



VETERINARY PRACTICE BOARD
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



FROM THE REGISTRAR

For the first time this year the Board will be hosting a stand at the AVA WA Trade Fair. This is your chance to meet members of the new Board as well as Board staff and have your questions answered.

This newsletter has a number of articles that have arisen from queries the Board has received as well as from complaints before the Board. All great material for staff meeting discussions!

Veterinary nurses now join veterinarians as being registered, rather than approved, to practise. See below for what this change means.

As always, feedback, suggestions and comments are very welcome.

Dr Sue Godkin
Registrar



BOARD STAND AT THE AVA TRADE FAIR

This year the Board will be hosting a stand at the AVA WA Trade Fair at the Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle on 4 and 5 November 2022.

This is your opportunity to meet and chat with some of the new Board members and staff. You can also ask questions and find out about the new legislation and what it means for you.

CANINE MONOCYTIC EHRLICHIOSIS

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has finalised their guidelines for veterinarians on canine monocytic ehrlichiosis and released a series of factsheets for veterinarians, dog owners and for rescue, adoption and relocation of dogs in Australia.

The guidelines are being provided, to assist in the education and treatment of ehrlichiosis.

[Veterinarian guidelines](#)

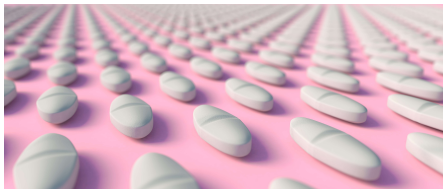
[Additional veterinarian guidelines](#)

[Guidelines for dog owners](#)

[Guidelines for rescue, adoption and relocation](#)



REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS AND PRESCRIPTIONS WITH REPEATS



What is the difference between a repeat prescription and a prescription with repeats? It may sound like a riddle but the difference is important.

After examining an animal, a veterinarian may prescribe a scheduled drug, with repeats which is entered in the clinical record. In this situation a veterinary nurse may dispense the repeats at the owner's request based on the instruction on the clinical record without further reference to a veterinarian (**prescription with repeats**).

NOTE: If the owner has any concerns about the animal's health then the veterinarian needs to discuss these with the owner before they are provided with a repeat.

So what is the requirement if a veterinarian has previously examined an animal and prescribed a scheduled drug? Can they prescribe more of the same scheduled drug for the same animal for the same condition without further examination? The answer is 'yes', as long as the veterinarian has discussed the health of the animal with the owner within the previous 7 days (**repeat prescription**).

GONAD SPARING SURGICAL STERILISATION

The Board is aware that there is increasing interest from veterinarians, breeders and dog owners in gonad sparing surgical sterilisation procedures in dogs. The Board acknowledges that there may be some medical justification for these procedures, but would stress the following measures are taken to protect the public's interests:

1. The owner of any dog receiving a gonad-sparing procedure should be clearly educated on the implications and particularly in regards to both the recurring signs of oestrous and the fact that any future requirement to remove the retained gonad is likely to be more involved and more expensive than the initial operation.
2. The status of the dog is clearly recorded in a manner that allows any veterinarian that cares for that dog in the future to be able to easily interpret the status of the gonads, and what would be involved to undertake a complete gonadectomy procedure. This may include, and not be limited by, the dog's microchip registration particulars, desexing certificate, and tattoo.
3. Before a veterinarian undertakes a gonad-sparing surgical sterilisation procedure, it is expected that further education into surgical technique will have been undertaken.

For further information refer to the Australian Veterinary Association policy on the [Surgical Sterilisation to Dogs and Cats](#)

HEATING PAD INJURIES

The Board recently received a complaint where a dog received a severe thermal injury due to the incorrect use of a microwaveable heating disc and pad during surgery. Such thermal injuries are painful and difficult to treat, and distressing for all involved. Sadly in this case the owners elected euthanasia rather than a potentially long and painful treatment and recovery for their dog.

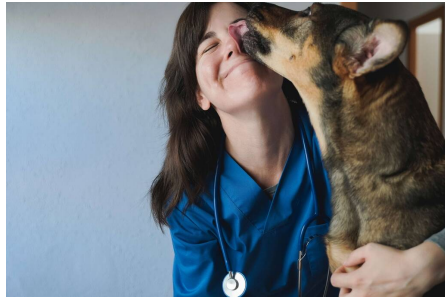


Heating equipment is required to reduce hypothermia in anaesthetised animals and avoid complications such as prolonged anaesthetic recovery and increased infection rates. However, there are risks with using these heating devices, especially the microwaveable and electric versions. It is well recognised but uncommon for an artificially heated device to cause a thermal burn.

Anaesthetised animals are unable to move themselves off the heating pad or indicate that they are getting burned. To avoid thermal injuries it is vital that the device is heated in a manner which is consistent with the manufacturer's instructions and precautions are taken, such as using the

lowest settings and ensuring there is enough padding.

Safer options are available and should be used in preference to microwaveable and electric heating pads. A very safe option with little or no risk of burns, are devices that work by flowing warm air to gently surround the patient.



VETERINARY NURSES NOW REGISTERED

Following the commencement of the Veterinary Practice Act 2021 on 18 June 2022, veterinary nurses are granted registration to practice as veterinary nurses instead of being approved. This is not just a change in nomenclature but a recognition of the professional skills and standing of veterinary nurses.

A further recognition of the contribution of veterinary nurses to the profession is the inclusion of a veterinary nurse on the Veterinary Practice Board.

This change will also make the regulation of veterinary nurses more consistent with the regulation of veterinarians.

NEW SPECIALISTS

Congratulations to Dr Nicole Studer who was granted registration as a specialist in veterinary anaesthesia on 7 July 2022 and Dr Melissa Claus who was granted registration as a specialist in emergency medicine and critical care on 9 September 2022.



UPDATED BOARD GUIDELINES

The following guidelines have recently been reviewed and updated;

- Guidelines for the design and equipping of veterinary premises.

The updated guidelines can be viewed [here](#).

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