

Putting your Pets First

BRIDGE

VETERINARY PRACTICE LTD  
WROXHAM



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# NEWS



WINTER 2018

## Consultations by Appointment

Mon-Fri: 8am-6.30pm  
(pre-booked evening appointments available until 8pm)

Saturday: 8.30am-1.00pm

Tel: 01603 783920

24 Hour Emergency Service  
After Hours call: 01603 867330

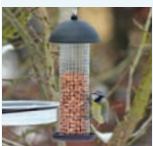
[www.bridgevet.co.uk](http://www.bridgevet.co.uk)  
[bridgevets@bridgevet.co.uk](mailto:bridgevets@bridgevet.co.uk)

## Garden birds

During the long winter months, food can be in short supply for garden wildlife. Offering a selection of foods to the birds will help them survive until Spring and ensure you have lots of interesting visitors to watch!

Dawn and dusk are when most birds feed, so make sure your bird tables are full at these times.

In addition to traditional bird tables, hanging feeders suspended from trees or free standing poles are a popular way of feeding birds.



Seed feeders are tubular transparent containers with holes, through which the birds are

able to access a high calorie seed mix, whilst nut feeders are made of steel mesh and are ideal for *unsalted* peanuts.

When choosing seed, try to buy a mix of sunflower seeds, broken peanuts, maize and millets.

If you have a water bath, pour boiling water on any frozen water and place fresh cool water twice daily. If you don't have a water bath use a shallow dish or bowl, allowing the birds to drink and have a bath.

Further information on caring for garden birds can be found online at [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

## Keyhole Surgery now available at Bridge Vets



David Performing a Laparoscopic spay

At Bridge Vets we are continually striving to offer your pets the very best standards of care. With this in mind, we have recently equipped the practice with state of the art equipment enabling us to be one of only a handful of practices in Norfolk to offer laparoscopic surgery – commonly called 'keyhole surgery' – which is routinely used for many procedures in human surgery, due to its improved recovery times and reduced pain compared to traditional surgery.

The main procedures that keyhole surgery is used for in veterinary medicine, are neuters – spays and

cryptorchid castrates (when one or both testicles are undescended), however it can also be used for prophylactic (preventative) procedures – such as an operation called a gastropexy – where the stomach wall is sutured to the abdomen to prevent it twisting and causing a GDV (commonly called 'bloat') in susceptible breeds. Other abdominal surgeries such as biopsies of internal organs can also be performed, e.g. liver biopsies and laparoscopic assisted procedures such as bladder stone removal.

This recent addition complements our existing equipment, which includes flexible endoscopes, digital radiography (both standard and dental X-rays), ultrasonography, ECG, tonography (measuring eye pressure for glaucoma), orthopaedic equipment – allowing us to repair many fractures and undertake complex cruciate ligament repairs, a full in-house laboratory allowing us to obtain immediate blood test results in most cases. All in all, a comprehensive – and growing – list of tools enabling us to give your pet the best care available.

If you are interested in having keyhole surgery for your pet, or have any questions regarding the services we can offer, then please speak to our team.



David and Delyth In Theatre at Bridge

## Q: Where do fleas go in the winter? A: Your home!



Did you know that the worst time for flea infestations is actually the Autumn and Winter months? Fleas thrive in warm conditions and thanks to central heating, they don't need to hop south for the winter, they just need to move into your living room.

Fleas can make their way into our homes in all sorts of ways; on our pets, on us, or just hopping in by themselves. Did you know that fleas can jump 20cm into the air – so your front step is no barrier to them! They lay their eggs in protected places like under furniture or in the cracks of laminate floors and those eggs can survive for months, waiting to be activated by warm conditions (remember that central heating?!) and the presence of pets spending more time inside. This is why flea infestations can appear to come out of nowhere!

**So, it is vital to protect against fleas all year round!** Come and have a chat to us about the best ways to do this and you can stop your home from being a flea's winter paradise!



63 Norwich Road • Wroxham • Norwich • NR12 8RX  
T: 01603 783920 • F: 01603 784055 • [www.bridgevet.co.uk](http://www.bridgevet.co.uk)



## Cold weather aches and pains

Cold winters can make your pet's joints feel stiff and painful. This can manifest as a reluctance to go on long walks, a stiffening when getting up after lying down or a specific lameness.

The joints most susceptible to arthritis are those permitting limb movements – called synovial joints. The ends of the bones which meet at these joints are covered by smooth articular cartilage. In pets with arthritis, this protective cartilage is damaged, resulting in exposure of the underlying bone, causing pain and inflammation. Secondary new bone is commonly deposited around the joint and may be seen on x-ray (see lower right image).

In many cases, arthritis causes a low grade, constant discomfort. Whilst some pets will develop an obvious limp, many pets, especially cats, will simply slow down, be stiffer getting up and generally rest more; all of which is easy to put down to 'old age'.

Although arthritis cannot usually be cured, the good news is that we now have an expanding range of treatments to help your pet.

First of all, weight reduction is absolutely vital. Often sore joints lead to reduced exercise causing an increased waist line! However, even a small loss will make a massive difference to mobility. Have a chat to us about how to help your pet slim down!

Exercise: Many arthritic pets struggle on long walks, so little and often is the key. Vary where you go so they always have somewhere new to explore; mental stimulation is as important as physical, especially for older animals. Try swimming as well, pools for dogs are now very common and it is a great way to strengthen muscles and burn calories while not stressing out sore joints. Simple changes at home can make such a difference: putting mats on slippery floors, providing a super supportive bed and using ramps will all really help.

Many pets also benefit from anti-inflammatory pain relief and/or supplements including some prescription diets. Some alternative treatments such as acupuncture may also help. Ask at reception for more details.

### X-rays and arthritis

Radiography is commonly used to investigate joint problems.



X-ray of a normal elbow joint



Arthritic elbow joint in a dog with lots of "fluffy" new bone (yellow arrows) around the joint, indicative of marked arthritis.



## Brrr – it's cold out there!

With the colder weather setting in, it's a good idea to start making plans to avoid some Christmas calamities and keep our pets healthy throughout the festive season.

**Winter walks:** In order to avoid pets expanding their waistline, getting out and about as the weather cools is essential. However make sure that your pets are adequately prepared; when outside they may need to wear waterproof and warm jackets, especially if they are older or have thin coats. Some salt mixtures on paths, and also snow building up between the paws, can cause limping and pain. So, do check your pet's feet regularly and make sure they are washed and clean on return from a walk. Whilst out and about, make sure you play some games to give your pet mental as well as physical exercise.

**Toxic alert:** Anti-freeze poisonings increase at this time of year because we use it more in our cars. Although it is highly toxic, it tastes very sweet and pets, in particular cats, will drink it readily. Make sure your car isn't leaking any fluid and keep cans or bottles of it well out of reach and cleaned on the outside. Even a few licks can be fatal.



**Outdoor pets:** Rabbits and guinea pigs are ideally brought into a heated garage or shed, or moved inside. Make sure they have plenty of bedding and that their water supply is fresh twice daily. Check your small furies at least once a day to

make sure they are bright, eating and well. If you have a rabbit or guinea pig who lives alone, now is the ideal time to think about getting a friend of the same species so they have someone to cuddle up with!



**Foliage alert:** Some plants such as ivy, poinsettia, holly berries and mistletoe can also cause stomach upsets. Lily petals and pollen are very toxic to cats. They may brush against the pollen and lick it off their fur, which can cause kidney failure.

**Festive alert:** Pieces of string, tinsel and bones from turkeys should be kept well out of reach to avoid an intestinal blockage and the possible need for life saving surgery. Baubles and lights, if broken and eaten, will cause serious damage to your pet. Similarly we see lots of problems at this time of year from pets eating things like chocolate, christmas cake and mince pies.



So – enjoy the festive season and follow these tips to keep your pets safe and healthy. As always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch!



## Winter weight worries!

Shorter days, inhospitable weather, and the lure of a cosy sofa all conspire against us and our pets in the winter months, leaving both pets and owners prone to putting on a few unwanted pounds. This is a problem because while it is all too easy to gain weight, it isn't nearly as easy to lose it!

Long term, this can have health risks since carrying excess weight can cause or worsen a range of conditions including skin, heart, respiratory and joint disease. Your pet may also be more prone to develop problems such as raised blood pressure, diabetes and pancreatitis. So – now is the perfect time to assess your pet's weight! Dogs should have a visible 'waist line', with ribs that can be felt on palpation. By contrast, if you can pinch an inch or more, and if your pet's tummy sags down, then a diet is probably in order. We are here to help and can weigh your pet and can advise you on their ideal weight. Additionally, by visiting the surgery every few months we can use the scales to keep an eye on your pet's weight.

Special diets and feeders, advice on exercise, treats, and calorie management all have their part to play and will give you the best chance to get your pet's weight back under control. The good news is that as your pet loses weight, the benefits of increased healthiness and vitality are usually seen quite quickly. So, if your pet has gained weight, or seems to have slowed down, then why not give us a call – we are here to help!