



Animal Health Centre

358 Gloucester Road, Horfield, Bristol BS7 8TP

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NEWS

SUMMER 2016

WELCOME TO the latest issue of our Newsletter designed to keep you up to date with what's happening in the practice.

Practice facilities

- Appointment system
- Free Nurse's clinics
- 24 hour emergency service
- Modern surgical facilities
- In-house laboratory
- Full dental facilities
- Annual health checks
- Weight-watchers clinics
- Full range of diets
- Advice on buying a new pet

Opening times

Monday – Friday:
8.30 am – 6.30 pm

Saturday: 9 - 12

Consulting times

Monday – Friday:
9 -10 am, 2 - 3 pm
5 - 6.30 pm

Saturday: 9.30 – 11.30

24 Hour
Emergency Service
☎ 0117 9059000

Topics in this issue:

- *Dry itchy eyes?*
- *Watch out, the sun's about!*
- *Better safe than sorry!
Is your pet insured?*

Practice News

As Animal Health Centre continues to grow and get busier so we have increased our staff numbers yet again.



Frankie and Retriever!

We are very happy to introduce our new full time fully qualified veterinary nurse, Frankie, to complete our team. Frankie has come a long way to join us having most recently worked in Australia where she did a lot of wildlife and conservation work. She has also lived in Hong Kong but is now looking forward to settling into Bristol. Her interests are in running nurse clinics and anything under the microscope. Outside of work she plays the drums and loves to dance. She is a great asset to our team and we all look forward to being groupies at her gigs!

Many of you know Elsa, Nicky's daughter, who has finally reached the end of her vet degree in Liverpool after 5 years of study. She takes her finals in May 2016 and qualifies in July. Elsa hopes to work initially in mixed practice with farm animals and horses as well as companion pets. We wish her every success in her career and are all very proud of her.

On June 25th Nicky and Elsa are taking on another challenge for charity, an overnight bike ride, 60 miles around Bristol in aid of the Blue Cross animal charity. Do look out for them setting off from Horfield Leisure Centre at 11pm and hopefully finishing off with a bacon buttie at some early hour of the morning to celebrate! Any sponsorship gratefully received.



Elsa (Nicky's daughter)

And finally a reminder that microchipping is now compulsory for all dogs, if you are not sure if your dog is chipped or whether it is still working please do call into the the practice for a free microchip check, no appointment needed. Your contact details must also be up to date by law so if you have moved recently don't forget to change your details.

Star Patient – A stones throw...

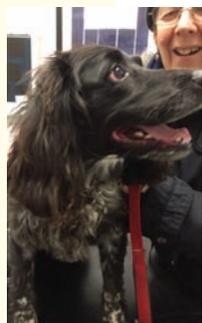
Tilly is an 8 year old spaniel who was presented to us with severe halitosis. She seemed happy in herself and was eating normally but her owner could not understand why her breath had suddenly got so much worse than her usual 'dog breath'.

Tilly was very reluctant to let us look in her mouth, we were able to glimpse her teeth and could see a build up of calculus but we couldn't see the exact cause of the smell. It was decided that the only way to find out more was to anaesthetise Tilly and have a good look in her mouth.

Under anaesthetic the cause of the smell was immediately obvious. Tilly had fractured one of the large molars in her lower jaw, it was very infected and the smell was quite impressive even for our smell-hardened professional noses here! We removed the tooth after sectioning it further and put Tilly on a course of antibiotics and painkillers.

3 days later at her post op check Tilly was a very happy mutt, her breath smelled sweet and her owner reported that she was much brighter although no one had realised before that she was depressed with tooth ache. We think the tooth was probably broken some months before when Tilly was playing on a beach with stones, she had suffered in silence with a broken tooth for a long while!

So a timely reminder to not allow your dog to play with stones and if your dog has bad breath please come in for a dental check. And its strictly tennis balls only for Tilly in future.



Our Star Patient Tilly



Tilly's fractured molar

Dry itchy eyes?



Did you know that keratoconjunctivitis sicca, commonly referred to as “Dry Eye”, is one of the most common eye problems in dogs. Dry Eye affects 1 in 22 of all dogs in recent surveys.

In most cases, Dry Eye is caused by destruction of the tear glands by your dog’s own immune system, leading to partial or total loss of tear production.

Tears play a key role in keeping eyes healthy. They lubricate and cleanse the eyes, carry vital nutrients and oxygen to the surface of the eye and help protect against infection. Healthy eyes are bright and clear (see photo left).



Healthy eye



Severely affected case of dry eye

Without tears, the eyes will become progressively more dry and uncomfortable (see lower photo). However Dry Eye has a very variable appearance, with some pets’ eyes appearing relatively normal *despite* little or no measurable tear production.

Happily there is a quick and simple test to diagnose Dry Eye in your dog. Better still, medication for Dry Eye, usually in the form of an ointment, can improve tear production and reverse many of the signs of Dry Eye, maintaining vision and keeping pets comfortable. So, if your pet has any of these symptoms, let us know since the earlier the problem is diagnosed and treatment started, the better the long term outlook for affected pets.

Watch out, the sun’s about!

Finally, the summer is here! Most of us, and our pets, love the warmer weather but it brings with it its own particular set of challenges and potential problems. Here are a few tips to keep your pet fit and well at this time of year:

Heat Stroke is an extremely serious problem and can even be fatal. Although all dogs are at risk, the shorter faced breeds, like Staffies, Pugs and Bulldogs are most vulnerable, and the danger is even greater if they are overweight. To prevent problems, avoid exercising your pets in the midday heat and make sure they don’t over-exert themselves at any time. If you become worried, move them to a cool, shaded place, give them lots to drink and call us immediately.



Slip, slap, slop! Most cats are real sun worshippers, which doesn’t tend to be a problem unless they have white ears or noses. These areas are vulnerable to sun burn because the hair is so thin, which is painful in itself but can also trigger skin cancers (see photo right). To protect your pet, apply high factor waterproof sun lotion to their ears and noses. This is sometimes easier said than done but there are pet specific products out there to help you.



Ear tip of a cat showing cancerous changes – note the reddening of the skin. If your pet is showing signs of skin changes on their nose or ears, please call us.

Grass seeds are another summer problem – the grass awns of the meadow grasses are easily trapped in the coats of pets, especially dogs. They then migrate and become lodged in a variety of places including the ears and between the toes. It is always a good idea to groom your pets regularly, and especially after walks, to keep a close eye out for grass seeds.



Grass awns of the summer grasses are a perennial hazard

BBQ Beware! Lovely weather and longer evenings mean lots of people break out the barbecue, and dogs often have a great time hoovering up the left-overs! This can cause tummy upsets, but more seriously, if anything like bones, kebab sticks and sweetcorn cobs are snaffled, they can lead to serious blockages requiring life saving surgery to remove. So keep your pets away from the barbecue!

Itch alert! For sensitive dogs with allergies, the flowers and grasses that thrive in the summer months can cause real problems. Dogs will often break out with nasty skin rashes, especially on the feet, tummy and ears. If your pet is affected, please come and see us for a check-up as there are usually treatments we can give them to improve the situation. Also – don’t forget to keep up to date with anti-parasite treatment, since fleas can be a big cause of itching!

So – enjoy the summer months, have fun and keep your pets safe. We are here to help, so if you would like any further information on summer hazards, please just ask a member of staff.

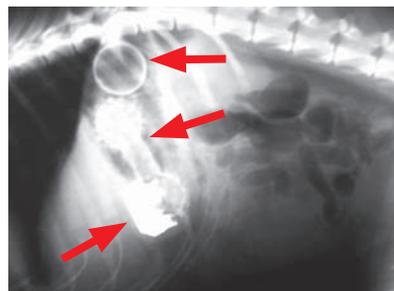
Better safe than sorry! Is your pet insured?

Did you know that you are more likely to claim on your pet insurance than either your house or car policies? The good news is that the majority of policies represent very good value for money and can take a great weight off your mind if you are faced with large vet bills.

There are several different kinds of policies; ‘12 month’ ones will only cover a condition for the first year after diagnosis, whereas ‘life long’ will continue to pay for treatment for as long as is necessary. Some will pay up to a certain amount per condition, whereas others are unlimited. So you really need to understand the policy before taking it out!

On a daily basis we see the heart wrenching decisions some of our clients face regarding the treatment of their pets, but with appropriate pet insurance, we can hopefully ensure that any treatment decisions are made on the basis of need rather than cost.

Don’t take any chances – make sure you get your pet insured today!



Case Study: Harry needed veterinary treatment because he had been vomiting, refusing food and was generally miserable. X-rays showed that Harry had been treating his toys as after-dinner snacks! Harry needed an operation to remove the toys – happily the bill was covered by Harry’s pet insurance!