

About Dr Liza Schneider

Dr Liza Schneider is the director of award winning Holistic Vets in Tauranga, and president of the Holistic Veterinary Society. Liza is a passionate advocate for sustainable healthcare.

My cell phone rings at 6.47am and I race out of bed to hear one of our clients on the other end of the line very concerned about her nine-year-old staffie Zak who doesn't seem to be able to stand up on his back legs and has been panting for the last hour. I arrange to meet her at the clinic in 20-minutes, already thinking that this will be a musculo-skeletal injury and shouldn't be too tricky.

On arrival at the clinic Zak is far worse than I expected. He's unresponsive, lying on his side, paddling his legs and having a seizure. I get baseline bloods, inject intra-venous valium which settles him slightly and then place an intravenous line running in vitamin C. Covering all bases, I inject him with an anti-inflammatory, antibiotics, Atropine and vitamin B's. Thankfully by this time my colleague Karen has arrived and she brings out her acupuncture needles to help settle Zak.

This is not a typical start to my day but as vets will testify, you never know what will happen or how the day may unfold when it comes to our furry friends needing veterinary care.

After qualifying as a vet more than 10 years ago, I became frustrated with the limited tools that traditional veterinary medicine and surgery had to offer for a number of health issues like allergies, arthritis, cancer and others. I have always sought and applied complementary and natural therapies so in 2003 established Holistic Vets, the first of its kind in New Zealand. Here, we integrate all the advantages of conventional veterinary medicine and surgery with complementary therapies.



Liza gives Pepe the Chihuahua a check-up

PAUL KING/LATITUDE LITERATURE

A little blue penguin is dropped off having just been found floundering in the waves

Right now we are particularly busy because Holistic Vets is also the front for our wildlife trust Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre (ARRC) and we're in the midst of receiving an abundance of baby birds that cats have caught or well meaning people have found, thinking that they need vet care. In between this onslaught, a little blue penguin is dropped off having just been found floundering in the waves. Its body condition is poor and it's dehydrated and anemic. With

the help of our nursing team we give him fluids and warmth and hope for the best, but we know our efforts are likely in vain as much of the wildlife work we do is relentlessly unforgiving.

Today has back-to-back consults through the morning and surgery to do as well. Our first case is Zen, a Siamese cat in for a laparotomy – surgery to explore his abdomen as Karen has identified an abdominal mass. Zen is one of my oldest patients and we're all hoping for a simple fix and a good outcome. Because he hasn't eaten for a few days we are concerned about him being able to survive the anesthetic so we gave him a pre-anesthetic session in our hyperbaric oxygen chamber to hyperoxygenate his body. We find this to be of awesome benefit to geriatric and compromised animals because it delivers far more oxygen into their blood stream than would otherwise be possible. At optimal