



Dr Liz Chmurycz BVSc CMAVA N5071  
Veterinary Surgeon

Ph (02) 42 845988

[www.animalclinic.com.au](http://www.animalclinic.com.au)  
17 Bellambi Lane, Russell Vale, 2518 NSW

Keeping pets Smiling since 1998.



## Medic Alert – April 2012

Welcome to the first issue of Medic Alert – This is something that won't come out weekly or monthly, as we have our newsletter Animail Tails which will come out regularly. But it will come out when we have an alert which we really want to share with the wider community.



It is not uncommon that a pet will feel unwell with a tummy upset, and the owner will call me to ask “is there something going around?”. Well, this is going to let you know if there is a bug doing the rounds, and to help you protect your pet even better so they don't get sick (if possible).

This issue is a focus on infectious diseases, utilizing the resources of the Disease Watchdog. This site also lists Tick paralysis, so it lets people know if they have Paralysis tick in their area

Virbac ANIMAL HEALTH **Disease WatchDog**

Home Instructions Submit new cases **View disease outbreaks** View clinic case details My account details Logout

Disease	Cases
Tick Paralysis	1175 Cases
Canine Parvovirus	336 Cases
Canine Cough	40 Cases
Feline Herpesvirus	31 Cases
Feline Calicivirus	23 Cases
Feline Leukaemia Virus	2 Cases
Feline Infectious Peritonitis	2 Cases
Canine Distemper	1 Case

Map showing disease outbreaks in Australia, with locations like Russell Vale, Wollongong, and Port Kembla marked.

Above is a 12 month snapshot of the diseases in and around NSW. You can also register to go onto Disease Watchdog to view real time disease outbreaks in Australia and New Zealand. This website is specifically for infectious diseases of dogs and cats.

#### Local diseases Update:

- In the past few months, we have seen a spike in coughing dogs, with the majority of them not classified as “high risk” – i.e these coughing dogs had not been to boarding kennels, dog park or grooming. The majority of these cases also had another dog in the household which did not get the same cough or if they did, not to the same severity as the first dog; many patients were also vaccinated against Canine Cough.

Thus, it is hard to say if it was true “Canine Cough” or a variant of it. Either way, all cases responded very fast to antibiotics, with most being normal within 4 days.

The signs I have seen included

- Not eating well
- Lethargic
- Nasal discharge
- Coughing
- Harsh chest
- Blood work (on two cases – had a high white cell count consistent with a bacterial infection).
- As all dogs recovered, no further tests were done.



#### **Tests we could've done to have assisted in finding out the actual cause of this cough –**

- We could have performed a bronchial wash with a culture and sensitivity. (Cost about \$300)
- We could have submitted a throat swab for a **Canine Respiratory Disease (CRD) Real PCR Panel**, which would've screened for Bordetella Bronchiseptica, Canine Adenovirus Type 2, Canine Distemper virus, Canine Herpesvirus, Canine Influenza Virus (H3N8), Canine Parainfluenza Virus Type 3, Canine Respiratory Coronavirus, Influenza Virus (H1N1), Mycoplasma cynos and Streptococcus equi zooepidemicus. (*Wow – what list. No wonder doctors say “you just have a virus, when you go in coughing! Cost of this test is around \$200.00 so not bad to test for all of those things – problem is, takes 10 days for results*).
- We could have done chest radiographs (Cost about \$200).
- I have seen **one cat test positive** for infection with the rare Feline Leukemia Virus. See below for more information on this particular virus. This cat also tested positive for Feline Immunodeficiency Virus, which is not uncommon. Out of every 10 tests I do I see one positive.
- **Myxomatosis is out and about too** – Myxo is a disease which affects rabbits (wild and domestic alone) and there is no vaccine available in Australia for this. Prevention is best through minimising mosquito and biting fly access to your rabbit – through mosquito proof hutches and through reducing their time outside during dawn and dusk (peek mossie biting time)

## INFECTIOUS DISEASE FOCUS - FELINE LEUKEMIA

In November 2011, we tested a sick cat for Feline Leukemia, Feline Immunodeficiency Virus and Heartworm (with an in house Feline Triple test kit with high accuracy), and it came up positive for two out of the three. This beautiful little man was positive for Feline Immunodeficiency Virus and Feline Leukemia, both of which can make a cat very sick, but together, is invariable causes incurable untreatable disease.

This was my first ever diagnosed case of Feline Leukemia EVER.... So it was a wake up call. Whilst it is still a rare disease, it is out there in our cat population.



*From the Disease Watchdog website....*

“Feline Leukaemia Virus can cause significant disease in cats, and can be transmitted by infected cats years after they were initially infected. Approximately one third of infected cats remain infected until they die years later. These cats can transmit the disease in their saliva, tears, urine and faeces. As with other contagious diseases, this virus can be transmitted by sharing communal feeding areas,

litter trays and toys and by mutual grooming.

Feline Leukaemia Virus often leads to a depressed appetite, weight loss, anaemia, vomiting, diarrhoea, reproductive problems and a highly increased risk of developing other infections and tumours. These signs can present years after the initial infection.

Kittens particularly are vulnerable to infection with this disease. “

One case does not a pandemic make, but it is still one life, which is one life lost too soon.

Vaccinations against Feline Leukemia and Feline Immunodeficiency are available, although there are other ways of preventing these diseases in many cats. In multi cat households (3 or more), vaccinations are your only option, but in single or two cat households, then regular blood testing (we recommend annually), annual vet checks, and especially keeping them indoors or outdoors in a cat run is ideal.

All of our cat dentistry, deluxe cat desexings, cat fight abscess surgeries all get tested with the Feline Triple, screening for Feline Leukemia, Feline Immunodeficiency Virus and Heartworm disease.

Dr Liz

April 2012

*Disclaimer: The information is current at the time of writing, and things may have changed. Please do not rely on this information if it is more than six months from the date listed above.*