

## **ENQUIRING MINDS**

### **EQM EP 3 SEG 2**

**BEC:** Let's join Holly and Dylan as they find out why it's so important to take care of your pets, no matter what the species.

**HOLLY:** For any animal lover an ideal job would be helping care for them when they're sick or injured. Vets and vet nurses are trained to work with a wide range of animals, everything from domestic pets like cats and dogs right up to some of the wild animals you see in zoos. Let's meet Dylan and find out why this is what he wants to do when he grows up. Hi Dylan, how are you?

**DYLAN:** Good.

**HOLLY:** Good. Hello. Who are these?

**DYLAN:** This one's Duke, the German shepherd.

**HOLLY:** Yep, Duke and what's this one?

**DYLAN:** This one's Boots. Boots is four years old, Duke is two years old and so is Gretel but she's hiding.

**HOLLY:** Oh, she's a bit shy.

**DYLAN:** Yeah.

**HOLLY:** And so what is it that makes you want to care for animals?

DYLAN: They do something for you, like if they're rescue dogs they rescue you so we should do something for them.

HOLLY: They're great friends, aren't they?

DYLAN: Yes.

HOLLY: And what is it that you know about vets and vet nursing?

DYLAN: Sometimes they operate on them like say if they have something wrong in their body they fix them.

HOLLY: Absolutely, they look after them, don't they?

DYLAN: Yeah.

HOLLY: So would you like to go and meet someone who has met all sorts of animals with their work as a vet nurse?

DYLAN: Yes, that's would be great.

HOLLY: Let's go.

FABIAN: The role of a vet nurse in a clinic is they are essentially the first point of call and so if someone walks in it's the nurse that first has to assess the condition of the animal. And then from there be able to get the vets, let them know what exactly is going on. So essentially what we do from that stage is assist the vets.

HOLLY: Hi, Fabian, how are you going?

FABIAN: Good, how are you?

HOLLY: Good, this is Dylan.

FABIAN: How are you going, Dylan?

DYLAN: Good.

FABIAN: That's the way.

DYLAN: So Fabian, what animals have you worked with?

FABIAN: I've worked with lots of different types of animals but mainly I've worked with dogs and cats. I guess that's the main sort of animals that people have at home so they're the most common ones that we see.

DYLAN: So what was your favourite subjects at school?

FABIAN: Well, I always loved all the science subjects so biology and chemistry but yeah, especially biology because I love learning about animals, about how their different systems work, how they live, how they breathe, where they live and how they impact on the environment as well.

HOLLY: What's involved in the job of being a vet nurse?

FABIAN: It can be very complex but why don't I go in and show you?

HOLLY: Yeah, great.

FABIAN: Cool. Hi, Jenny.

JENNY: Hi.

FABIAN: How are you?

JENNY: How's it going?

FABIAN: Good.

JENNY: It's good to see you.

FABIAN: Good to see you again. What are we doing with Dexter?

JENNY: Yes, this is Dexter, he's a 5-month-old boxer and as you can see he's a bit special because he's white. He had a seizure last night. It's actually the second one he's had within about two weeks. When they have seizures it's actually a problem in the brain. Most likely in his case, because he's so young, we think it's probably epilepsy. So same as people get epilepsy dogs do too.

FABIAN: It's funny how people don't realise how many human illnesses there are that our pets can have as well such as epilepsy.

DYLAN: Why do you like working with dogs so much?

JENNY: Well, they're man's best friend, aren't they? They're so special. I like working with them because it is like treating a family member so I'm a doctor but just for animals.

FABIAN: It is a very taxing career because you do see lots of sick animals and you have to be able to dissociate yourself from that and just realise that you're doing the best that you can and then once you do figure out that that is

something that you can do it is extremely rewarding. Hey, Marda, how are you?

MARDA: Hi, good, how are you?

FABIAN: Good. So what are we doing here?

MARDA: This horse has come in because he was sore in this foot so he had what's called a lameness and we found a very, very deep abscess. Much like a very, very deep, deep pimple, something like that.

FABIAN: And so you got that plate there just to support it and keep it all together?

MARDA: That's right. We've got this aluminium plate right across which is really secured and fastened on to the hoof wall.

FABIAN: And what do we need to do now?

MARDA: Okay, so we need to give it a clean. Fabian do you want to come around this side and you can give me a hand?

FABIAN: Yeah, sure, no problem.

MARDA: Okay.

FABIAN: Okay, Dylan, pretty much as an assistant we do whatever the vet needs to be able to do the job. A lot of jobs need more than one pair of hands to do it.

MARDA: Right, so what we'll do is make sure everything is nice and clean and make sure there's no dirt packed in underneath this shoe.

DYLAN: Why do you like working with horses?

MARDA: Well, I think it's really challenging because they can't tell you where they're sore or what's wrong with them so it's a bit of a puzzle that you have to put things together in order to try and find out what's going on.

FABIAN: When it comes to looking after your own pets at home it is very important just to always keep an eye on them so that you know exactly what their normal behaviour is. So then if there's any sort of difference between what is normal and then when they're unwell you can actually pick that out quite well.

Besides just domestic animals we also look after more exotic animals and that's what they look after here so come through and I'll show you.

HOLLY: Great.

DYLAN: So what's happening with this bird?

FABIAN: Well this bird came in yesterday and it came in critically ill. It had a blood transfusion and so what Jane is doing here, the vet, is just injecting some fluids and also some antibiotics just to treat any bacterial infection.

HOLLY: What kind of bird is it?

FABIAN: It's a Quakers parrot.

JANE: And we're also treating for a possible toxicity. Because this bird came in collapsed and had been depressed for a couple of days that is a possibility that he's eaten something that he shouldn't and one thing that birds really

like to eat are things with metal in them and so they get heavy metal toxicity and their red blood cells get affected by that and that may be why he was so low on blood and why we needed to do the blood transfusion yesterday.

HOLLY: So do we have to watch out what metal ends up in the environment in rubbish?

JANE: We do, yeah, we always need to think about that because lots of different animals will enjoy eating metal because metal tastes sweet. Anything that's in your house as well. So paint tastes sweet and your venetian blinds taste sweet so that's why we have to be really careful of what we have in our house when our animals are roaming.

FABIAN: Working with animals and working as a vet nurse in a clinic you don't know what's going to come through the door. It makes your job and waking up every morning exciting.

WOMAN: Just no hands near mouth. He loves his food.

FABIAN: And fingers look like food.

HOLLY: What kind of injuries and illnesses do reptiles get?

FABIAN: Well, guys like this, they commonly cross the road so one of the most common injuries they get is by getting run over by a car. But yeah, the guys here they do everything they can to rehabilitate them.

HOLLY: And what lizard is this?

FABIAN: This is a shingleback. So with this lizard you can see that the tail looks

very similar to the head and so that is to confuse the predators so they don't know which side to go where the mouth is. The skin is very thick and protects their internal organs.

HOLLY: It's like armour.

FABIAN: Exactly, it is an armour.

JANE: Alright, let's have a look at Cyril.

HOLLY: Oh, he's lovely.

JANE: He's great, isn't he? Alright, so Cyril when he came in had lots of skin infections so we check his skin all the time to make sure that he's not got any problems anymore and every year reptiles shed their skin so we've got to make sure that Cyril can shed all of the little pieces of skin properly otherwise he will get sore in the areas that the skin doesn't come off. You can see his little toes, some of them are a bit funny.

FABIAN: He's missing -

JANE: He's missing a few.

FABIAN: - missing a couple there.

JANE: Yeah, that's right and down the back here.

FABIAN: Nice shiny coat as well, nice shiny armour.

JANE: Nice and shiny, yep, that means he's relatively well hydrated and we always check noses and mouths in reptiles and you can see his mouth is

nice and pink and a nice blue tongue. That's pretty normal for these guys.

FABIAN: I've worked with a broad range of animals from domestic animals, your dogs and cats to mice, birds to more exotic animals, your lizards, your snakes and also with tigers.

DYLAN: What do you love about tigers?

FABIAN: Well, the things I love about tigers has changed over time but when I was a kid I just loved how independent and graceful and powerful they were, just what they symbolised. And then as I grew up there was lots more that I learnt about them and more to love. I decided that that's what I wanted to study so I went out of my way, designed my own project and approached them about it and I pushed hard because it's something that I really wanted. So it just goes to show you that if you really want something that it is achievable, you just have to set your mind to it and do what you need to do to get there.

HOLLY: What sort of behaviour have tigers shown in captivity?

FABIAN: Well while they're in captivity some abnormal behaviours do arise and one of those you may have noticed that tigers do tend to pace backwards and forwards, normally in a bit of a ring pattern as well. And that is a behaviour that they try and control and different zoos try to incorporate different ways and one of the most common ways to control that is to use things called enrichment. Just by putting food around in the enclosure so then they can actually try and find the enrichment and just try to stimulate natural behaviours.

DYLAN: Why are the studies of tigers so important?

FABIAN: Well it's very important because the population of wild tigers is just diminishing so quickly. The natural habitat is getting devastated at such a rate that we need to really think about how we can protect them. Everyone can do something and every little thing that we can do can help in protecting the population in the wild.

HOLLY: Oh, they're beautiful.

FABIAN: Look how small they are, they're so cute.

HOLLY: Aren't they cute, Dylan?

PATRICK: Just give them some space in front there.

HOLLY: Yep.

PATRICK: And we'll come right past. Do you want to give them a pet?

HOLLY: Yes.

PATRICK: Come behind me.

HOLLY: Come on, Dylan.

PATRICK: And give them a pet on the backside.

DYLAN: Why do you walk the tigers?

PATRICK: Well, it's great enrichment for them, it gives them lots of things to see and do so it's a great thing for them to do long term. And also gives people a great chance to see them up close and probably something they haven't

seen before and hopefully have a bit more empathy or they care a little bit more about tigers than they did before they see him. Tigers, other cats in captivity can suffer from boredom so by giving them different things to do it keeps them a little bit more entertained and enthused so it's good for them. They're full grown about 3 years of age. Right now he's just 7 months old so he's just a little guy now. He will probably weigh about 160 to 180 kilos when he's full grown. Right now he weighs about 55.

HOLLY: So does he grow into those paws or will they get bigger?

PATRICK: Sort of, they always have pretty big feet though. Tigers are excellent swimmers so by having big feet helps propel them through the water.

DYLAN: How much does he eat on a daily basis?

PATRICK: He eats about 2 kilos day, a little over 2 kilos a day.

HOLLY: My goodness.

PATRICK: And right now he's gaining about 1 or 2 kilos a week so he's growing pretty fast at this stage.

HOLLY: What do you feed him?

PATRICK: He eats chicken, horse, beef and kangaroo. So just all meat and a few vitamins and minerals added to that.

FABIAN: What sort of role do you guys play in conservation here?

PATRICK: We hopefully educate a few people about the dwindling numbers of tigers left in the wild and there's only about 3,000 left in the wild and also we

raise quite a bit of funding for different projects we support in India and forests in Russia and Sumatra.

HOLLY: What can people do to save tigers in the wild?

PATRICK: Well the problems that they face are habitat destruction, so there's a lot of people using the forest for other purposes. So a lot of funding that we receive goes to hiring forest guards to protect those last lands and prosecute people who are doing the wrong thing. It's just important to know that you're going to do the right thing and try to be a good global citizen and not just waste your environment.

FABIAN: During my degree I found out how diminished their population is in the wild and then I thought what is going to happen when they're gone. How is it going to affect the ecosystem and how are we going to resolve this? So that is where you go to university, you do your studies and you can help.

DYLAN: I enjoyed this experience because when I get older I want to be a veterinarian. When I go to university I want to research about animals and how they live in their habitats so I can connect with them and help them out.

HOLLY: It's great to meet someone like Fabian that's so dedicated to caring for injured and sick animals and hopefully this experience will encourage Dylan to follow his dreams and work in a vet surgery, whether it's helping domestic animals or even big cats like these tigers.

BEC: On the next episode – Holly learns how to build computer games and Lockie takes the plunge as he comes face to face with some sharks. See you next time.

VOICE-OVER: If these stories have inspired you then check out our website for activities and loads of information on all of our experts. Plus, don't forget to challenge yourself with our Enquiring Minds game.

END OF TRANSCRIPT