



Animal Health Centre

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NEWS

AUTUMN 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:

- *Feeling ticked off?*
- *A word in your ear!*
- *Autumn Awareness!*



Earlier in the summer we were joined by Kristiana and Hannah to complete our team of 4 qualified veterinary nurses, Kristiana works part time with us while also working for an animal welfare charity and Hannah is full time. It is a treat to have our nursing team up to full strength again, good nurses are a rare breed and difficult to recruit! We hope we can now utilise them with more nurse clinics and check ups.

In July Nicky completed her mammoth charity bike ride, 500 miles to Bordeaux in 4 days. A massive thank you to all of our clients who supported her and so generously donated to the charity PROPS for the learning disabled



Practice news

adults of Bristol. She exceeded her target of £750 by quite some way. Any suggestions for next year's challenge...?

A huge thank you to one of our clients and painter and decorator, Mark, for giving up a bank holiday weekend to redecorate Animal Health Centre inside and out, it looks great, thank you very much. As we are open 6 days a week it is impossible to find time in a normal working week to allow such a transformation. Even with a bank holiday Monday, it still felt like a race against time to get everything back in place ready to start work again on the Tuesday.

It may be nearing the end of the tick season but fleas seem to be perennial problem, so don't drop your guard. We now have in stock a new monthly chewy tablet for dogs that is very effective for fleas and ticks as well as roundworm and the slug and snail lungworm, please call in and ask for more details.

★ STAR PATIENT ★

Minnie the hedgehog caught in a mouse trap

A badly injured hedgehog was brought into us after being found with a back leg trapped in a mouse trap. The trap had caused severe damage and also broken the tibia and fibula with bone showing through the wound.

It was not possible to perform surgery on the leg so we started the long process of cleaning the wound, antibiotics, painkillers

and supportive care to allow natural healing. Each week we anaesthetised Minnie to check her wounds and clean her leg and she lived with us here for the duration so we could keep her environment as clean as possible.

2 months later Minnie's leg was healed, remarkably nature had allowed the broken bones to knit together so she could walk well and the skin had healed over.

Lela was in charge of Minnie's rehab and did a great job of caring for her, Minnie became very tame and certainly enjoyed her 5 star hotel, eating vast amounts and gaining weight! She certainly was a very happy patient.

Finally we released Minnie to the local hedgehog rescue to allow her to be re-released back into the wild when she is ready.

It is always so rewarding to treat wildlife casualties and it is a very special part of our work. We do not charge for any treatment given to wild animals and give our time freely too. We are also lucky to have locally so many enthusiastic volunteers who care for our casualties once we can discharge them before they can be released once again.





Feeling ticked off?

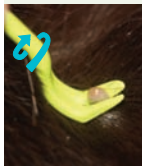
Autumn is the prime time of year for ticks as they thrive when the weather is still mild, but moist. They are particularly prevalent in areas with livestock, especially sheep, and where the undergrowth is thick, waiting to hop on to passing pets as they brush by.

Ticks will attach themselves to your pet and feed on their blood for several days. Although pets are rarely bothered by them, they can leave skin irritations behind and have the potential to pass on some nasty infections. Ticks can spread: **Lyme Disease**, an inflammatory infection which causes lameness and fever, **Babesiosis**, which can lead to life threatening anaemia and **Ehrlichiosis** which also attacks red blood cells and can be fatal. The latter two conditions are particularly prevalent abroad, so if you take your dog abroad on holiday, it is essential to protect them against ticks.

Pets should be monitored daily for ticks and if any ticks are found, these should be promptly removed with a specially designed tick remover. Treatments and preventions for ticks are available as spot-ons, tablets and collars and are generally very effective.



Grooming reveals an *Ixodes* tick. These are widespread across the UK and Ireland and may be infected with Lyme disease.



Ticks can be carefully removed using a tick hook.



Autumn Awareness!

Autumn is a truly beautiful time of year – the trees are turning to glorious golds and the weather is crisp. However, here are some things we need to be aware of to ensure our pets stay happy and healthy as the seasons change.

Parasite alert! Firstly, keep up your **flea** protection! Turning on the central heating means our homes become their ideal environment when it is too cold for them outside. Continue to treat your pets and come and talk to us about how to protect your home as well. **Harvest mites** and **ticks** (see above left) also thrive at this time of year and again we are happy to advise you on how to prevent problems.

Toxic alert! Cars often have anti-freeze added to their engines around now which means bottles are often left out and spillages can occur. Unfortunately, cats find it very tasty despite the fact it is highly toxic and often fatal. Make sure you keep anti-freeze well out of reach, clean up drips and if you think they might have eaten some, bring them to us immediately.

Outdoor pets like rabbits or guinea pigs are usually able to cope fine as winter approaches but we can help by ensuring their cages are free from drafts and that they have enough bedding to create a cosy bed. However, they still should have as much freedom as possible, so do keep allowing them outdoor access in a secure run, they are active creatures and will be miserable cooped up for months.

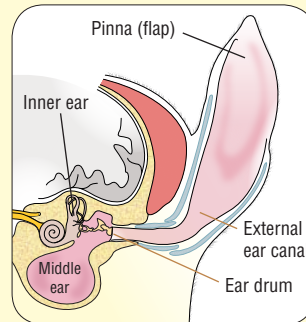
Finally, watch out for **conkers!** For some dogs they can seem like fun play things or tasty snacks! However, they are poisonous, causing nasty tummy upsets, and can potentially lead to dangerous blockages in the intestines.



A word in your ear!

Ear disease is common in our pets and being able to quickly recognise the signs is very important.

Anatomically, our pets' ears are very similar to ours, with a canal extending from the ear flap into the skull with a drum at the base protecting the middle ear. The main difference is that their ears are positioned towards the top of their heads, rather than the sides, and the ear canals are longer. Sound travels down the ear canal and vibrates the ear drum, stimulating tiny bones in the middle ear, which in turn transmits sounds onto the inner ear and brain.



A dog's ear in cross section. Most ear problems occur in the external ear canal

The vast majority of ear problems affect only the external ear canal but repeated infections and some growths will cause middle ear disease. Middle ear disease (which is more common in cats) can be a challenge to diagnose, and treatment is difficult owing to the depth of the middle ear.

Signs of ear problems include: head shaking and scratching or rubbing at their ears. Discharge is common and can be black and waxy or creamy or pus-like and is often very smelly. You might also notice inflammation and reddening.

Ear infections can be triggered by objects getting into the canal (grass seeds are a common culprit), skin allergies, excessive wetness after swimming (but not for all pets, so if your dog enjoys a dip, you don't necessarily need to stop them!), bacterial infections or ear mite infestations (seen commonly in cats). Sometimes we might recommend sedating your pet so we can fully examine their ears, and run tests such as swabs, bloods or X-rays.

Treatment of ear problems usually involves topical liquids but these can be a challenge in some pets! If you think you might struggle, please ask us about other options. Some drops only require once daily, or even once weekly application, which we can always do for you, and occasionally we will prescribe tablets.

To prevent or reduce ear problems it is important to promptly identify the cause and start treatment as soon as possible to avoid longer term problems. In addition, regular cleaning will help affected pets – once or twice a week is enough and always use a veterinary standard ear cleaner. Ask us and we can show you what to use and how to do it effectively.



Otitis externa in a cat with ear mites with a typical crusty brown discharge.



Photo of a grass awn lodged at the base of the external ear canal. Pets with trapped grass awns will usually present with severe head shaking.



Spilt antifreeze is sweet but also **deadly** to pets

