



Animal Health Centre

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NEWS

 **WINTER 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:

- *Winter Wonderland?*
- *How healthy are your dog's eyes?*
- *Bunny Upsets!*

Practice news

Some of you may have noticed that we have the lovely Karen Wilson working with us now as a third vet. Karen worked with Nicky many years ago and is now working regular part time shifts with us during our busy consultation periods. She has worked as a locum for some years in many practices around Bristol.

Recent achievements in the practice have been Debbie completing her level 2 diploma for veterinary care assistants, we are very proud of all the hard work she has put in over the last year! Sophie has recently been on an echocardiology course, learning how to perform basic heart ultrasound scans and an abdominal ultrasound course for those tricky

tummy scans. Nicky has been away for some learning in the sun and has gained lots of new knowledge she is keen to put into practice.

Nicky's daughter Elsa has just had a lovely litter of puppies from her dog Nellie, Elsa is now working as a vet in Herefordshire, Nellie had been great throughout her pregnancy however she delivered the first 3 puppies without warning in Elsa's practice car! She had 5 puppies in total and all are healthy, happy and have lovely homes to go to.

We are heading into winter but don't forget to regularly treat your pets for fleas as we often see a resurgence of fleas when the central heating is turned on!

★ STAR PATIENT ★

Teifi came in to see Sophie having been a bit off colour for around a week, her symptoms were very vague, being sick intermittently. That day she had suddenly seemed much less happy and had been sick twice and wouldn't eat her breakfast. She had eaten a peach stone a week before, but her owners had not thought anything of this, as it seemed small. Sophie was very concerned that her vomiting could be due to the peach stone being stuck somewhere it shouldn't be and so her worried owners were happy for Teifi to be admitted straight away.

She was given a mild sedative to take X-rays of her tummy. On the X-rays, something could be seen lodged in her intestines. With her stomach muscles relaxed, a suspiciously peach stone-shaped object could be felt in her tummy. Teifi was taken to surgery immediately and lo and behold a peach stone was retrieved from her intestines.

Teifi was closely monitored by her owners for the days following her surgery as there can be complications after intestinal surgery, however luckily for Teifi she recovered remarkably well and healed up beautifully.





Winter Wonderland?

The cold winter months bring particular challenges for our pets, and as their owners, we need to be alert to the problems they can suffer at this time of year.

Arthritis is very commonly first diagnosed in older patients during the winter months. This isn't because the disease first strikes during this period but because the lower temperatures seize up the limbs and make the symptoms of pain and stiffness more obvious. Most pets will really benefit from anti-inflammatory medications but you can also help by giving them joint supplements, lovely soft beds, and many will enjoy resting by the radiator or on a pet-safe hot water bottle!

Out and about: Although the weather can be miserable, it is still important to ensure dogs get their walks! Make the most of the shorter days by playing games while you are out to give your pet mental as well as physical stimulation and short coated breeds like greyhounds and whippets often benefit from wearing coats. Take care though in snowy or icy conditions, as both can ball up in hairy paws and be painful. Also bad for feet is grit, which can really irritate the skin.

Festive alert: The festive season can also pose a huge range of very tempting hazards for our pets!



Chocolate is a festive favourite, but as little as 50g of plain chocolate can be fatal in small dogs. **Turkey bones** can cause choking,

constipation, as well as seriously damaging internal organs. Make sure **fairy lights** and electric wires are 'chew-proof' from inquisitive puppies, kittens and even rabbits too. Brightly coloured **baubles** and **tinsel** are new and exciting objects for pets, who may try to eat them and cause themselves all sorts of internal problems. **Seasonal plants** such as holly, poinsettia, ivy and lilies are all extremely toxic.



Finally, have fun with your pets and stay safe over the festive season!



Healthy eyes are open and comfortable and free from discharge. Light is seen to reflect from the moist, healthy cornea

How healthy are your dog's eyes?

The eyes are very complex organs and thankfully function normally most of the time. Externally the eyes are protected by the eyelids and also the third eyelid (in the corner of the eye).

Healthy eyes: Your dog's eyes should be open, sparkly-clear and free of discharge or excessive tearing. Inside, you can see the coloured part of the eye (the iris) and a pupil which responds to light. You can also gently draw back the upper eyelids to see the 'white' of the eye, which should be just that – white or only marginally pink.

However problems can occur and here are some common ones:

Dry eye occurs when there is inadequate production of tears by the tear glands and is normally an immune-mediated condition in dogs. Most commonly this is seen in middle to older-aged dogs as well as specific breeds. Typical signs include increased levels of thick, yellowish discharge from the eyes, pinkness of inner eyelids and white of the eyes. Discomfort may be noticeable, with increased blinking or rubbing at the eyes.

Happily, diagnosis of this condition can be made using a simple test to measure tear production. Once a diagnosis is made, treatment is necessary with an ointment containing ciclosporin which is usually applied twice daily to the affected eyes and life-long. Keeping this treatment consistent is important for the medication to work and for the eyes to stay comfortable. Many dogs also need lubricants applied regularly throughout the day.

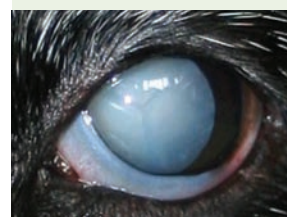
Cataracts: A cataract occurs when the transparent lens inside the eye becomes opaque. Cataracts affecting the whole of the lens will cause blindness. Hereditary cataracts can present at various ages and in a large number of breeds. Cataracts are also commonly seen in diabetic dogs and these develop very quickly, causing blindness in just days or weeks. Advanced cataracts also cause inflammation inside the eye, which can lead to other problems including glaucoma (a high pressure inside the eye). Any eye with a cataract should therefore be monitored regularly. Cataract surgery to restore vision is possible in many cases and will require a referral to a specialist ophthalmologist.

Glaucoma: This is a high pressure inside the eye, which causes blindness if not treated appropriately and quickly. Changes you may notice include redness of the white of the eye, a clouding/ blueish colour to the cornea (front window) or lethargy due to pain. As such any dog presenting with this sort of "red eye" should be treated as an **ocular emergency**.

Early diagnosis is the 'golden rule' with eyes, so don't delay! If your pet is showing *any* symptoms of eye problems, make an appointment for your pet today!



Dry eye with a dull lustreless eye and mucoid discharge

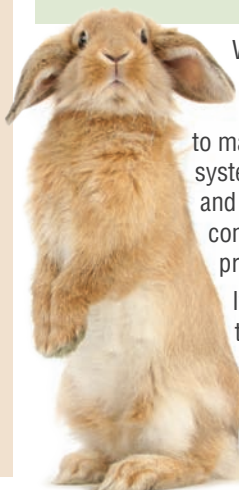


Cataracts in diabetic dogs are a very common issue



Glaucoma (high pressure) in this eye has caused redness of the white of the eye and a blueish clouding of the cornea

Bunny Upsets!



We always recommend keeping a close watch on how much your rabbits are eating. A reduction in appetite or faecal production may indicate that there is an underlying health problem. Rabbits need a high fibre diet to maintain healthy teeth and encourage food to move through the digestive system at a normal pace. If a rabbit is unwell the intestinal motility can slow and appetite may reduce. They may seem withdrawn and hide away from contact. In severe cases bacteria in the intestines produce excess gas, which progresses to a swollen abdomen or bloat, which can be life threatening.

If your rabbit seems to be eating less, it is well worth making an appointment for a check-up. We will look for underlying causes and can prescribe medications to make your rabbit feel better and start eating again.

If you would like your rabbit to have a general health check, please give us a call today! And remember, any bunny that is not eating should be seen as soon as possible. Don't delay – call us today!