

SHARING TRACKS



WHAT IS SHARING TRACKS?

Working in animal health and management has its challenges, especially for those working in rural and remote communities. Sharing Tracks was designed to share information, ideas and lived experiences and give you the latest information on companion animal (cat and dog) health and management. We hope that the newsletter will support program planning and service delivery and help to create a network for collaboration and support of individuals working with cats and dogs in rural and remote communities.

Even though Sharing Tracks is developed and distributed by Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC), it is our hope that most of the newsletter's content will reflect the voice of our readers and their communities. All of our readers are encouraged to request information that reflects the needs of their community and to provide articles and news stories from their communities and programs that can help others to understand different approaches to companion animal health and management.

Do you have a question or story you would like to share in our next issue? Feel free to contact us at sharingtracks@amrric.org



**SIGN UP TO SHARING TRACKS
NEWSLETTER [HERE](#)**

NEW SCIENCE – Is chemical sterilisation of surgical instruments in community desexing programs effective?

Bushnell, A., Davis, B., Hoopes, J., Miller, D., Trott, D. Bactericidal efficacy of 2% Glutaraldehyde solution for instrument sterilisation in Indigenous desexing programs. Poster Presentation. October 30, 2023. University of Adelaide Research Day, Adelaide, Australia.



WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study looked at whether chemicals for cold sterilisation became less effective over time after being used in a remote veterinary surgical program.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Desexing is an important part of animal health programs and helps to prevent dogs from breeding up. Desexing is a very safe surgery, but all surgeries carry risks, and making sure that dogs and cats having surgery are safe is a key responsibility of the veterinary team.

Veterinarians use special tools called “surgical instruments” to help them perform surgery. These tools need to be properly cleaned and sterilised to remove bacteria and other germs. This helps to reduce the risk of infections after surgery and helps to reduce the need to give cats and dogs antibiotics before, during and after surgery.

In permanent veterinary clinics, machines called autoclaves are the standard of care for instrument sterilisation. But even newer autoclaves are very large and heavy (around 50 kg), meaning that they cannot be easily transported to communities. They also require large amounts of power and water to run properly. As a result, veterinarians working in remote areas often need to use other methods to sterilize their instruments between patients. This includes using special chemicals in a process called “cold sterilisation”. Even though cold sterilisation is very good for sterilising instruments, there is no research looking at whether how well these chemicals work when they are exposed to things like temperature, humidity, and sunlight in the field.

WHAT DID THEY FIND?

The good news: initial findings from this study showed that chemicals used for cold sterilisation were just as effective after being used in a field desexing program for 2 days with a small number of dogs and cats. But more research is being needed to see if the chemicals are still as effective after longer programs (7 days) with more desexing procedures.

The bad news: the study found that these chemicals could be completely inactivated by the liquid part of blood. This means that if the chemicals accidentally get blood in them, either from an instrument that has not been properly washed, or from a surgeon’s glove when they are removing an instrument from the solution – the chemicals may not work properly.

WHAT NOW?

The authors of this study are doing more research to see if the chemicals are still effective after a longer program with more animals, where there is a higher risk that the chemicals may be exposed to blood. We will keep you posted on the results of the next stage of the project.

EDUCATION FEATURE: EMPATHY ANIMATION

This animation is a great education resource, created to help teach young children empathy towards animals. The video, developed by AMRRIC in partnership with Indigenous animation group Nani Creative, shows the story of a young boy looking after his dog and realising that his dog has feelings, just like he does, and that it is his responsibility to look after and protect his dog. The animation is great to use in communities in classrooms, youth groups, or early years learning groups. As it is a video, it can be played easily on a TV or computer in many different locations. The resource is very useful to help teach children to look after their pets, be kind to animals, and keep their pets and their communities happy and healthy.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH DOG MOB CAT CREW'S ANIMATION](#)



SEND US YOUR
PHOTOS OF THE
ANIMATIONS
BEING PLAYED IN
COMMUNITY!

DISEASE FEATURE: RINGWORM

WHAT IS RINGWORM?

Ringworm is a skin problem caused by a fungus, called a dermatophyte. The fungus lives on the skin, hair, and nails. Ringworm can also be called tinea or dermatophytosis.

The name “ringworm” is a bit confusing because it is not a worm at all. It is called ringworm because when people get ringworm it looks like a worm in a red circle on their skin. This red circle on people’s skin, that looks like a worm, is very itchy.

DO DOGS AND CATS GET RINGWORM? HOW?

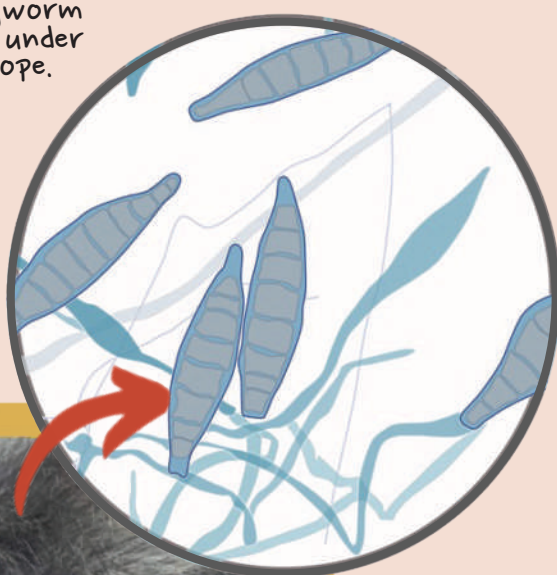
Ringworm is very contagious, which means it can pass easily between dogs and cats. Dogs and cats get ringworm by touching another animal that has ringworm, or by touching something around them that has ringworm on it. If a dog or cat has a cut, a scratch, or a skin problem, they are more likely to get ringworm.

HOW CAN I TELL IF A DOG OR CAT HAS RINGWORM?

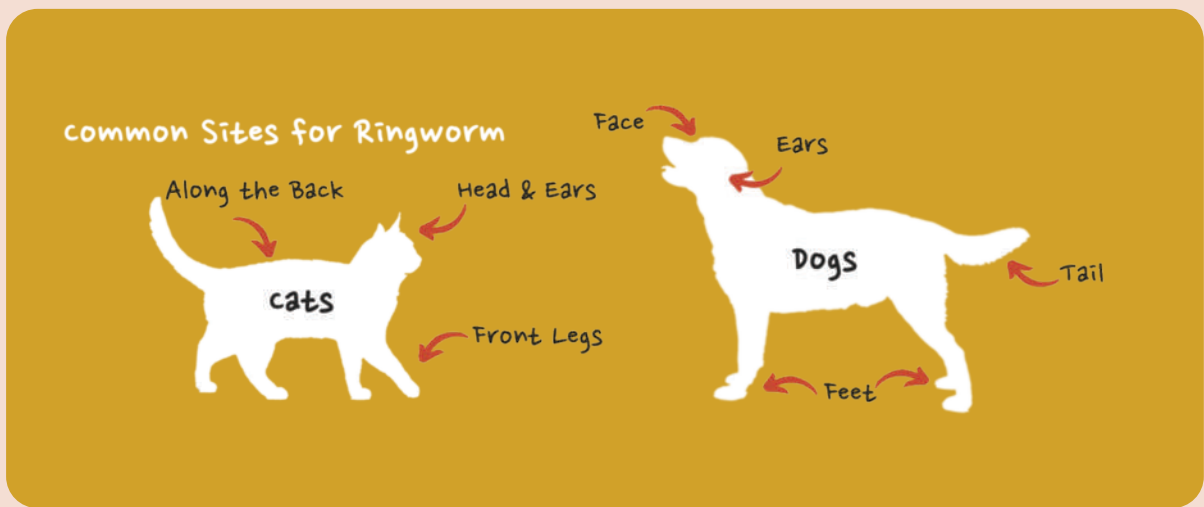
Ringworm on the skin usually has a “ring” or circle shape. It can look like dry, scaly, grey, or red areas on the skin, sometimes with no hair. The ringworm area can also have thin and broken hairs in the middle. Ringworm can sometimes be itchy, making the dog or cat scratch.

Some dogs and cats that have ringworm don’t have any signs.

What ringworm
looks like under
a microscope.



Ringworm Sore



SIGNS OF RINGWORM IN CATS & DOGS

- Dry, scaly areas of skin
- Ringworm can look like a circle or not have any shape
- Grey or red in colour
- Bald areas of skin with no hair, or with thin, broken hairs in the middle
- Can be itchy

PROTECTING DOGS AND CATS FROM RINGWORM

Cats and dogs can get ringworm in many places. There are no injections or medicines that stop people and animals from getting ringworm. Medicines used to protect pets against ticks, fleas, worms, and mange do not kill or stop ringworm.

But there are some things pet owners can do to help protect their pets from ringworm:

1. Take dogs and cats to the vet if they are sick or have skin problems.
2. Ticks, worms, fleas, and mange cause skin problems in dogs and cats. Use regular medicine to protect cats and dogs from things that cause problems for the skin. Dogs and cats with skin problems get ringworm more easily.
3. Animal sleeping areas should be clean and tidy.

HOW TO TREAT RINGWORM IN DOGS AND CATS?

Ringworm is treated with special medicines from a vet. Ringworm in cats and dogs can sometimes go away on its own, but it is a good idea to get cats and dogs with ringworm treated with medicine, because ringworm can be passed between animals and to people.

CAN RINGWORM MAKE PEOPLE SICK?

Yes. People usually get ringworm from other people. But people can also get ringworm from other animals, like cats, dogs, horses, and pigs.

People get ringworm the same way animals do – by touching another person or animal with ringworm or touching things around them that have ringworm. Children and people who have a weak immune system are more likely to get ringworm.

In people, ringworm makes ring-shaped or circle red patches, that are usually scaly and itchy. People can get ringworm anywhere on the body.



Want to learn more about ringworm? AMRRIC has some great resources about ringworm on our website

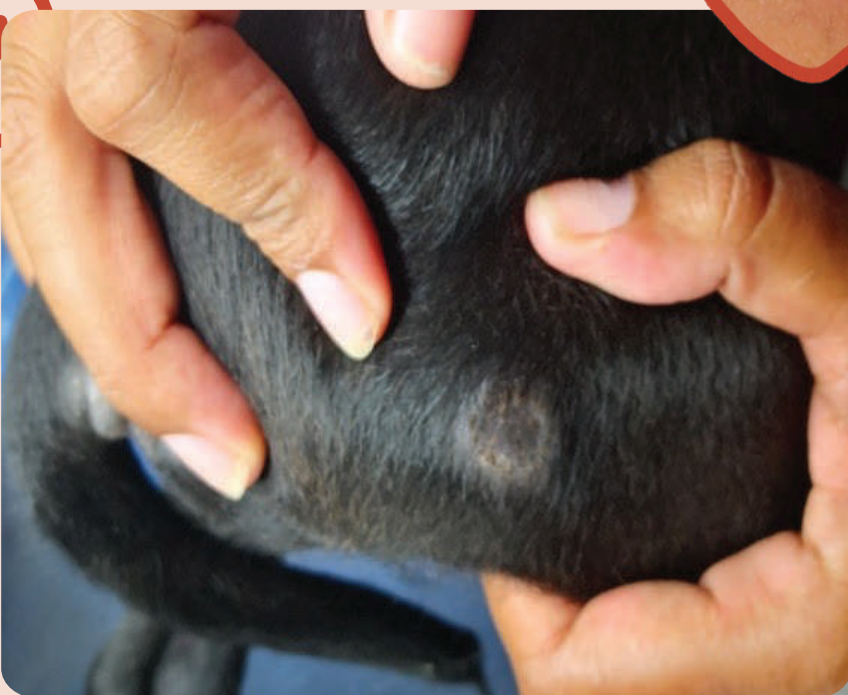


Photo courtesy of Animals Fiji



Photo courtesy of Julius Bautista

IS THERE A DISEASE OR ILLNESS YOU WANT TO LEARN ABOUT? EMAIL US TO REQUEST A DISEASE FEATURE!

A DAY WITH BINDEE DAVIS

Bindee Davis is an experienced veterinary nurse and veterinary student at the University of Adelaide. She is also a member of AMRRIC's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee.



TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

I am an aboriginal woman from Darwin. My mother's family is from Daly River, and my father's side is from Kuku Yalanji. I have worked as a veterinary nurse for many years across general practice and emergency work, but my true passion is the work I do with remote communities. I especially enjoy working to help improve community health and wellbeing through community education and animal health programs. After I graduate from vet school I hope to follow my passion and focus on supporting animal health in remote communities across Australia.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED WITH ANIMAL HEALTH AND MANAGEMENT?

I got involved in community animal health programs in 2008 and I am still doing work in this space.

WHAT COMMUNITY DO YOU WORK WITH?

I have been involved in a number of animal health programs in South Australia and the Northern Territory.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PART ABOUT WORKING IN ANIMAL HEALTH AND MANAGEMENT?

My favourite part of my job is seeing the smiles on the faces of community members when I have helped them with their animals, whether it is for treatments (e.g. parasite control or desexing) or even nail clipping and grooming for their pets. I also enjoy helping to educate pet owners so they can live a happy, healthy life together.

DO YOU HAVE ANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OR SUCCESS STORIES THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE ABOUT THE WORK THAT YOU DO?

There are a few. But one in particular that still stuck out with me is a wombat that I saw when it was a baby. It was covered with mange and had infected claws. I treated it with antiparasitic medication, clipped its claws and cleaned them up. I also educated the owners on what foods to feed it and how to prevent the wombat from getting sick and how to clean its claws. For example, I talked to them about where the wombat should stay at night and about letting it dig in the dirt and express its normal behaviours. Every time I go back to this community, they are excited to see me and show me the wombat. They are proud that the wombat is healthy, has put on weight and hasn't gotten claw infections or mange again.

Another story is when an owner wanted to get his male dog desexed. I explained to the owner about how to look after the dog after the procedure, what to look out for on the surgery site and what to do to prevent any infections. The owner got a mattress and put it inside the house near the fireplace to keep the dog warm through the night and checked the site regularly. When I came back to this community, the owner came up to me and told me how he listened and did everything for his dog, and even showed me photos of the surgery site over a couple of days. To me, it showed a sense of pride for him because not only was this dog his pet, it was also a member of his family. This made my year knowing that I am making a difference and having an impact not only on animal health but on community members as well.



**WANT TO SHARE YOUR STORY?
EMAIL US!**

HELPING YOUR COMMUNITY PREPARE FOR EMERGENCIES

Remote communities in Australia are at greater risk from emergencies like heatwaves, bushfires, floods, storms, and cyclone. Many communities have limited emergency infrastructure and services, which makes them even more vulnerable to the impacts of these disasters. This is not only true for people, but also for their pets.

The devastating flooding following Cyclone Jasper in December caused considerable damage throughout far North Queensland. In Wujal Wujal, damage to the community from flood waters was particularly bad, with residents of the community having to be evacuated by helicopter. To make things even harder, they had to leave their pets behind. With the help of AMRRIC and many other organisations, the team remaining the ground in Wujal Wujal has worked very hard to care for the dogs and cats until they can be reunited with their owners.

AMRRIC is always happy to support emergency response efforts in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities upon request.

Free-roaming pets, limited access to animal health products and veterinary services, and the fact that there are limited systems and processes in place to support emergency planning for animals makes the situation even more challenging. For families that are forced to evacuate their homes, many emergency shelters do not allow pets, making it hard for owners to make sure their pets are safe. We also know that people's bonds with their pets can change their behaviour (for example, being less likely to evacuate to a safer place if their pets cannot come with them) or may cause people to put themselves in danger to help rescue an animal during an emergency.

Including animals in your community's emergency response plan can help to improve outcomes for both people and animals. This article aims to help animal health workers in remote communities help their communities prepare for disasters.

Animal health workers play a vital role in getting ready for an emergency. Here are some things that you can do to help prepare your community and its animals for an emergency:

- **Animal Census:** Having up to date information on the number and type(s) of animals in your community is important to help guide and develop animal emergency management plans. This is known as an animal census. You may have good information about the pet population in your local community already, but if you don't check out some of our resources on [doing a community animal census](#) using a [spreadsheet](#) or the AMRRIC App, which is now available on the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).

- **Building Networks:** Work with local authorities to create a list of people and groups, locally, in neighbouring communities and across Australia that can help you with animal emergencies. This can include vets, pounds, shelters and rescue groups, boarding facilities, and/or shops that can be used to provide emergency veterinary advice, house evacuated animals, and provide pet food and supplies in the event of an emergency.

If you would like to learn more about what you can do to support your community in planning for animals during emergencies or for resources that you can use, please visit [Emergency Management Webpage](#).



- **Communicating with Pet Owners:** Animal health workers play a critical role in communicating with pet owners before, during and after an emergency. Consider how best to share information with animal owners in your community. For example, local radio, trusted messengers, social media, etc). You may want share information in a few different ways to reach as many people as possible. If possible, plan to share emergency information in the main languages spoken in your community.

- **Emergency Supplies:** work with your local government and emergency committees to get a supply of commercial pet food and temporary plastic collars with ID tags which can be used in the event of an emergency.

- **Identification:** Pet owners should be encouraged to make sure there is a way to identify their pets if they become separated during an emergency. Examples include a collar and ID tag, and/or a microchip.



AMRRIC APP

The AMRRIC App is a custom-designed digital tool to help remote Indigenous communities to keep a track of their dog and cat populations. The AMRRIC App can be used to undertake a community-wide dog and cat census, or can be used as an ongoing registration system. Visiting vets are also able to use the AMRRIC App to record any treatments and procedures they are administering. Animal Management Workers (or other relevant local staff) can also use the App to record things like anti-parasitic treatments being administered. Throughout 2024, AMRRIC currently has external funding which allows users from remote Indigenous communities to access the AMRRIC App for free. If you are interested in using the AMRRIC App in your community, get in touch with us at info@amrric.org so that we can set you up with a user login.

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Have you got any other tips or advice that can support improved companion animal emergency management in remote areas? AMRRIC would love to hear about them!

FEATURED MEDICINE

NEXGARD SPECTRA® SPOT-ON FOR CATS

Last year Boehringer Ingelheim introduced a broad-spectrum antiparasitic treatment for cats – NexGard SPECTRA® which is available as a spot-on for cats. This new treatment combines three different antiparasitic medicines to treat and control fleas, ticks and mites, as well as many gut worms for up to one month.

It is safe to use in kittens from 8 weeks of age, and in breeding, pregnant or lactating mothers. The medicine is reported to be safe with no reported side effects so far. To learn more, [click here](#).



Photo courtesy of Boehringer Ingelheim

Once the medicine is given, the cat is protected from all the parasites below for a month.



Roundworm



Hookworm



Ticks



Fleas



Tapeworm



Heartworm



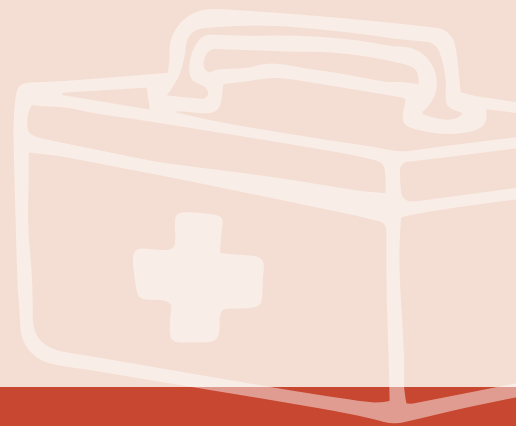
Mange



Ear Mites

The medicine comes in two sizes:

- Small (Cats 0.8 – 2.4 kg)
- Large (Cats 2.5-8.5 kg)



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

HOW DO I GET A COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER?

The easiest way to stay up to date with the latest edition of Sharing Tracks is to subscribe to our newsletter, by clicking [here](#). This will add you to a mailing list that is only used for the newsletter. You can opt out of receiving the newsletter at any time. You can also keep up to date by following [AMRRIC's Facebook page](#). If you miss an issue, you can also check out our newsletter archive here.

HOW OFTEN IS THE NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED?

Right now, a new edition of Sharing Tracks will be sent out by four times a year, but we're always open to suggestions. Don't want to wait for the next newsletter? No problem. Our social media pages will be updated as news, articles and stories become available.

HOW DO I SUBMIT AN ARTICLE OR ASK A QUESTION?

If you want to ask a question or include an article in our next newsletter, simply send us an email at sharingtracks@amrric.org, or send us a message on our [Facebook page](#).



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