



Animal Health Centre

358 Gloucester Road, Horfield, Bristol BS7 8TP



WINTER 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 905 9000



Topics in this issue:

- Chips with everything!
- Avoiding Christmas calamities!
- Fleas?! But it's freezing!
- Winter Worms!



Practice news

Sophie has had a busy time recently, after passing her exams she is now a fully qualified first aider with St Johns Ambulance and she is also now qualified as a government Official Vet which means she is able to issue pet passports and export certificates. Congratulations Sophie.

Our latest new toy in the practice and foray into technology is an ultrasound machine. Sophie and Nicky are getting up to speed and using it whenever they can as well as attending courses and having tuition in the practice. This adds another angle to our armoury of diagnostic tools as well as being good for us to have a new skill to learn!

We're now at the end of another busy year at Animal Health Centre it just remains to wish all of our patients and clients a very happy and peaceful Christmas and a healthy 2017 ahead.

★ STAR PATIENT ★ Brown and the not so sweet corn!

Brown is a very happy and lively one year old Springer Spaniel. He tends to eat before he thinks, necessitating visits to us, we had seen him previously on a couple of occasions after eating socks. His most spectacular dietary indiscretion to date was eating 10 corn on the cob, found in a rubbish bag. He presented to us with an acutely bloated abdomen and looking a bit sorry for himself.

Brown had already tried being sick but nothing had come up and the cobs were too big to be passed out. There was only one way the corn on the cob was going to come out and that was via surgery to empty his stomach.



We operated on Brown and opened his stomach to remove all offending contents. Despite being in there for only just over 24 hours the smell



was quite ripe and enough to put the whole surgical team off sweet corn for life. He also had a large quantity of coleslaw in there too!

Brown went on to make a rapid recovery and was able to go away on holiday to France just a few days later. We hope that as Brown matures his tastes for exotic foods and socks may decline.

Corn on the cob is a classic abdominal 'foreign body'. They are very attractive to dogs especially when thrown away with a sauce to enhance the taste. They tend to be swallowed easily by dogs although can occasionally lodge in the oesophagus before even reaching the stomach. Once in the stomach they are often not able to pass out into the small intestine or if they do then they don't get far and cause a blockage.

So to be avoided at all costs for dogs!

Chips with everything!



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It is now a legal requirement for all dogs in the UK to be microchipped. This is to try to reduce the stray population and encourage responsible pet ownership.

All puppies born after April 2016 should be chipped and registered to their breeder, before the details are changed to the new owners. Any adult dogs who haven't been done, should be chipped as soon as possible since you can be fined!



However, it is a very good idea to microchip **all** your pets, not just the dogs! **Cats** often wander and lose collars, so it's just as important.

We can also chip **rabbits**, **birds** and even **reptiles**!



A microchip is hardly bigger than a grain of rice and having it implanted is quick and simple. Like a normal injection, it is inserted under the skin at the back of the neck, and once there, it lasts a lifetime.

All the chip numbers are held on a central database and you can register as many contact details as you like, so as well as your own numbers, add family members and even work, to ensure if your pet does go missing, someone is always contactable.

Finally, don't forget to keep that information up to date! A chip loses its effectiveness if the numbers are no longer current!

If you would like your pet to be microchipped, or want to know how to add more numbers to the database, please just speak to our friendly practice team!

Avoiding Christmas calamities!

The festive season is an exciting time, with plenty of lovely food, chocolate galore, presents, visitors, not to mention all the decorations and the tree! So here are some tips to keep your pets out of trouble over this fun time.

Festive food alert! With so much extra food in the house it is essential to keep it well away from pets. **Rich foods** can lead to upset tummies, but be especially aware of **raisins** in puddings, pies and cakes, since they can be very toxic to the kidneys. **Chocolate** is another festive favourite, but as little as 50g of plain chocolate can be fatal in small dogs. Turkey meat is fine but if your pets get hold of **turkey bones**, there is the potential for dangerous gut blockages. Also, don't forget about the **presents** under the tree! Dogs, with their sensitive noses will be able to tell exactly which gifts are edible and the wrappings and ribbons won't do their tummies any good either!

Visitor alert! Christmas is a time for families and our homes are often full of visitors celebrating the festive cheer. Many pets

will revel in this extra attention but some will find it extremely stressful. If your animals are more shy than sociable, make sure they have a safe space they can retreat to undisturbed.

Winter walks: when going for an after lunch walk, take care of your dog's paws. Snow and ice can ball up between the toes, especially on furry feet, and road grit can cause nasty sores if it is not washed off once you are home. Also slim fine coated breeds such as whippets find it hard to conserve heat and will benefit from a dog coat in cold weather.

Pinch an inch! With many pets spending more time indoors during the winter months – they are getting less exercise and need correspondingly less food. Keep an eye out for any weight gain since excess weight can cause a range of health problems including heart disease and diabetes.

If you would like any further information on any of the topics mentioned in this article, please speak to a member of our team. Have fun with your pets and stay safe over the festive season!



Dastardly Decorations!

Make sure the decorations and the tree are either well out of reach or securely fastened down. Cats especially, find the twinkly lights, tinsel and baubles irresistible and will love to bat them about or, worse, chew on them. Which not only could ruin your lovely decorations but could cause them harm if they are accidentally swallowed or broken.

Toxic plant alert!

When cats are not going out as much they also like to amuse themselves by chewing house plants. Beware of **lilies** which are toxic to cats. All parts of the plant, including the pollen, are toxic, causing kidney failure.



E-Cigarette awareness

These are a new hazard for dogs that chew everything. The high concentration of nicotine poses a very serious risk to chewing pets.

Cat with wool, rabbit, dog in snow: Jane Burton

Fleas?! But it's freezing!



It's true! The winter months are often the worst for fleas because although it is cold outside, our houses are warm and just right for them

to breed in their thousands. This is why it is important to continue with flea protection at this time of year because just one or two fleas can easily turn into an infestation. In many cases new flea problems are caused by flea eggs from *old* infestations hatching out and reinfecting your pets!

Common symptoms of bites include itchiness, red rashes, hair loss and severe irritation, which is particularly marked in pets with an allergy to flea saliva. Some affected pets develop secondary skin infections and may require antibiotics and treatment to relieve their itching.

Have a chat to our lovely staff about how to protect both your pets and your house from fleas in winter! For optimum flea control, treatment should ideally be all year round!

Winter Worms!

Even in the colder months, we mustn't neglect our worming regimes for our pets!

Worm eggs are shed in their millions in the faeces of infected animals and can survive for many months in the soil, even in freezing conditions, and are then reactivated when ingested. This commonly happens when dogs go snuffling in the undergrowth or cats groom themselves. Also, some worms are passed by fleas, whose numbers often increase at this time of year, because although outside is chilly, our homes are lovely and warm for them!

Although some pets show symptoms of worms – itchy bottoms, diarrhoea or bloating, many appear completely normal but still carry big infestations. Also, don't forget some of the worms that infect our pets, can also infect humans as well – even more reason to keep up with protection! Please speak to our staff about which worming products would be best for your pets!