



# Veterinary Centre

AUTUMN 2018



## NEWS

### Practice News

#### End of an era



In July, we said a sad goodbye to Nicky Smith who has been Head Nurse at 387 Veterinary Centre for more than a decade. Nicky was the practice's first employee when we opened our doors back in November 2007, and has been instrumental in driving practice standards as we've grown in size. Nicky has always been passionate about implementing new learning for positive change. She was responsible for the practice becoming a Gold Cat Friendly Clinic, and has guided 387 Vets towards Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Accredited Practice status. In 2017, we received two additional RCVS awards for our exceptional levels of service and care. Part of Nicky's role at 387 Vets has also been acting as clinical coach to our trainee nurses: supporting, training and monitoring their progress on their 2.5 year journey to qualification. We know they have hugely valued her mentoring. And two of the three students she has trained are still with us today as fully qualified nurses! We wish Nicky all the best in her new ventures, and are full of gratitude for the amazing service she has given the practice over the last 10 years.



#### Welcome to Maninder

Many of you will already have met Maninder who joined the 387 team in May. Maninder is our new trainee veterinary nurse and will be completing her two and a half year nursing diploma whilst working at 387 Vets. Maninder already has lots of experience working with animals: she is holder of

a Level 2 Certificate in Animal Nursing, has worked as an Animal Care Assistant at a busy veterinary hospital in Kent and also has experience of nursing within the charity sector, having spent two years at an RSPCA Animal Hospital. In addition, Maninder's portfolio includes working in an advisory capacity for a large banking corporation, which means she is as passionate about people as she is about pets!

#### Weight management success!

Following our formal annual assessment in May, we have once again been accredited as an Approved Weight Management Centre with Royal Canin. This means we've been officially recognised as high performing in the way we communicate

about pet diet, balanced nutrition and how nutritional needs change at pets' various milestone life stages. Our free weight management clinics are an important part of how we support pets towards reaching their optimum body condition score.

We were given a bag of pet goodies from Royal Canin to celebrate. And we'd love to share these with you! Visit our website blog ([www.387vets.com/blog](http://www.387vets.com/blog)) or Facebook page and keep your eyes open for competitions to win fabulous prizes that help pets stay trim!



### On a scale of too thin to obese how would your pet score?

With our recent Royal Canin Approved Weight Management Centre reaccreditation, we thought it appropriate to dedicate part of this newsletter to that very topic: pet weight management and, specifically, how you as a pet owner can identify whether your pet is in prime condition. 65% of dogs and 39% of cats in the UK are deemed overweight.\* With serious health implications linked to obesity (e.g. increased risk of diabetes, heart and kidney disease, certain cancers, shorter life-expectancy) it's important you can establish whether your pet is carrying excess weight and take positive action towards better pet health.

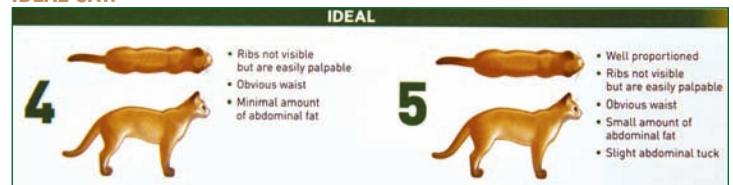
At 387 Vets, we use Royal Canin's 9-point body condition scoring system to assess optimum body condition in cats and dogs. We visually assess pets to identify the amount of fat coverage over the ribs and whether there is a visible waistline and an abdominal tuck. We may also assess whether ribs are palpable by applying light pressure with our hands. We'd love you to try this at home. If your pet is in good body condition: their ribs are easily palpable (but not visible), their waist is obvious and there is an abdominal tuck. Below is the ideal for a cat and a medium sized dog (the principles are the same for other sizes of dog) from a Royal Canin body condition score card. Go on, give it a go!

For rabbits, check out the ideal body condition score from the Pet Food Manufacturing Body's 5-point scale.

It is worth bearing in mind that 80% of owners underestimate an overweight dog's body condition score.\*\* Do be honest!

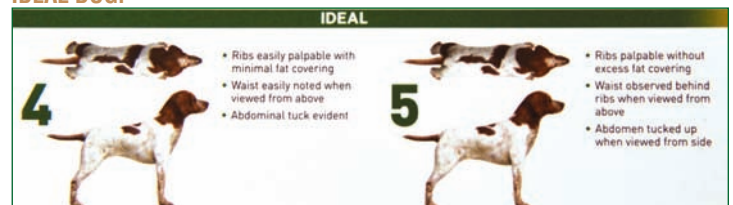
### Pet perfect?

#### IDEAL CAT:



From Royal Canin Cat Body Condition Score Chart

#### IDEAL DOG:



From Royal Canin Medium Dog Body Condition Score Chart

#### IDEAL RABBIT:



From PFMA Rabbit Size-O-Meter

**Take action!** If your pet's body condition score is less than ideal, please give us a ring to ask about registering for our free pet weight management clinics for great on-going safe weight loss and optimum nutrition advice. Get your pet back to fit!

\*Apop survey, October 2011 \*\*Royal Canin



## Autumn Alert!

Autumn is a great time of year for pets as all those problems associated with summer heat disappear. However, we still need to keep an eye on our pet's health so that we can ensure they are happy, comfortable and safe. Here's what to look out for:

### Cooler weather – stiffer joints!

Older pets will often feel the cold in their joints and become stiffer and less mobile. As

in humans, this can be a sign of arthritis, which, as many of us will know, can be very painful. Please don't ignore the signs. Help is at hand! We run free pain clinics at 387 Vets for all pets of any age with general or localised stiffness. We'll run a lifestyle analysis to establish what hurts and how we can help. We'll discuss strategies for improved mobility and interaction with you AND we'll teach you basic massage and physiotherapy techniques you can use at home to help your pet feel less stiff and more active. Book your appointment!

**Parasite protection** Summer may be over, but those pesky parasites are still around!

If your pet does contract fleas, turning the heating on means your home will become the ideal breeding ground. Harvest mites and ticks love the cooler, moist outdoor weather. Keeping up with your regular parasite protection will help protect against all these! Ask us about our free text reminder service to ensure your pet's protection doesn't lapse.

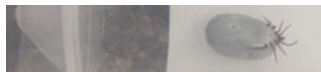
**Poisons alert** Watch what inquisitive dogs might be nibbling on when out on walks. Conkers, acorns and rotting fruit can all cause upset stomachs. And as the weather gets colder, it becomes anti-freeze alert time too. Unfortunately, the sweet chemical it contains (ethylene glycol) is very tasty to pets, but even lapping up the tiniest amount is incredibly toxic and can be fatal, especially in cats. Contact your vet immediately if you suspect your pet has ingested any. Always dispose of antifreeze safely. Visit [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) for advice.

### Sting potential

The end of the summer means bees and wasps are becoming dozy and slow, which can make them an

irresistible plaything for curious pets. But their sting hurts and can cause painful swelling. Contact us immediately if severe swelling or an allergic reaction occurs as your pet could be going into anaphylactic shock. All stings to the mouth need veterinary attention. Pick up our Emergency First Aid Advice card when you're next in as this includes advice on how you can treat low-grade wasp and bee stings at home.

Emergency! First Aid Advice...



## Troublesome ticks

Ticks love Autumn so keep tick treatment current! A tick bite can cause redness and swelling at the attachment site, but more seriously, ticks can transmit serious diseases. Tick-borne Lyme disease can cause swollen joints, stiffness, fever, anorexia and lethargy and in some cases life-threatening kidney disease. If you are taking your pet abroad,

there are other tick-borne diseases you will need to be aware of. Current evidence suggests that tick-borne diseases take many hours after tick attachment to be transmitted so using a product that kills or repels them helps reduce disease risk. Not all products carry the same efficacy so ask us for advice on what we would recommend to best protect your pet.



## Firework frenzy? It doesn't have to be...

If your pet suffers from noise anxiety, the fireworks season can be an incredibly stressful time – for everyone! Signs of anxiety include yawning, panting, restlessness, vocalising and inappropriate toileting, and even the most relaxed pets can experience stress at this time of year. Forward planning and preparation can make a big difference to how your pet copes on the night. Here are some strategies to help make bonfire night better for all:

### Long term planning

There are lots of calming agents and therapies which can help improve a pet's response to any situation they find stressful. All of the following will require some action or application ahead of the day.

**Bowen technique:** use of light touch, and gentle pressure on muscles which stimulates the body's nervous system and encourages the emotional state to shift from anxious and fearful to relaxed and vegetative. Ask us about training so you can apply this technique on your pet at home.

**Thundershirts:** wraps for dogs that cover their back. The gentle pressure has a calming effect on anxious or over-excited dogs. Regular wear of the thunder shirt beforehand is recommended so your dog becomes familiar with the wrap.

**Calming supplements:** nutraceuticals are calming supplements made from natural ingredients that have been proven to reduce pet stress. They are palatable, can be added to food, and should be started several days in advance of fireworks night or a situation or event you know your pet will find stressful.

**Pheromone treatment:** pheromones are comforting scents animals naturally produce to mark territory as safe and secure. Animal mums use pheromones to comfort their babies. Synthetic versions replicate all these effects. Ask us about plug-in diffusers and sprays available and how best to use them.

### On the night

- **Provide a den or hiding place:** animals naturally hide when they feel scared. Having a safe, familiar place where they can tuck themselves away will help them to feel more secure. Rabbit hutches can be covered with blankets.
- **Muffle loud noise:** close curtains, doors and windows, and turn on the TV or radio to mask loud bangs.
- **Keep pets inside:** walk dogs early and plan toilet trips carefully. Don't let pets out if fireworks are likely. Bring small furies like rabbits and guinea pigs inside (but not a heated environment) and supply with plenty of extra bedding to burrow into.
- **Don't over fuss:** praise calm behaviour, and try to avoid rewarding nervous behaviour. Avoid over-fussing too, as pets will be less able to cope of you are not there.
- **Stay calm:** pets can easily sense when you are uneasy, which increases their stress. Even if your pet's behaviour is frustrating, do stay calm. Remember, your pet is frightened. Showing frustration will only increase their stress and negative behaviour.
- **Prepare for unusual behaviour:** it's helpful to be aware that when pets feel scared they can behave out of character. A dog which anticipates a loud bang could show aggression or reluctance to go in the garden.

**NO NEED TO STRESS!**  
Let's combat fireworks phobia together  
Book your free pet Anxiety Management Clinic at 387 Vets today!

### Cats – top tip!



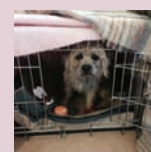
Confine cats to the house a few days before fireworks night with a litter tray so they get used to being kept indoors. Make sure your cat is microchipped - just in case they slip out and get scared.

### Rabbits – top tip!



Whilst many rabbits ordinarily carry the parasite *E. cuniculi* with no effect, stressful events can trigger the parasite to multiply and cause serious symptoms. Worm

with Panacur to prevent this from happening. Leave out their favourite foods in times of stress too to keep them active and happy.



### Dogs – top tip!

Set up a dog crate in the family room (or where people are going to be), and pop in your dog's bed, any familiar blankets your dog sleeps with and favourite teddies. Cover the crate with a blanket to block out any flashes and to make your dog feel enclosed. Do this all well in advance of firework's night so the den becomes a familiar haven.