



## What About Rover? Pets In Family Law Settlements

(Tibor Csapo – Kells the Lawyers, Wollongong )

These days, pets play an important role in the lives of many families. Many families treat their beloved pet like a child, particularly in childless relationships. A separation brings with it the prospect of one party no longer being with the pet, which can be extremely upsetting.

In Australia, the Family Law Act sets out what happens with children when there is a separation. However, there is no equivalent law which deals with the family pet. At law, a pet is treated as “property”, and has the same status as a piece of furniture.

The issue of pet ownership is most often dealt with by agreement between the parties. It can also be included in consent orders, but this is less frequent. However, this issue has not yet been fully considered by the Courts in Australia.

You may have heard of lengthy and expensive pet “custody” battles in the United States of America, where the Courts have considered this issue.

Other states have considered emotional attachment to the pet and the ability to provide for the pet. However, there is no specific legislation on the topic.

Until a law is passed in Australia in relation to the treatment of pets in the breakdown of relationships, the best approach is to reach agreement with the other party. When

agreements are reached without court intervention, perhaps with the assistance of a mediator, any number of arrangements can be made, even those similar to parenting orders for children. It must be borne in mind, however, that enforceability may be an issue as the Courts have little guidance as to how to treat some more creative arrangements.



In the interim, the party in whose name the pet is registered will have a stronger claim to the pet until a property settlement is finalised, when the ownership of the pet can be changed just as the ownership of a motor vehicle or shares can be changed.

We need only look at television to see how important pets are in people’s lives. From specific shows about caring for pets, to celebrities and their pampered pooches, pets are an integral part of many people’s lives. Separating from a beloved pet is more upsetting for some people than losing an asset or heirloom. It seems that it is time the law adapted to deal with this. As society has changed, so must the law.

### HOSPITAL PARKING

As many of you know, at times it is difficult to find parking close to our hospital, due to the increase of daily parked cars in the area. We are currently consulting with Wollongong Council for timed parking outside. This will allow you to park closer to the Hospital, especially during peak times of the day. Currently we are asking all clients affected to sign a petition at the front counter. If you have been inconvenienced in the past and would like to sign this petition please do not hesitate to contribute.

## Intestinal Worms in Cats and Dogs

Our pets can fall victim to several different types of intestinal worms and the most common are roundworm, hookworm, whipworm and tapeworm.

**Roundworm** – These are small thin worms that live in the intestine and feed on undigested food. Symptoms include lack of appetite, coughing, depression, pot-belly appearance, rough coat and vomiting.

**Hookworm** – These blood sucking parasites live in the small intestine. Symptoms include anaemia, lack of appetite, depression, diarrhoea and in severe cases even death.

**Whipworm** (dogs only) – These thread like worms live in the large intestine or colon and cause colic. Symptoms include abdominal pain, diarrhoea and weight loss.

**Tapeworm** – These worms are transmitted by fleas. They attach to the small intestine. Symptoms include scooting and irritation around the anus.

Most puppies and kittens are infected before birth or while nursing from their mothers. Adult dogs and cats can become infected by ingesting infected faeces or soil, or by eating infected mice or fleas.

Worming your pet is important, not only for their health but for your family’s health. Intestinal worms are transferable to humans and can cause several health issues including allergies, gastrointestinal problems and organ damage.

Due to the health risk, regular worming of your pet is essential. Worming frequency depends on the pet’s age and product used, see table below.

**Product: DONTAL Allwormer tablet/chewable tablet**

4 to 12 wks of age	→ Worm every Fortnight
12 wks to 6 mths	→ Worm every Month
6 mths and Over	→ Worm every 3 Months for Life

**Product: Profender spot-on (cats only)**

8 wks and Over	→ Worm every Month for Life
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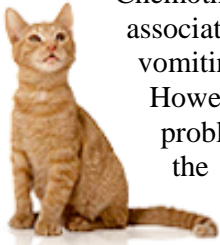
If you suspect your pet may have worms, please contact our clinic and speak with our friendly vet nurses for advice and assistance.

**Cancer and It's Treatment in our Pets**  
(Kevin Calleja)

Cancer is a devastating illness in people and is an equally devastating disease in our pets. Just like in people some types of cancer can be treated and others can not. Treatment can involve chemotherapy, radiation therapy, surgery or a combination of all three. Cancer does not have to be a life limiting illness and there are many options open to owners and their pets. Let's look at some of the more common types of cancer seen at the clinic.

**Canine and Feline Lymphoma**

Lymphoma is a cancer of the blood or haematopoietic system. The most common detectable problem is an enlargement of one or more lymph nodes. Most commonly the animal shows no clinical signs, or only mild illness like lethargy or reduced appetite. It is a treatable cancer with around 10% to 15% of patients being cured of the disease. However, most animals enter into a period of remission, which means that the cancer is in the body but is not detectable and the animal does not show any clinical signs of illness. Remission may last several months or even years before the cancer comes back. Lymphomas are treated with a variety of medications or chemotherapy drugs.

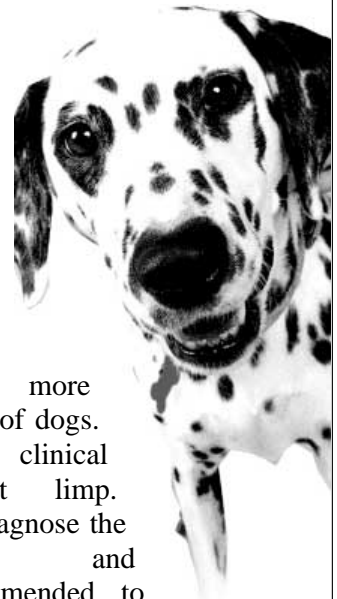


Chemotherapy does have a bad name as we associate it in people with hair loss, vomiting and general unwellness. However, in our pets these sorts of problems are rarely encountered due to the resilience of animals and the less harsh dosage rates of the chemotherapy drugs. Most

animals have little if any detectable problems.

**Osteosarcoma**

Osteosarcomas are tumours of the bones that support the legs of dogs and cats. They are aggressive and require radical surgical and chemotherapy treatments. They tend to occur more commonly in large breeds of dogs. The most common early clinical sign is a persistent limp. Radiographs are used to diagnose the disease. Amputation and chemotherapy are recommended to manage this illness. Unfortunately animals cannot be cured of this disease, however remission rates of a few weeks to many months are attainable.



**Soft Tissue Tumours**

Soft tissue tumours are one of the more common tumor types. Some are locally aggressive, needing surgery to remove the mass. Others are widely aggressive, spreading to other parts of the body, and need both surgery and chemotherapy to manage the problem. Soft tissue tumours are best managed early while they are small to minimize the surgery needed to remove it them.

*The Golden rule with any Cancer is to have it examined as soon as possible so that more options are available to you and your pet.*

**THOMAS'S TAILS:**

Just a quick note to all my furry friends out there that our clinic has received many enquiries from your owners regarding the Hill's Pet Slimmer program which was mentioned in our last newsletter.

I am very happy to report on the progress of one of my furry friends, Buster. Buster joined the Hill's Pet Slimmer program back in April 2008 and has since lost 1.1kg.

Buster is enjoying his new found energy and regular walks. Unfortunately, I now have to run faster and hide quicker because Buster is not my biggest fan when he walks in for his fortnightly weigh-in.

Congratulations Buster! You are almost at your target weight, keep up the good work.

***If you would like to share a tail of your own, please visit [www.crownvet.com.au/submit-a-newsletter-article](http://www.crownvet.com.au/submit-a-newsletter-article)***



**PET PROFILE**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Buster</b>
<b>Age:</b>	5 Years
<b>Breed:</b>	Mini Fox Terrier
<b>Starting Weight:</b>	7.7 kg
<b>Weight:</b>	6.8 kg
<b>Favourite Things:</b>	Walking his owner, barking at other dogs, jumping, chasing Thomas when he is boarding at the hospital.



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