



Equine Zone Visit Scheme



In addition to our usual service we are going to launch a Zone Visit Scheme for routine work such as vaccinations, blood sampling, routine dental work, passports, microchips and non-urgent consultations/examinations.

The scheme has been devised to reduce costs for our clients, and to improve the efficiency of our time. With a little planning, you can save money on your veterinary bill.

Zone visits have been divided into four areas and will be covered Tuesday to Friday. The visits will be booked on a first come, first served basis, and the number of visits limited on the day, therefore early booking is recommended.

We will not be able to offer a specific time for the zone visit but can offer you a morning or afternoon, and the allocated zone visit vet will ring you nearer the time of the visit.

To find out which day of the week your area falls and for any other information about our zone visit scheme please call our equine unit on **01226 763542**

Full details will soon be available on our website www.churchfieldvets.co.uk



Dry Eye Campaign 2017

There are many eye diseases that can lead to impaired vision. One of the most common is dry eye. It's a progressive condition, but with correct and effective treatment your dog's sight can be preserved, and they can continue to enjoy life to the full.

What is dry eye?

Dry eye, also known as Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca (KCS), it is a condition where the tear glands do not produce enough tears to meet the needs of the eye. About **1 in 22 dogs are affected by dry eye and 1 in 5 of predisposed breeds**, which include **West Highland White Terriers, Yorkshire Terriers, Lhasa Apso's, Shih-Tzus, Cocker Spaniels, Bull Dogs, Pugs and Cavalier King Charles Spaniels**. The disease is most often due to the body's immune system attacking and destroying the tear glands.

Tears are essential to lubricate and nourish the eye, and to prevent infections. When tear levels are low, eyes can start to feel itchy and uncomfortable (like having grit in them), and can be covered in a thick discharge. They may also suffer from recurrent conjunctivitis. Once the disease has progressed, deep ulcers may quickly develop on the surface of the eye. This can be extremely painful, and can result in the need to treat surgically or even remove the eye. Dry eye is a progressive and irreversible condition which can lead to blindness if untreated, so the sooner it is detected and treatment started, the better the long-term outlook for your dog's vision and comfort.

Prompt treatment can help to ensure vision and comfort are preserved.

How can we detect dry eye?

We can measure dogs' tear production in only 60 seconds using a Schirmer Tear Test. This involves a special piece of paper being placed in the corner of the eye, which measures tear output and provides immediate results. No sedation or anaesthetic is required and most dogs tolerate the test extremely well.

During **November** we are running a dry eye campaign and will be offering a **Free Schirmer Tear Test** in our nursing clinics (usual price £21.78)

To take advantage of this offer please call to book an appointment on **01226 733333**



Fattening up for the winter?

The shorter days and colder weather mean pets often exercise less and have more time to beg for treats! However, it is really important to ensure they don't put on weight because those extra pounds are really bad for their health; joints are put under unnecessary strain, so is the heart and other organs and it leaves them vulnerable to developing illnesses such as diabetes.

To tell if your pet is a healthy shape, simply put your hands on them! You should be able to easily feel their ribs and spine without them being too prominent. They should also have an obvious narrowing of their body behind the ribs and a 'tuck' in their stomach from the side. To help porky pets slim down consider things like changing their food to a 'light' version, cutting back on treats and stopping table scraps. We are here to help – so if you are worried, bring them in for a check-up.





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!

Worming worries - is your pet affected?

Unlike infectious diseases that we can vaccinate against, your pets are in all likelihood continually coming into contact with worms. Before we look at prevention however, it's useful to know your "enemy".

So what are the major types of worms affecting our pets? There are three important groups to be aware of...



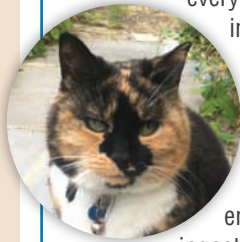
Roundworms are long, white and spaghetti like.



Tapeworms are long segmented worms which shed segments.



Electron-micrograph of an adult **lungworm** (courtesy Bayer).



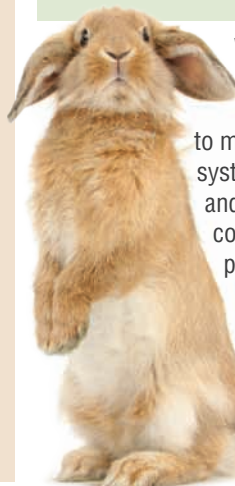
Roundworms are long, white worms seen in dogs and cats. The worms live inside the intestinal tract and can cause a 'pot-belly' appearance in young animals, tummy upsets and a failure to thrive. Roundworms produce thousands of eggs every day which are excreted (via the faeces) into the environment. Animals become infected by eating contaminated material such as fox faeces, eating infected hosts (rodents and some birds) and even from drinking their mother's milk, which makes early exposure common. The eggs can survive for many years in the environment and can also pose a risk to humans, being unwittingly ingested from soil, food or from pet's coats.

Tapeworms are long segmented worms which live inside the small intestines. They can cause diarrhoea and an itchy bottom in infected pets. You may sometimes see small white segments in your pet's faeces which could indicate tapeworms are present. These segments pass out in the faeces and release their eggs into the environment. These eggs are often eaten by fleas and small rodents which act as 'intermediate hosts' and are a common source of infection for dogs and cats (cats eat rodents and all pets swallow fleas when grooming).

Lungworms (also known as *Angiostrongylus Vasorum*) causes life threatening disease in dogs. Slugs and snails act as 'intermediate hosts' and are commonly infected with immature lungworm larvae. If infected slugs and snails are eaten by a dog, the larvae migrate to their lungs. Here they develop into adult worms up to 2cm in size! The adults live and lay eggs inside the vessels of the lungs and the right side of the heart, causing symptoms such as coughing and exercise intolerance. Larvae migrate into lung tissue, causing blood clots, bleeding problems and even sudden death. The larvae are coughed up and pass out in the faeces where they are eaten by slugs and snails, so continuing the lifecycle. Lungworm is also very prevalent in the fox population.

There are a variety of treatments to prevent worm infections which are easy to apply and suitable for dogs and cats. Please contact us to find out how we can help you best protect your pets.

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!