first really tricky case in early June where a patient was brought into clinic with complex symptoms and a diagnosis was not going to be simple, even for the most experienced vet.

Sherry carried out numerous examinations, blood tests, ultrasounds and blood transfusions with the support from another experienced vet, a good vet nurse and a skilled pathologist.

She lead the case and uncovered the issue, turning around her lovely Border Collie patient from being at deaths door to well on the road to a full recovery.

When patients present in life-or-death cases the clinic can be a high stress and often emotional environment, but Sherry was completely in her element and handled the case like a seasoned pro. The owners were very happy with how the patient has been treated and grateful for Sherry’s efforts and concern. We are sure it is the start of many more successes for Sherry!

Patient Profile: Sherman

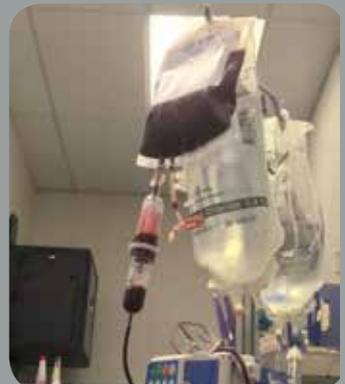
Meet Sherman, a special face at VetEnt Queenstown. Sherman is a gentle giant who has saved the lives of a number of dogs in Queenstown over the last few years.

He saved another life recently, sharing his blood with a very special patient. Thank you Sherman (and family) for every generous donation you have given over the years. The team at VetEnt Queenstown, the critically ill patients and their owners are eternally grateful.

If you have a pet who you think could be suitable to donate blood. Speak to one of the healthteam at your local VetEnt clinic.



Sherman is one of our Blood Donors and his very helpful owners drop everything and bring him into the clinic to donate when we have an emergency requiring blood.



FUN FACT:

As the weather is getting warmer it’s good to know... dogs only sweat from the bottoms of their feet, the way they can discharge heat is by panting!