



^ Peak Vets NEWS

36 Olivet Rd, Sheffield, S8 8QS. Tel: (0114) 2507733

WINTER 2014



Welcome...

Welcome to Peak Vet's latest newsletter which presents the latest goings on in the clinic and up to date pet care information.

Consulting Hours

**Peak Vets, 36 Olivet Rd,
Sheffield S8 8QS**

Mon – Fri: 8 am – 9 pm

Saturday: 9 am – 3 pm

Sunday: 11 am – 1 pm

Peak Vets Facts:

- We provide our own on-site emergency service.
- A nurse lives on the premises to provide the best care possible for your pet.
- We have ample off street car parking.
- We have a number of discounts for pets on long term medication.

Tel: (0114) 2507733

Fax (0114) 2507730

Email:

enquiries@peakvets.co.uk

www.peakvets.co.uk

Visit www.peakvets.co.uk and our facebook page for:

- Instructional videos
- Interesting cases
- Medication discounts and much more"

Photo: © iStockphoto.com



Is old age catching up?

Has your dog (or cat, rabbit or other pet) started to slow down as he's got older? Does he seem stiff to rise? Is he less keen to take exercise? Does he pant and puff if he does? Is he lethargic? Has he gone off his food? Does he drink more?

These are all symptoms which are often put down to old age and may seem an inevitable consequence of passing years, but in most cases these symptoms are caused by specific problems which, if treated, can relieve the signs of ageing resulting in a much happier and bouncier pet.

So if you have noticed such symptoms, do bring your pet in for a check – we can make sure his heart and lungs are working properly, check for lumps and bumps, examine his teeth and gums, give him a thorough MOT, and – if necessary, perform further tests to accurately identify any problems.

Once we know what's causing your pet's symptoms of ageing we are in a position to help him. Appropriate changes of diet, exercise regimes, medication and even surgical treatments can all help give your pet increased comfort and longevity. So, if old age seems to be catching up – do please give us a call.



Aches and pains – is your pet affected?



Cold damp weather can unmask signs of arthritic change in dogs and cats, and now is a great time to take a good look at your pets and make sure they are comfortable. Do they seem stiff or lame? Do they have difficulty getting

up or lying down? Does it take a while for them to get going in the morning? If so, your pet will benefit from a check over to identify any problems and work out how best to treat them.

The joints that are most susceptible to arthritis are those permitting free limb movements – called *synovial* joints. The ends of the bones that meet at these joints are covered by very smooth articular cartilage and lubricated with synovial fluid.

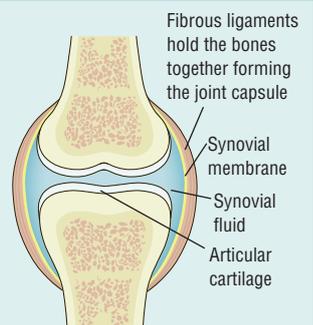
In pets with arthritis, this protective cartilage is damaged and worn away, resulting in exposure of the underlying bone causing pain and inflammation. Secondary "fluffy" new bone is commonly deposited around the joint and may be seen on xray. Affected joints commonly appear stiff, swollen and painful.

Although arthritis cannot usually be cured, there are several things we can do to help.

- **Weight control:** overweight pets tend to struggle far more with stiffness and arthritis than slender ones, as the extra weight puts more strain on diseased joints and weight loss can really help.
- **Exercise regimes** can also make a difference. Most stiff dogs benefit from two or three shorter walks every day than one long one from time to time. Other forms of exercise may also be helpful, and hydrotherapy may be useful in some cases.
- **Food supplements and medication** may also be required. We can advise on appropriate food supplements such as those containing EFAs (essential fatty acids) and glucosamine, and can prescribe anti-inflammatory treatments as required.

If your pet is showing any signs of arthritis, please come and see us for a check-up today.

Diagram of a synovial joint



Joint X-rays



The top xray shows a normal healthy elbow joint, whilst the bottom xray shows a very arthritic one with lots of "fluffy" new bone (yellow arrows) around the joint.



**Find us on
Facebook!**

www.facebook.com/peakvets.sheffield

The many benefits of regularly grooming your pet!



In addition to the regular health checks your pet receives from us, it's a great idea to perform some form of routine grooming yourself. Get your pet used to you examining their eyes, ears, teeth, feet and giving them a general check-over. This way you can better detect any problems at an earlier stage.

So what may you find when grooming your pet?

Parasites need no introduction to most pet owners! The two major ones to keep a watchful look out for are fleas and ticks.

• **Fleas:** Pets are often very effective at grooming fleas (thus removing the evidence!), so as well as looking for these tiny pests, keep an eye out for any signs of brown flea "dirt" (flea faeces) which also indicates their presence. Fleas are a major cause of skin problems in pets and can also bite humans!

• **Ticks:** The big issue here is the diseases they can transfer to your pet when they latch on and feed on their blood. This is mainly in the form of Lyme disease (which can affect pets and humans alike), but for pets travelling to mainland Europe, many will be exposed to a range of other diseases carried by ticks. Regular grooming and removal of ticks with a suitable tick hook, plus treatment with a product to kill or repel ticks, forms the basis for prevention of tick borne diseases in our pets.

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

Lumps and swellings are another issue to keep a watchful eye out for. If you find a skin lump on your pet, there are several possible underlying causes – these include abscesses, hernias and tumours. Tumours can be either *benign* – which tend to be slow growing and remain in one place, or *malignant* – which invade the surrounding tissues and may also spread to other parts of the body.

If you find any lumps or swellings it's a good idea to get them checked by us as soon as possible. Timing is everything and delay in appropriate treatment can be the difference between a small treatable mass and one that is far more difficult to treat.

So – when grooming your pet, if you find anything of concern, bring your pet in for a check-over and don't forget to maintain your guard against fleas and ticks and grass seeds!

What to look out for:

Fleas: Specks of flea "dirt" (faeces) in the coat indicates the presence of fleas.



If you collect these brown specks and drop them onto some wetted paper, they will dissolve yielding a characteristic reddish blotch confirming the presence of fleas.

Ticks: Parting the coat reveals a tick in situ with buried mouth parts.



A grass seed has become lodged between the toes in a dog causing a painful interdigital cyst.



Skin lumps: may vary considerably in appearance. Some are fairly obvious, whilst others are harder to detect. Some lumps move with the skin while others feel 'stuck' to underlying tissues.



Skin lump on a dog

Skin lump on a cat



It's cold out there!

With winter nights drawing in, it's important to take good care of all our pets so here are a few seasonal tips:

Outdoor pets such as rabbits and guinea pigs will need extra bedding and food, and hutches should be moved into sheltered areas and covered for frost protection. Keep a regular eye on their water container to make sure it doesn't freeze up.



Turning to dogs, whilst many dogs love the cold and snow, slim fine coated breeds such as whippets find it hard to conserve heat and will benefit from dog coats in cold weather.

In the home, ensure pets have warm comfortable sleeping areas but remember that **fleas** also love their creature comforts as well, so don't drop your guard during the winter!



The festive season brings with it a huge range of hazards for our pets! Items such as **ribbon and tinsel**

are very attractive to mischievous pets and, if swallowed, may lead to a serious intestinal blockage.

Whilst on the subject of edible items, don't forget that **chocolate** can be very toxic to dogs – in general the higher the cocoa content the more toxic the chocolate. Additionally **grapes, raisins or sultanas** are all toxic to dogs, making Christmas cakes, puddings and mince pies a serious hazard.



Many pets also love chewing **house plants** however some of these are very toxic! **Lilies** are a particular hazard to cats, with all parts of the plant being toxic.

STOP PRESS: **electronic cigarettes** pose a very serious risk to dogs that chew them, due to high concentrations of nicotine within.

If you have any questions on keeping your pet healthy – please just ask!

Does your pet drink like a fish?



Increased drinking is a very common early sign of a range of diseases, so if you are filling up the water bowl more frequently, it's time to stop and work out which pet is drinking too much and make an appointment!

Excessive thirst can indicate diseases ranging from liver or kidney disease, to diabetes and other hormonal conditions (including Cushing's disease in dogs and hyperthyroidism in cats). Infections can also cause increased drinking, particularly pyometra (a womb infection in an unsprayed bitch which also causes signs of illness and lethargy).

So if you think your pet is drinking more than normal, please bring them in for a check-up. As well as giving your pet a thorough clinical examination, urine and blood tests are usually very helpful in making a diagnosis. Radiography and ultrasound of the abdomen may also be of help, allowing an assessment of the size, shape and internal structure of the organs.

The good news is that we do have treatments for many of the conditions mentioned above which will hopefully ease the symptoms and prevent or slow the progression of the disease. Please call us if you are at all worried about your pet!