



## Our On-line shop is now open

Save money on purchase of a wide range of foods and pet related products and non-prescription medications. Free delivery for orders over £49.00. 10% discount for new customers and 5% discount for Healthy Pet Club members. Log onto <http://bbbvet.onlinevetshop.com> or via our website [www.bbbvet.org.uk](http://www.bbbvet.org.uk)



## Happy Holidays!

With the warmer weather here at last, you may be considering taking your pets abroad this year. The Pet Travel Scheme enables you to travel with your pet dog, cat or ferret to other EU countries (and specified non-EU countries) and then return home without having to put them into quarantine. Here are the steps:

Pets must firstly be **microchipped** and subsequently **vaccinated against rabies**. Once these steps are completed a **Pet Passport** can be issued. Pets will be allowed to travel with a Pet Passport 21 days after rabies vaccination.

Before travelling home, dogs must be treated against **tapeworm**. This needs to be given by a veterinary surgeon and recorded in the passport and should be given not less than 24 hours (but not more than 120 hours) before travelling home.

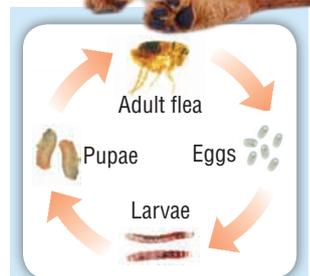
Please contact us for further information or visit: [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)



## Itchy scratchy – is your pet affected?



**Fleas** need little introduction to pet owners, but it is still a surprise how many people don't know the life cycle of the flea and how it can result in severe flea infestations developing in a short space of time. Not all animals with fleas will scratch – in fact its the ones that are allergic to flea bites which are more likely to show signs such as severe itch, scabs and hair loss, particularly along the back. Fleas are easy to pick up outside in the summer as the warmth can mean the life cycle from egg to adult can be as short as 3 weeks. A female flea lays up to 50 eggs a day! Also contrary to popular belief, fleas do not jump from one animal to another. A flea hatches out of its pupal case and jumps onto an unsuspecting animal as it walks past and will stay on that animal until it is swallowed or knocked off by scratching. The biggest problem arises when fleas are allowed to continue breeding inside the house, resulting in a very severe house infestation within a few months. We have various treatments available to kill fleas, ranging from injections in cats that stop flea eggs from hatching, or monthly tablets that work very effectively and kill fleas faster than any spot-on and are the treatment of choice in animals that swim or are bathed regularly, or the spot-ons which also treat mites and worms. Ask at your surgery for more advice.

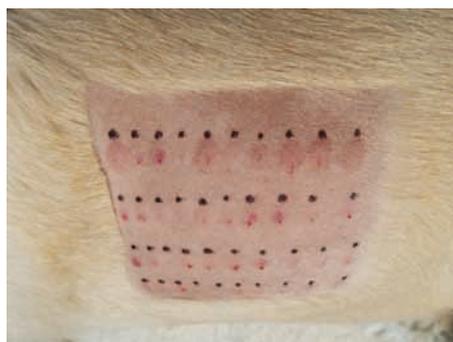


### The flea life-cycle:

Adult female fleas can lay up to 50 eggs per day and these fall off your pet and onto carpets, bedding and outside areas. Whilst the eggs can remain dormant for many months, in warm weather they will rapidly hatch out and develop (via larval stages) into adult fleas. With a life-cycle of about a month, flea numbers can rise dramatically in the summer.

Photos: Warren Photographic

**Atopic Dermatitis** is another allergic skin disease that we see all year round, but tends to be worse in the spring and summer, due to the presence of allergens such as tree, grass and weed pollens in the environment. Even the house dusts and forage mites,



responsible for year round atopic dermatitis, are in their highest numbers in the late summer. These allergens get into the body through the skin as it is known that atopic dogs also have a defective skin barrier. The disease will cause itchiness and redness of the various parts of the body, but classically the face, ears, feet, axillae and underside of the tummy. However some dogs will sometimes only show inflammation in the ears. It is one of the main causes of recurrent ear diseases in dogs. The disease also occurs in cats but these cases are more difficult to work up and treat. Luckily, we have a dermatologist in the practice, David Bentley, and he offers a full work-up of these cases and if necessary will advise Intradermal Skin Testing to



decide which allergens are significant, with a view of treating a case with allergen – specific immunotherapy which can improve symptoms by at least 50% in 75% of dogs. For more details log onto [www.leicesterskinvet.com](http://www.leicesterskinvet.com)

For further information on any of the topics covered in this newsletter, please contact your local surgery:

192 London Road Leicester Tel: 254 3255 • 41 Hinckley Road Leicester Forest East Tel: 238 8100 • 1 Central Avenue Wigston Tel: 288 6638



## Gum disease – a very common problem

If your pet's breath leaves a lot to be desired, it is likely that *gum disease* is the underlying problem! A healthy mouth usually has shrimp pink gums and bright white teeth. However problems will occur if plaque bacteria are allowed to build up on the surface of the teeth. Over time, accumulation of sticky plaque leads to *inflammation* and *reddening* of the gums – termed **gingivitis**. This is frequently accompanied by the accumulation of calculus (tartar) on the surface of the teeth along with very bad breath! However there is worse to come..! If the gingivitis is allowed to continue unchecked, plaque bacteria will start to penetrate *below* the gum line, resulting in destruction of the bone and tooth supporting structures – a painful condition called **periodontitis**. As the tooth support structures are progressively destroyed, the tooth will become loose and eventually fall out.

### So what is the incidence of gingivitis and periodontitis?

Sadly – it is very common and unfortunately once a tooth becomes loose, the problem is usually too advanced to save that tooth. However if gum problems are identified at an *earlier* stage (where there are signs of *gingivitis*), a combination of a Scale and Polish and ongoing Home Care can make a real difference to your pet's oral health (and their breath!). Please contact us today for a dental check-up and to find out more about caring for your pet's teeth.



Gingivitis with swollen and inflamed gum margins



Periodontitis with redness and recession of the gum margin.



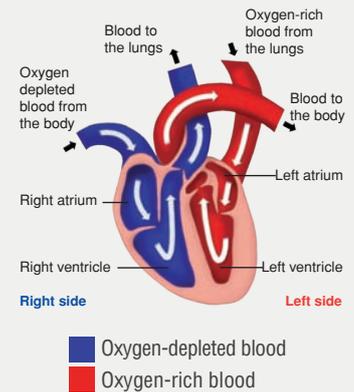
Scale and Polish: Removing the calculus using an ultrasonic scaler, followed by polishing is a very effective form of treatment



## Have a heart!

Whilst most of our pets take normal heart function for granted, it's a sad fact that heart disease is surprisingly common in dogs and cats.

The heart is a muscular pump that is responsible for supplying the tissues of the body with oxygenated blood. The heart receives de-oxygenated blood from the tissues of the body and pumps it to the lungs where it is re-oxygenated. This re-oxygenated blood flows back to the heart, where it is then pumped back round the body.



Heart disease – which can be gradual or sudden in onset, is the loss of the normal pumping action of the heart. Whilst there are many possible causes of heart disease, most problems are associated with the heart valves or the muscular walls of the heart.

In dogs it is generally more common in older pets, but in certain breeds it can be more prevalent at an early age. In cats it is often associated with an over-active thyroid gland.

Signs of heart disease include:

- coughing (excluding minor coughs lasting a few days)
- laboured or rapid breathing,
- reluctance to exercise,
- fainting or collapse.

If your pet is showing *any* of the signs listed above, come and see us for a full clinical examination. Happily, new diagnostic techniques and novel medications are now greatly improving and extending the lives of pets with heart problems.

## Don't get the summertime blues!



We all love the summer weather – when it finally arrives! *But how prepared are you and your pets?*

Here we look at some simple steps to help to beat the heat this summer:

**Play it cool!** Remember to avoid walking dogs in the heat of the day, particularly old overweight dogs and those with heart



problems. Early mornings and evenings are best. If you have space, dogs love a paddling pool to cool off!

**Sunscreen please!** Cats with white noses and white ear tips are at risk of getting these areas sunburnt and this can lead to cancerous changes in the sunburnt areas. High factor sunblock applied to the at risk (white) areas helps to minimise this risk.



Ear tip of a cat showing cancerous changes

**Barbecue beware!** Remember to ensure pets don't eat the barbecue leftovers – scraps and fatty leftovers can give your pet tummy upsets or pancreatitis, whilst also beware of corn on the cob husks which can easily become lodged in your dog's intestines.



**Flystrike** is a really big problem in rabbits during the warmer months. Rabbit rear ends often become damp and this moist area attracts flies, which lay their eggs

there. These eggs hatch out into maggots, which are capable of burrowing through the rabbit's skin and into the underlying flesh. Rabbit rear ends should be inspected daily for fly eggs and maggots, and soiled bedding should be cleaned out on a daily basis. Call us immediately if you are worried.

Also remember that pets in outside runs need a *shaded area* to get away from the sun.

**Grass seeds** of the meadow grasses are easily trapped in the coats of pets, particularly dogs. They often migrate and become lodged in a variety of places including the ears and between toes. Regular grooming, especially after walks is helpful in preventing problems associated with grass seeds.



**Bee and wasp stings** are another seasonal problem. Some pets are allergic to their stings and may need prompt veterinary attention.

**And finally:** Don't forget to keep treating your pets regularly against **fleas, ticks and worms** and **never ever leave a pet in a car on a hot day, they can die of heat stroke.**