

# RUSTHALL VETERINARY SURGERY



20 Ashley Gardens, Rusthall,  
TUNBRIDGE WELLS, Kent TN4 8TU  
Telephone: (01892) 511715

## NEWS



SUMMER 2019

### Opening hours

Mon–Fri: 9.00am–6.30pm  
Saturday: 9.00am–12 noon

### Practice facilities:

- Inhouse facilities for:
  - Surgical
  - Dental
  - X-ray/ultrasound
  - Laboratory
  - Hospitalisation
- Nurse clinics for advice on:
  - Weight control
  - Nail trim and grooming
  - Administer flea and wormer
- Full nutritional advice

### Ring for appointment

Telephone: (01892) 511715

### Pet Care Plans

#### Save money on routine pet care with our Pet Care Plan!

Our **Pet Care Plan** allows you to spread the cost of caring for your pet throughout the year. It covers your pet's basic health care needs:

- Vaccinations
- 12 months' flea/worm treatment
- Twice annual health checks
- Annual blood/urine screen (senior pets)
- PLUS additional value-added benefits

Price example for a **large dog** (25-40kg) is **just £16.25** per month and **cats are only £12.75** per month.

The scheme is designed for cats and dogs whether insured for accident/illness, or not.

If you would like to join our **Pet Care Plan**, or have any questions, please contact us and we will be happy to help.

## Summer Bites!

Warm weather brings the best out in all of us, but it also brings out plenty of pesky parasites as well! Make sure your pets have a parasite free summer by keeping their anti-parasite treatments up to date.



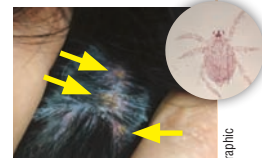
**Fleas** are thriving right now, especially on wildlife. If your cat is a hunter or your dog enjoys chasing rabbits, they are sure to come into contact with these biting blighters! Don't forget fleas are champion jumpers, so will have no problems getting on your pets wherever they go!



**Scabies**, or fox mange, is often diagnosed in summer. The scabies mite is a crawler, so can't travel easily, but if your dog enjoys rolling in fox poo or heading down fox holes, they can often be infected. These mites cause a VERY itchy rash.



**Harvest mites** are intensely itchy and often congregate between toes. They can be spotted if you look carefully. They are small, but bright orange! If your dog or cat is chewing at their feet, they could be the cause.



**Ticks** can be found in grasslands and woodlands where they lie in wait for passing pets. Once on a host, they will feed in one location and may stay attached for several days. Ticks can sometimes cause local reactions but can, in addition, transmit a range of serious diseases including Lyme Disease and Babesiosis.

We have a range of very effective products to protect your pet against summer parasites. Please ask us for further information on the best treatment for your pets.

The bright orange mites often cluster together and are commonly found between the toes

Puppy and kitten photos: Warren Photographic

## Could it be Kennel Cough?



If your dog develops a harsh, hacking cough, it could be Kennel Cough – which is a very misleading name for the problem – because your dog doesn't need to go to a kennels to catch it!

It can be picked up anywhere other dogs go, although kennels, doggy day care, or training classes, are all high risk places.

Kennel Cough (or Canine Infectious Tracheobronchitis) is a very contagious disease. It can be transmitted through the air, on objects that have been in contact with an affected animal, and also by direct nose-to-nose transmission. The condition can involve several infectious agents including viruses and a bacteria – *Bordetella bronchiseptica*. Younger animals are particularly vulnerable, and any pet that is going into kennels or dog training classes may be at greater risk.

It causes a harsh cough, an inflamed throat and sometimes nasal discharge. The symptoms can be dramatic, and it is not uncommon for owners to become concerned their pets have something stuck in their throats. The cough is often self-limiting, but can still persist for 2-3 weeks.

To give your dog the best protection against Kennel Cough, an intranasal vaccine is available to reduce the risk of developing the disease and reduce clinical signs. This is given *in addition* to your pet's standard vaccines. Please call us at the surgery for further information.

## Dental Alert!



Did you know that by the age of just three years old, the vast majority of our pets are suffering with dental disease?

Poor dental health is painful, causes tooth loss, and infections can spread throughout the body – potentially causing significant organ damage. So, it is important for us to regularly check your pet's mouth and instigate a care regime at home to ensure their teeth and gums stay in good condition.

A healthy mouth typically has bright white teeth and pink (or pigmented) gums. However, over time, accumulation of plaque bacteria on the surface of the teeth leads to *inflammation* of the gums – a condition called **gingivitis** (also called gum disease). If the condition is allowed to continue unchecked, bacteria will penetrate below the gum line, destroying the underlying bone – a painful condition called **periodontitis**. As well as very bad breath, if left untreated, this will lead to tooth loss.



Periodontitis with very inflamed gums

Cats may also suffer from one or more **tooth resorptive lesions**. Here the tooth is progressively destroyed,

leading to exposure of the nerve.

The good news is that if gum problems are identified at an *early* stage, a combination of a Scale and Polish and ongoing Home Care can make a real difference to your pet's oral health. Please contact us today for a check-up!

## Handling the heat – a summer survival guide!

Finally, the summer is here, but it brings with it its own particular set of challenges and potential problems. Here are a few tips to keep your pet fit and well at this time of year:

**Keeping cool!** It is vital to ensure your pet keeps cool in hot weather. Dogs should be walked early or late in the day to avoid heat stroke. Paddling pools may help keep dogs cool and they should have free access to water at all times. Heat stroke is a common, and serious, problem and over-weight or heavily coated dogs are most at risk. Sometimes even minimal exercise can trigger it, so take care, even in the mornings and evenings. Finally, remember – dogs rapidly overheat in cars, and should never, ever, be left unattended.



**Sunburn:** Thinly haired or white coated pets are at risk of sunburn, especially if they are dedicated sun worshippers! White cats are particularly vulnerable to developing skin cancers on their ears and noses, so pay close attention to these areas. Problems tend to start as scabs or sores that don't heal and can progress to cancerous changes. To protect your pet, you can apply high factor sun lotion specifically designed for pets.

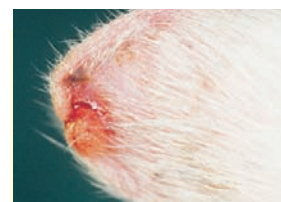
**Grass awns** are another summer problem – the grass awns of the meadow grasses are easily trapped in the coats of pets, especially dogs. They then migrate and become lodged in a variety of places including the ears and between the toes. It is always a good idea to groom your pets regularly, and especially after walks, to keep a close eye out for grass awns.

**Stick to dog toys!** Long walks with the dog are great, but please don't throw sticks! It is really tempting but we see some horrible head and throat injuries from them being speared. There is no reason not to play fetch (although it is best avoided if it is very hot) but use specific dog toys!

**Insect alert!** Bees and wasps are tempting to play with for both cats and dogs but will deliver a nasty sting if provoked! These are painful and can cause sudden swellings on faces or paws. Most stings will benefit from prompt veterinary attention.

**Flystrike** occurs when bunnies become dirty around their back-ends and flies lay eggs in the mess. These quickly hatch into flesh eating maggots, which cause horrible damage. Protect your bunnies by cleaning them out regularly, checking their back-ends twice daily and using anti-fly medications to stop any egg laying. Additionally, remember that pets in outside runs need a *shaded area* to get away from the sun.

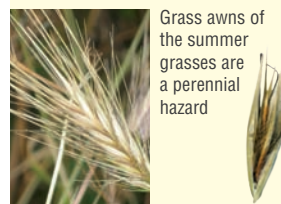
So – enjoy the summer months, have fun and keep your pets safe. We are here to help, so if you would like any further information on summer hazards, please just ask a member of staff.



Ear tip of a cat showing cancerous changes – note the reddening of the skin. If your pet is showing signs of skin changes on their nose or ears, please call us.



Paddling pools are a great way for dogs to stay cool in the summer!



Grass awns of the summer grasses are a perennial hazard



Guinea Pigs are sociable, very lovable and make great pets. To keep them healthy and happy, here are a few tips:

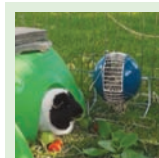
Guinea pigs require a specialist guinea pig diet with adequate amounts of Vitamin C and free access to water. A special diet will make sure they don't develop diarrhoea or scurvy. They have continually growing teeth, so to keep their teeth healthy they need free access to hay and gnawing blocks to chew on.

Guinea pigs should never live alone, they are sociable animals and listening to the chirps they make to each other is really fun! A same sex pair or group will live together happily, but boys and girls can live together, as long as they are neutered.

Some guinea pigs may be prone to respiratory conditions or eye infections if the incorrect bedding is used. Guinea pigs are also susceptible to mite infestation and symptoms include hair loss and intense itchiness and scratching. Guinea pigs instinctively hide any signs of pain and illness, therefore it is important to check them at least once a day.

We are here to help, so if you have any questions regarding your guinea pigs, give us a call!

## Guinea pigs are great!



Guinea pigs can live indoors or outside, but it is important they have enough space to run and play. A run should be at least a metre square and any outside hutches need to be well insulated.

It is ideal to keep them in pairs, or small groups in a large cage, preferably with access to a grassy area. Guinea pigs need inspecting daily as they can be prone to feet and skin conditions. Make sure the cage is weatherproof and cleaned regularly, and safe from predators.

Guinea pigs are grazers and will thrive with a lawn to nibble on. They should also have good quality hay available all the time and have a small amount of fresh food and guinea pig pellets every day.