

# MEDIA RELEASE

26 May 2009

Promoting  
Responsible  
Dog Ownership



## Home remedies: Killing you dog with kindness

Australians are a nation of animal lovers but many pet owners are killing their pets without realising it. Home remedies based on outdated medical myths, that would rarely be considered for use on humans, are today used on dogs as a means of relieving ailments such as eye and ear infections, eczema and localised pain.

"Many owners are well meaning but I have lost count of the number of times I have seen sick or near dead pets because they have been given some form of old wives tale as a remedy for a simple ailment", said veterinarian and **Dogs NSW** spokesperson **Dr Peter Higgins**.

Examples of these remedies include using human eye drops and paracetamol, bathing dogs in kerosene, and blood-letting. **Dogs NSW** does not support these self-medicating practices, and encourages dog owners to seek professional veterinary advice.

Common conditions in dogs include eczema, eye and ear infections, and localised pain from sprains, cut and bruises. Owners will sometimes consider cheaper "home-remedies" as a means of treating their dog's maladies with thrift.

*Eczema* is a condition when skin becomes extremely dry and itchy. Some owners will treat it by bathing their dog in kerosene, or even applying sulphur as a paste. Not only does this place the dog under great stress and pain, but worsens the condition and places the dog's life in danger.

"I have seen these sort of substances applied to already damaged skin and at best they can cause severe burns, and at worse they are actually putting their dog's life in jeopardy.", exclaims **Dr Higgins**.

*Eye and ear infections* often leave dogs frustrated as they roll around on the ground and rub their faces on carpet or grass to try and relieve their itch. Human eye and ear drops should be avoided as a means to relieve these irritations. Vets are able to supply drugs specifically designed for dogs that fix the problem.

"It is one thing to see an owner take proper and responsible care for their dog, but at times owners can make irresponsible decisions that have the potential to harm their dogs more. Out of date medications can cause serious problems with eyes and ears.", warns **Dr Higgins**.

Relieving a dog's pain from injuries or arthritis by giving them aspirin, paracetamol, or other anti-inflammatory drugs intended for humans can kill dogs. As little as 30 mg of aspirin can kill a medium sized dog because dogs lack the enzymes required to efficiently metabolise the drug. While smaller doses may not kill, they are not well tolerated, and often cause stomach pains and stomach ulcers.

"Owners often look to self-medicate their pets because they don't want to see them in unnecessary pain. They really need to contact their vet before taking wild guesses at what their dog needs. While their intentions are good, they really are killing their dogs with kindness.", explains **Dr Higgins**.

\*\*\* ENDS \*\*\*

### For further information, images or interviews, contact:

Tomas Ganderton or Dr Peter Higgins  
Media Liaison  
0401 927 653 or 0410 67 63 65  
TomasGanderton@dogsnsw.org.au

### DOGS NSW is located at:

The Bill Spilstead Complex for Canine Affairs,  
44 Luddenham Road,  
Erskine Park,  
NSW 2759