



Animal Health Centre

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NEWS

SUMMER 2017

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:

- Things are hotting up!
- Brushing up on dental care!
- Stick to balls!



Firstly a huge **thank you** to all of our clients who sponsored us earlier in the year for our 5k night race, Back to Black. We were absolutely thrilled to be able to raise over £1,000 for DAWG, our local greyhound and lurcher rescue and rehoming society.

We had a great night out for the run, very wet, cold, dark and muddy but we rose to the occasion and Team Dawglers triumphed finishing as first team in the 5k and Nicky was first lady home. And a special mention to Debbie Coles' 2 children, Harry aged 6 and Brianna aged 4, who ran the junior 1k race and set the standard for the rest of us!

Nicky is now training for her next charity challenge and will be cycling 500 miles to Bordeaux in early July. The trip is over 4 days so 125 miles a day on a bike in aid of PROPS, a Bristol charity working with young adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. It will certainly be a challenge and a test of character,

Practice news

she has cycled that far in a day before but never for 4 consecutive days! If you would like to sponsor Nicky then do hand in donations at reception or visit her donation page, [my donate.bt.com/fundraisers/nickybromhall1](http://my.donate.bt.com/fundraisers/nickybromhall1)

When not setting ourselves mad energetic challenges we are keeping very busy at Animal Health Centre. To provide more appointment slots we have taken on a new member of staff, Karen Wilson as part time vet. Karen and Nicky worked together many years ago at the University practice in Langford. Karen brings with her a wealth of experience and particularly enjoys medical cases and imaging with X-rays and ultrasound. It's great to have her with us.

Now is the time to vaccinate your rabbit against Myxomatosis and Viral haemorrhage disease (VHD) as both diseases are carried by flying insects. Last year a new strain of VHD appeared in UK and we now have stocks of the new vaccine available, please call for details and to book an appointment.

Finally a reminder as the summer is almost on us, don't forget your tick and flea remedies before the onslaught, do come in and chat to the nurses to find out the latest products that we have available to protect your pet.



★ STAR PATIENT ★ Curious symptoms

12 year old gorgeous ginger cat, James, was presented to us as he was off his food and even turning his nose up at this favourite Whiskas.

When Sophie saw him she could feel a lump in his abdomen that was very suspicious as the cause of his problems. After blood test, x-rays and ultrasound, it was decided that he had a growth on his spleen and that surgery was called for.

We operated on James and found a spleen with large bleeding tumours and no sign of any spread elsewhere. His spleen was successfully removed and James went on to make an uneventful recovery and started to eat again. Analysis of the spleen showed it to be a Lymphoma.

Splenic masses although common in dogs are quite rare in cats. Removal of a spleen in an adult animal is quite major surgery but once recovered the animal can manage very well without it.

James' prognosis is good as it appeared he had no spread at the time of surgery and we hope he will have many happy years ahead tucking into his Whiskas.





Things are hotting up!

Woo hoo – the summer is here! But when the heat turns up, the dangers to pets increase too. To keep your dog, cat and other furry friends safe, make sure you are prepared. To help you we've put together some top summer survival tips:

Summer walks: When walking your dogs, do try to avoid the hottest times of the day. Heat stroke is a real risk for many breeds but particularly those with shorter noses or who are overweight. However, this doesn't mean they can't enjoy the great weather – just make use of the light evenings and go out when it is cooler.



UV Alert! Just like us, sunburn can cause problems for our pets. Cats are natural sun bathers, but cats with white noses and ear tips are particularly vulnerable to sun burn and subsequent skin cancer.

This risk can be reduced by keeping them out of the sun, or by applying sunblock to these areas during the summer months.



Ear tip of a cat showing early (reddened) cancerous changes. If your pet is showing signs of skin changes, please call us at once.

Summer shade: Guinea pigs and rabbits need an area of shade so that they do not overheat – guinea pigs in particular are unable to regulate their body temperature and both they and rabbits are vulnerable to sunburn.



Flystrike is a very serious problem at this time of year. Rabbit rear ends often become damp and this moist area attracts flies, which lay their eggs there. These eggs hatch out into maggots which can cause life threatening infections. Rabbit rear ends should be inspected daily for fly eggs and maggots, and soiled bedding should be cleaned out daily. Call us immediately if you are worried.



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

So – do enjoy the summer and remember to check your pets' coats for pesky **grass seeds** which can get trapped and cause problems. And finally – **NEVER leave pets in cars. Even on dull days, they can heat up and become ovens.**

Brushing up on dental care!

Did you know that poor dental hygiene can be a source of long term pain and discomfort for many pets? Worse still, without regular check-ups, dental problems in pets are frequently overlooked as pets usually tolerate the pain – suffering in silence.

In order to prevent dental problems in our pets, it is helpful to understand how and why they arise.

Pets are usually born with healthy mouths, with shiny white teeth and pink (or pigmented) gums. However, over time the accumulation of plaque bacteria on the surface of the teeth leads to inflammation of the gums – termed **gingivitis** (or gum disease). This is often accompanied by very bad breath and also the accumulation of calculus (tartar) on the tooth surface.

If the gingivitis is not treated at this stage, the plaque will start attacking the underlying tooth supporting structures, resulting in gum and bone loss, dental pain, marked bad breath and eventually leading to tooth loss. This condition is termed **periodontitis**.



As well as gum disease, cats may also suffer from one or more **tooth resorptive lesions** usually found at or below gum level. These are unique to cats and still not fully understood.

They are very painful, however, and again most cats will not show obvious pain.

Regular dental check-ups (as part of the booster visit) are a key part of monitoring for dental disease. The good news is that if gum problems are identified at an early 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.

Please contact us today for a dental check-up and to find out more about caring for your pet's teeth.



Gingivitis with inflamed gums



Periodontitis with gum loss



Tooth resorptive lesions
Typical lesion (arrowed). The tooth is progressively destroyed and is usually very painful.



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

Terrier photo: Warren Photographic

Stick to balls!



If you have a dog who loves to play fetch, but you forgot to take a ball with you on a walk (or you threw it and they lost it!), it is tempting to use a stick instead. After all, there are always plenty lying around and who hasn't seen a dog with one in their

mouth's, looking very pleased with themselves?!

However, throwing sticks can be extremely dangerous and they have the potential to cause some very nasty injuries. If your dog runs onto it while it is pointing upwards or catches it by one end rather than the middle, it can easily rip into the soft skin and tissue of the throat, leading to massive damage and bleeding. Less dramatically, splinters can dig into the gums and lips, causing pain and abscesses, some of which aren't always obvious and our dogs end up suffering in silence.



This is a typical stick injury – in this case the stick has become lodged in the dog's throat.

Photos: courtesy Bath Veterinary Referrals

Most vets and veterinary nurses have seen 'stick injuries', the most serious of which can be extremely difficult to fix or potentially even be fatal. Certainly it is far safer and also cheaper to buy a new ball for every walk – rather than resort to a stick!