



parkhill vets news

Hutchison, Dunlop & Baird
Parkhill Veterinary Surgery, Walton Road, WETHERBY, LS22 5DZ
☎ 01937 582025 • www.wetherbyvets.co.uk

Our Premier Health Plan is now even better!

It now includes monthly worming, flea and tick treatments, Booster AND Kennel Cough Vaccination and 25% off all Royal Canin Foods as well as many more discounts

PLUS 6 monthly health checks as we believe prevention is better than cure!

Join when you come for vaccination and receive 10% off your booster vaccination.

Save from £90/year for a Small Dog to £360 for a Giant Dog before the extra discounts off consultations, food, long term medications.

Don't delay join today and start saving now!

Get into shape for Spring

We are proud to be an approved Royal Canin Weight Management Centre.

Has your pet put on a few pounds through the Winter?

If you would like us to check your pet's weight, come along to our free Weight Clinics where we can show you how to 'body score' your pet and give dietary advice to help keep them healthy and happy.

For a nurse appointment call 01937 582025

Did you know you can now book appointments online?

Visit www.wetherbyvets.co.uk

 Follow us now on Facebook

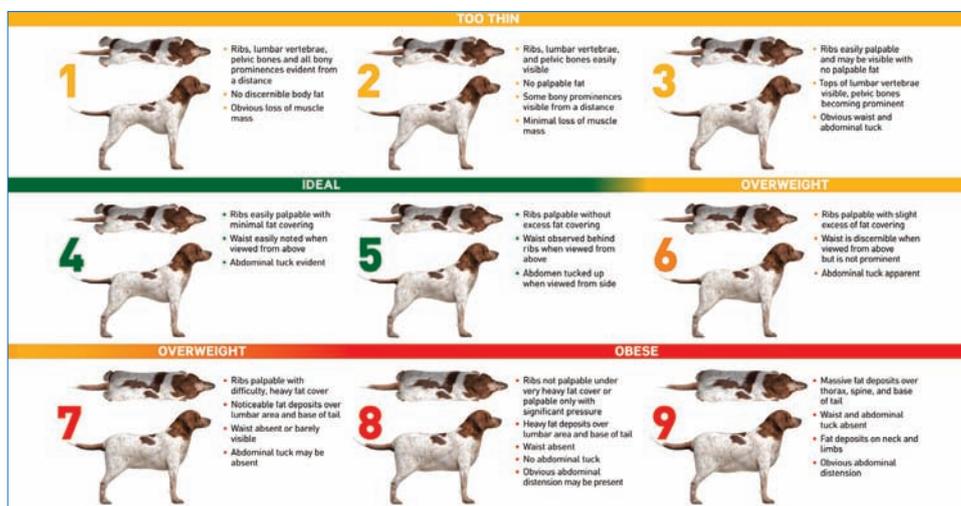


Keeping your pet in shape



We are all too aware of the epidemic of obesity facing humans in developed countries, but what about our pets? With nearly 60% of dogs and 40% of cats being overweight in the UK it is important we recognise a healthy shape for our pets.

To assess a healthy body shape you can use a Body Condition Score chart like the one pictured below. If you would like to know how to body condition score then please come and speak to us and we can show you how to use the charts.



Carrying extra weight can lead to a range of health risks including: **Arthritis:** If joints are under constant strain from extra weight, they are more likely to become arthritic and painful and require medication. **Diabetes:** for cats, being obese is a huge risk factor for them developing diabetes.

How can you ensure your pet stays at a healthy weight? The most important thing is to ensure their diet is one suitable for their size, age and lifestyle. Neutered pets tend to have a slower metabolism and so can be more prone to weight gain and therefore require less calories. ROYAL CANIN® Neutered Diets provide a complete food that meets the differing needs of male and female neutered cats and dogs.

Some breeds are more vulnerable to becoming overweight such as Labradors and Cavalier King Charles Spaniels and we can recommend suitable breed diets tailored for each dog's individual needs.

Indoor cats may be much more sedentary than outdoor cats and require different nutrients depending on their age and activity, the diets we recommend are more tailored to suit your cat's specific needs.

Most importantly we have to consider the amount of extras, rewards, treats we give as they all contain many different amounts of calories and may be too much for our cats and dogs. It can be difficult to determine the amount of calories in most treats so please ask our advice.

So - how can you help a pet lose weight? Dieting our pets is not always easy. That's the reason we offer free weight management clinics for you to attend, seek advice and have our continued support throughout the process. We are a ROYAL CANIN® Approved Weight Management Centre and our staff have undergone specific training to help you get your pets back into ideal weight. We will talk through your current routine and make recommendations accordingly. Where required we may advise on a calorie restricted diet. These diets although restricted in calories provide all the nutrients your cat or dog will need, the diet also has increased fibre to help your animal stay fuller for longer.

All pets need regular exercise, this can include walks on and off lead, play when out on walks and in the house or garden. Exercise is important for cats as it allows them to express normal behaviours so encourage playtime on a daily basis. You can provide interactive feeders or slow down feeders instead of bowls at meal times. This makes the cat and dog work for their food and provides much more entertainment. If you are unsure which will be most suitable for your pet please ask our advice.

The good news is, that as your pet loses weight, the benefits of increased healthiness and vitality are usually seen quite quickly. **So, if you think your pet has been piling on the pounds please get in touch - we are here to help!**

Caring for your older cat – some top tips!



In their twilight years our cats can suffer from a range of conditions, but they are also experts at hiding the signs of illness! So, looking out for subtle changes in their behaviour can really make a difference. Here are some tips:

Sore joints: Recent studies have shown that approximately 80% of cats over the age of twelve have arthritis. However, it can be difficult to identify because they simply rest more, and because they are naturally athletic animals, they will often still jump, climb and play, but not as much as they

used to. Ask us to check their joints next time you are paying us a visit, and if we are concerned, a trial of pain relief medication often lets us know if they are sore or not. Make a stiff, elderly cat's life easier by placing steps up to their favourite places, putting food bowls close to where they rest, using low sided litter trays and giving them deep, soft beds in warm, cosy places.

Weight loss: Senior cats can lose weight due to many different conditions, but often it is such a gradual process we don't notice. It's a good idea to get into the habit of weighing your pensionable pussycat on a regular basis and if you notice a downward trend, bring them in for a check-up.

Drinking more: Kidney Failure and Diabetes are fairly common in older cats and both will cause them to drink more than they should. In fact, cats naturally drink very little, so often a cat who drinks 'well', is actually drinking to excess and should have a check-up.



Eating less: Sore teeth and Kidney Failure are two of the most likely causes of a reduced or changed appetite in a cat. If their mouth is painful they often keep eating, but they may start to prefer wet food or, if watched carefully, not actually chew properly. It can be difficult to fully check their mouths at home, so if you are worried, just bring them down!

Eating more: An over-active thyroid gland (Hyperthyroidism) and Diabetes will both make cats eat more, and while this is often taken as a sign of good health, it can be the opposite, especially if they are losing weight *despite* their appetite.

So – as you can see there are a lot of signs to keep a watchful eye out for. In addition it's also a good idea to bring older pets in for regular health-checks so that any problems can be picked up as early as possible.

Rabbit teeth – a growing issue!



Did you know that rabbits have unusual teeth in that they are *continually* growing? In fact their teeth are perfectly adapted to their natural diet of tough abrasive vegetation, which – without continued tooth growth, would soon result in their teeth being totally ground down to nothing!

Thus, to keep our pet bunny's teeth healthy, most of their diet should comprise of good quality hay (which is very abrasive), a small amount of fresh green leafy vegetables, and a small amount of a pelleted rabbit feed. This keeps their teeth at a healthy (short) length plus also getting all the vital nutrition they need.

However it is easy to feed too much hard food (often of the muesli kind), which bunnies often prefer, and so ignore the hay. Insufficient hay means the teeth aren't ground down and so grow too long, developing sharp spikes which tear into the mouth (see photo). Muesli type mixes also encourage *selective* feeding, leaving vital nutrients uneaten and which can lead to bone weakness. For this reason, it is better to replace the muesli mix component with pelleted food.

The good news is that feeding the correct diet, as outlined above, can go a long way to avoiding most dental problems in rabbits. For more advice, please have a chat to our team who will be very happy to advise you!

Oral exam reveals problems:



Overgrown cheek teeth (arrowed) are sharp, spikey and can lacerate the gums



Lungworm alert!

Lungworm, caused by *Angiostrongylus vasorum* is gradually becoming more common through-out the UK and Ireland. In affected dogs, clinical signs can range from a mild cough to life threatening bleeding problems.



Slugs and snails can carry the larval stage of *Angiostrongylus vasorum* and if dogs eat slugs and snails, they can become

unwittingly infected. Some pets seem to have a taste for these garden dwellers but all dogs are at risk. Some species of slugs are very small and can easily be accidentally swallowed when dogs eat grass, drink from puddles or play with toys that have been left outside. The disease is commonest in young dogs that eat or play with slugs and snails.

Once swallowed, the larvae migrate to the heart where they will develop into adult



Electron micrograph of an adult lungworm

worms. The adult lungworms live in the heart and those blood vessels supplying the lungs. Here they lay their eggs, which hatch into larvae and migrate into the airways of the

lungs. The dog then coughs them up, swallows the larvae, sheds them in the faeces, and the life cycle begins again.

Clinical signs of lungworm can be vague and variable – ranging from a cough or tiring more easily, to bruising easily, serious bleeding problems and even fitting.

Lungworm can be diagnosed by checking for the larvae in the faeces or by specialised blood tests. The treatment for dogs who are infected with a lungworm involves killing the parasites plus also treating the bleeding or other symptoms they may have. The latter can be challenging and, sadly, many dogs have died because of the parasite.

The good news is that prevention is straight forward with spot-on or tablet medications, both of which are highly effective.

If you are concerned about lungworm, please have a chat to our staff who will be able to advise you on the best form of preventative treatment to protect your pets.