



Find us on
facebook

www.facebook.com/bridgevets

Putting your Pets First

BRIDGE

VETERINARY PRACTICE LTD
WROXHAM

NEWS



AUTUMN 2019

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
bridgevets@bridgevet.co.uk



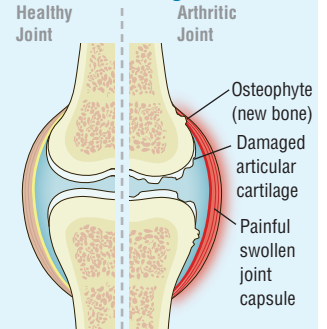
Arthritis - is your pet affected?

Anyone with arthritis knows that chills get in their joints, and the same is true for our pets. With 80% of older dogs and cats suffering with arthritis, it is important that as pet owners we know the signs to look out for when problems arise. The joints most susceptible to arthritis are the ones permitting free limb movements – called synovial joints (see diagram right). Arthritis develops when the articular cartilage becomes pitted and cracked. These changes are commonly due to age related wear and tear, but can also be secondary to joint trauma and also conformational joint issues such as hip dysplasia.



So what are the signs of arthritis? These often include sleeping more, plus for dogs – difficulty in getting up after rest, slowing down on walks and a reluctance to jump into the car. Cats may take extra time or effort to jump up onto surfaces, or show signs of toileting issues such as incontinence or missing a litter tray. Arthritis is usually diagnosed on a combination of clinical examination (examining the joints for swelling, thickening, pain and range of movement), plus a history suggestive of changes compatible with the disease. X-rays can also be helpful, confirming the degree of bone changes. Although arthritis cannot be cured, most pets will benefit from a wide range of treatment options. Key considerations are weight control and exercise control. Carrying excess weight will always negatively impact joints, whilst both over and under exercise will cause your pet to struggle - little and often is usually the answer. Dietary supplements may be beneficial, but vary widely, feel free to ask us for advice. Some dogs and cats will benefit from anti-inflammatories, whilst advanced cases may need a combination of treatments to keep them pain-free and mobile. So – if your pet is showing any signs of arthritis – please come and see us for a check-up!

Understanding arthritis:



Healthy Joint: The ends of the bones are covered by smooth articular cartilage and the joints are lubricated by synovial fluid, achieving pain free movement.

Arthritic Joint: The protective cartilage is damaged and worn away, resulting in exposure of the underlying bone causing pain and inflammation.

Bonfire Night (Mare!)



When you know fireworks are planned, it's a good idea to bring rabbits and guinea pigs inside and give them extra bedding to hide in.

It is also recommended to keep your cats and dogs inside, so some pets may need walking earlier in the day. Your home environment can also help your pet feel safe. If there is a low level of calming background noise, such as the television or classical music, it can help to alleviate the stress. You should keep curtains closed and provide a den or space for your pet to retreat to if needed. Additionally, by keeping calm yourself, you may help to make your pet more confident, whereas excessive concern may compound nervous behaviour. Pheromones can be helpful and work by producing chemicals that your pet associates with being happy and calm. Pheromone diffusers should be started 2-3 weeks before the event, ideally near your pet's den. We also recommend products that calm your pets and medicines to reduce their anxiety. We do not advocate the use of sedatives, as these will increase your pets' fears and phobias in the long term. Please get in touch if you would like further information on keeping your pets safe at this time of year.



The tooth about rabbit teeth!

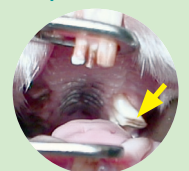
Did you know that, unlike dogs and cats, rabbits have continuously growing teeth – growing at a rate of 1-3mm per week! Wild rabbits have evolved to grind and chew large quantities of tough grass and plants.

These diets lead to a great deal of tooth wear, and without continuous tooth growth, they would rapidly wear out their teeth!

Problems are often encountered in domesticated pet rabbits fed a diet of mainly pelleted food, with little roughage to encourage tooth wear. The edges of their teeth do not wear down properly if they do not chew enough, and they can develop sharp points or spurs which eventually cause ulcers on the inside of the mouth and tongue. Your rabbit may start dribbling, paw at their mouth, seem unsettled or eat less food and produce less faecal pellets.

To keep our pet rabbits' teeth healthy, most of their diet should comprise of good quality hay (aim for them to eat a pile as big as themselves every day), a small amount of fresh green leafy vegetables, and a small amount of a pelleted rabbit feed. This keeps their teeth healthy, plus keeps them stimulated and busy, and helps keep their intestinal system working normally. If you notice any signs of dental problems, please come in for a check-up. We can also advise you on diet regimes aimed at promoting optimum dental health.

Oral exam reveals problems:



Overgrown cheek teeth (arrowed) are sharp and can lacerate the gums.





Autumn Alert!

After hot summer days, the cooler Autumn weather can be quite a relief. It is also a great time of year to have pets; long walks through golden trees with the dog and cosy evenings at home with your cat, there is nothing better!

However, Autumn does come with a range of pet care challenges that we must be prepared for!



Firstly, It is easy to think that as the temperatures drop, so does the risk from parasites but actually the opposite is true!

Ticks can carry and spread diseases which pose a health risk both to our pets and also to humans. Here are the main ones:

- **Lyme disease**, also called borreliosis, is spread by ticks; affected pets (and also humans) can develop swollen joints and stiffness. They can also develop a fever, anorexia and lethargy.
- **Babesiosis** (caused by *Babesia canis*) is an emerging tick-borne disease, destroying red blood cells and causing acute signs of anaemia in affected dogs.
- **Erlchiosis** also attacks red blood cells and can be fatal.

Both Babesiosis and Erlchiosis are particularly prevalent in continental Europe, so if you take your dog abroad on holiday, it is essential to protect them against ticks.

• Prevention

Current evidence suggests it takes a few hours after a tick attaches before a disease is transmitted, so all of the products we advise kill ticks rapidly. We also advise checking your pets every day for ticks, removing any you find with a tick hook.

The **Harvest Mite** is also prevalent and makes pets very itchy! It commonly congregates between toes and in ears and can be seen as tiny, bright orange dots.

Fleas also have a resurgence because once the central heating goes on, they move in! Our homes have everything they need; warmth, carpets and soft furnishings to breed in and a readily available source of food in our pets.

Ask us about how to protect against these Autumn invaders!



While you are out on your seasonal strolls, be on the look out for your dogs helping themselves to **windfall fruit**! A rotten apple can seem like a tasty snack but is likely to cause an upset tummy, especially if they eat quite a few!

Conkers and acorns are also very tempting but are actually toxic and can cause intestinal blockages.



Wasps and bees will be getting slower now and although their stings rarely cause serious issues, they are very painful. Swellings can quickly appear on paws if your pet has been batting them about, or mouths if they tried to eat them!



Antifreeze will also be making a comeback as the temperatures drop! It is highly toxic but sadly pets, cats especially, seem to find it irresistible. Make sure your bottles are well sealed and you clean up any spillages carefully if you top up your car.

And finally, don't forget the **wildlife**! Check bonfires thoroughly for sleepy hedgehogs and keep the bird feeder well stocked!

Alabama Rot and Seasonal Canine Illness

Something we hope never to see at Bridge Vets is Cutaneous Renal Glomerular Vasculopathy (CRGV) or Alabama Rot. There has been a lot written in the press about this life-threatening disease as unfortunately the exact cause is still not understood. There is a lot of research currently being undertaken to try to find exactly what triggers it. CRGV is mostly seen between November and June and is characterised by damage to skin and the kidneys. It was first seen in the 80's in a group of greyhounds in the USA hence the name 'Alabama Rot'. So far 122 confirmed cases have been reported across the UK since 2012 although there may be more unreported cases. None of the cases on the official map are in Norfolk (the closest to us being Much Hadam in Hertfordshire – near Stansted). Data suggests that three quarters of dogs develop skin lesions without clinical kidney injury and the prognosis for these cases is favorable. However, in the other 25%, the kidneys can be damaged as well, which is of much greater concern. The first sign that appears with this disease is usually an ulcer like skin sore often below the elbow or knee – if you notice any unusual sore like this, give us a call straight away – it is unlikely to be CRGV, but better to be safe than sorry! As the cause is not yet known there is unfortunately nothing that can be done to prevent the disease, although a charity has been set up to fund research into the disease so hopefully a cause and even better a cure can be found soon.

Seasonal Canine Illness (SCI) a mystery illness affecting dogs during the autumn; no-one knows what causes it.

It is normally characterised by vomiting, which may be accompanied by diarrhoea and lethargy and these clinical signs are usually witnessed within three days of having roamed in a woodland area – in Norfolk areas such as Sandringham Woods, Thetford Forest, Bacton Woods and Fritton Woods have all been suggested as areas where dogs have become affected. Unfortunately, in some cases, SCI becomes severe very quickly and, sadly, some dogs do not survive. Cases have been reported all over the UK, usually from August onwards, peaking in September but may be seen into November. SCI can affect all dogs, although in general it appears smaller dogs



are more readily affected. There are suggestions harvest mites may be involved, although there is no conclusive evidence as yet. It is known that dogs which are kept on a lead in wooded areas are affected far less frequently than dogs that roam free.

Keeping them hydrated can also help – give them a drink at the end of the walk, before heading home. Ultimately, be vigilant and closely monitor your dog's health in the hours and days after a woodland walk, especially if you normally do not walk your dog(s) in the area, also don't hesitate, give us a call as an emergency if you think your dog could have SCI - prompt veterinary attention could make the difference between life and death. If dogs receive veterinary treatment quickly, they tend to recover well after a week or so.

