

WELCOME TO the latest edition of our newsletter, designed to keep you up to date with your veterinary practice.

Practice Facilities

- Completely refurbished and extended practice
- Friendly professional service
- Orthopaedic referral service
- Annual health checks
- Nurse clinics
- Full dental facilities
- Puppy parties
- Weight checks
- Separate cat and dog wards
- Convenient surgery hours
- Senior Pet Healthcare programme, for dogs over 8 and cats over 10 years old

Consulting Times by appointment

Monday - Friday:
9.00 am - 6.30 pm

Saturday:
9.00 am - 12.00 noon



Infectious Diseases: Make sure your pet is protected!

ONE OF the major advances in both human and animal health in recent years is the development of vaccines against infectious diseases.

Unvaccinated dogs and cats are susceptible to a number of highly infectious and potentially fatal diseases. There is no effective treatment for several of these diseases, however for many conditions vaccination provides a very simple and effective form of protection.

In **dogs** we routinely vaccinate against Leptospirosis,

Canine Distemper, Canine Infectious Hepatitis, and Canine Parvo virus.

In **cats** we routinely vaccinate against Feline Panleucopenia, Cat Flu and Feline Leukaemia virus.

Provided their mother was regularly vaccinated, puppies and kittens are usually protected in the first few weeks of life by antibodies from their mother's milk. However this immunity falls with time leaving them very susceptible to infectious diseases and this is where vaccination comes in.

Two or more vaccinations are usually given as a primary course, giving your pet immunity for the first

year of life. However the immunity provided by vaccination is not indefinite and will gradually fall, leaving your pet at risk. Regular annual booster injections are *vital* to maintain your pet's protection. We also like to use this visit to give your pet an annual health exam – in effect a head-to-tail MOT!

Don't take the risk! Make sure your pet's annual booster vaccinations are kept up to date!



Should I have my rabbit neutered?

JUST AS there are major benefits from having your rabbit vaccinated against infectious diseases, so there are also several benefits associated with having your rabbit neutered.

The operation itself, which requires a general anaesthetic, can be carried out from about four months of age onwards. In male rabbits (bucks) the testicles are removed, whilst in female rabbits (does) the ovaries and uterus are removed.

The most obvious benefit is of course that you can prevent unwanted pregnancies. Additionally, because reproductive organs have been

removed, rabbits are protected from cancer of these organs. Finally, neutered rabbits tend to be calmer, less prone to aggressive or destructive behaviour and can be kept in social groups without fighting. If you would like any further information on the benefits of having your rabbit neutered, please don't hesitate to ask a member of staff!



Photos: Jane Burton



Does my pet have worms?

THE BEST way to ensure your pet stays worm free is to know your enemy! Sadly, even the best kept pets will occasionally be troubled by worms.

Tapeworms live in the small intestines and shed segments which contain eggs. These pass out in the faeces and the eggs may then be eaten by an *intermediate host* (such as fleas and small rodents). Dogs and cats swallow fleas as they groom and cats catch and eat small rodents, in both cases re-infecting themselves with tapeworms.

Roundworms also live in the small intestines and shed thousands of tiny eggs, which pass out in the faeces, polluting the environment. Cats and dogs are re-infected by unwittingly eating eggs in the environment. These eggs also pose some risk to children if inadvertently swallowed.



Tapeworm segments
e.g. *Taenia taeniaeformis*



Typical roundworms
e.g. *Toxocara canis*

Remember – just because you don't see any worms doesn't necessarily mean your pet is worm free!

Here are three simple steps to keep your pet and the environment worm free: **worm your pet regularly, use regular flea control and clean up faeces.** Please let us advise you on the most suitable worming and flea control regime for your pet.

Cartoon: Gareth Davies

Thyroid disease: is your pet affected?

DID YOU know that thyroid disease is surprisingly common in dogs and cats?

The thyroid gland consists of two lobes – one located on each side of the trachea (wind pipe). The gland produces thyroid hormone which regulates your pet's metabolism – too much thyroid hormone speeds up the metabolism, whilst too little slows it down.



Photo: Jane Burton

Over production of thyroid hormone is termed **hyperthyroidism** and is a relatively common condition in **cats** over 8 years of age. Affected cats tend to burn up energy

too rapidly and lose weight despite an increased appetite and food intake. In addition, excess thyroid hormone usually increases the heart rate, potentially leading to abnormal thickening of the heart muscle and increased blood pressure. As well as the above, a variety of other signs may also be seen including hyperactivity, vomiting and diarrhoea.

However the good news is that in most cases, hyperthyroidism in cats can be very successfully treated.

Under production of thyroid hormone is called **hypothyroidism**, and is a relatively common condition in the older **dog**. Lower levels of thyroid hormone result in a **decrease** in the metabolic rate, usually leading to weight gain (with no

increase in appetite) and generalised lethargy. Other signs often include coat problems and recurrent skin and ear infections.



Diagnosis of hypothyroidism is often more difficult than hyperthyroidism. However, once a diagnosis has been made, daily treatment with oral thyroid supplements is usually very effective in treating the condition.

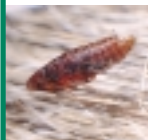
If you are concerned that your dog or cat is showing **any** of the signs described above, please arrange for us to examine your pet.



Autumn's here again!

WE ALL know that squirrels are usually very well prepared for the autumn and winter months – but how about our own pets?

Perhaps surprisingly for many pet owners, the number one problem at this time of year is **still** fleas! Unfortunately fleas do not take holidays, finding central



heating and carpets very much to their liking! So make sure that you don't let your flea treatment lapse at this crucial time. We sell a range of very effective products that are both safe and suitable for all your pets.

Older pets also need special consideration – make sure they have a warm draft free place to sleep. If your pet is a little stiff when moving, particularly when getting up after resting, they may be showing signs of joint problems. Please contact us if your pet is affected! The autumn is also the time for tortoise owners to ensure their pets are adequately prepared for hibernation. Please come and see us for a pre-hibernation check up!



Flea and Squirrel photos: Jane Burton