

Newsletter



Autumn 2019



Animal
Health
Centre

“A passion for pet care”

358 Gloucester Road, Horfield, Bristol BS7 8TP Tel: 0117 924 7832

WELCOME TO the latest issue of our Newsletter designed to keep you up to date with what's happening in the practice.

Practice facilities

- Appointment system
- Free Nurse's clinics
- 24 hour emergency service
- Modern surgical facilities
- In-house laboratory
- Full dental facilities
- Annual health checks
- Weight-watchers clinics
- Full range of diets
- Advice on buying a new pet

Opening times

Monday – Friday:
8.30 am – 6.30 pm

Saturday: 9 – 12

Consulting times

Monday – Friday:
9 – 10 am, 2 – 3 pm
5 – 6.30 pm

Saturday: 9.30 – 11.30

24 Hour
Emergency Service

0117 905 9000

www.animalhealthcentre.org

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Practice news



We have had a busy summer of weddings, Su and Jason, Holly and Chris and Hannah and Tom. Congratulations to all. It has been lovely to share in their celebrations and feel as if one large extended family, Team Animal Health Centre!



Pictures from Hannah and Tom to follow but meanwhile here's Su and Jason together with their ring bearer, Lulu and also Holly and Chris.

Many of you will have noticed by now the loss of Su on reception, after 10 years of cuddling dogs in our waiting room, Su decided it was time to seek pastures new and move on. We all miss her very much and wish her every success and happiness in what ever she chooses to do next.

Terri who did her vet nurse training here a few years ago has now come back to the practice having been away to raise a family so you may recognise a familiar face. Welcome back Terri!

Debbie is now our head receptionist and has increased her hours to fill the gap left by Su. Hopefully a seamless transition!

It is never too late to start thinking about the dreaded fireworks and how to help keep your pet happy and safe. We have plenty of products available to help calm and relax your pet as well as leaflets with advice of how to cope. Please do come in and ask and do not leave it until the last minute!!!

And finally do have a look at the Autumn Alerts over the page, particularly remembering that our favourites the fleas and ticks will still be active and its still too early to stop preventative treatment.

★ STAR PATIENT – Energetic Jetta! ★



Jetta is an 8 year old black Labrador who had a variety of niggling conditions but nothing to worry about, so thought her owners.

A few blood tests later and we had diagnosed that Jetta had an underactive thyroid gland, this was enough to explain the lack of energy and enthusiasm as well as the coat changes.

A simple treatment with thyroid hormone tablets and very quickly Jetta was responding and trotting off on walks very happily.

Hypothyroidism is a common condition but very much underdiagnosed as the signs can be vague and often discounted by owners and even vets as normal ageing changes. Usually the onset is in middle aged to older dogs. The thyroid hormone has many effects in the body so the clinical signs of low thyroid are very varied, together with an insidious onset it can be difficult to know your dog has a disease at all. Skin thickening in the face can cause a 'tragic expression' which appears with Jetta.

With treatment the prognosis is excellent for a full recovery and we hope to see Jetta once again bouncing in to her visits at the practice!

Jetta had lost her spark and bounce, she lagged behind on walks and didn't run with the same energy as she had as a young dog, 'she's getting older' was the assumed explanation.

We had also seen Jetta for lameness in her front leg after walking which further slowed her up.

Jetta's coat was dull, coarse and very flaky and her ear flaps had very crusty tips.



Seen in isolation these symptoms can all have individual and varied causes but when we thought about the combination all at the same time we wondered if Jetta had one condition accounting for all.

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 thrive in the warm but moist conditions, especially in the grassy undergrowth our dogs love to explore. Ticks lie in wait for passing pets and will quickly latch on and feed on your pet's blood and can carry a range of infectious diseases (see box right).

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!

Seasonal Canine Illness is a rare, but serious, condition and is most commonly diagnosed between August and November. The cause is unknown but affected dogs become very poorly with sickness and diarrhoea soon after walking in woodland. Treatment is often successful but they usually need to be hospitalised and placed on a drip.



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!

Chipping away!



Having your pets microchipped is absolutely vital! Even the most loyal of dogs and the most indoor of cats can go missing. Rabbits can hop off, tortoises can make a (slow!) getaway, and ferrets will find the smallest of holes!

Microchips are slightly larger than a grain of rice and contain a unique number which shows up on microchip scanners. This is held on a central database with all your contact details. It is important to register as many numbers and email addresses as possible, so if you can't get to the phone, another member of your friends or family can! Also, don't forget to keep the information up to date! Pet rescue centres have microchip readers to identify your pet should they go missing.

Microchips are placed with a needle – it is a very quick procedure and most pets barely notice it has been done! The only animals that are required to be legally chipped are dogs but we believe all pets should be chipped. If yours aren't yet, please ask us to help you!



Feline SOS!

Knowing when your pet needs to be seen as an emergency is an important decision for many owners. Generally, cats are good at keeping themselves out of trouble but occasionally serious problems do occur – here are a few things to look out for:

Road Traffic Accidents: Hopefully this is something that won't happen to your cat, but it is worth being aware that sometimes there may be no obvious injuries and you might just find them hiding away. A classic clue is that their usually clean and sharp nails may be shredded and dirty from scraping on the tarmac.

Poisonings: Cats are often poisoned because the toxins get onto their coats and are groomed off. **Lily pollen** is the most common but others include **engine oil** and road salt. Additionally, **permethrin flea treatments for dogs** are very toxic to cats, so make sure they are never accidentally applied to cats.



Poisons they might eat include antifreeze, slug pellets and, lilies (again!), because all parts of the plant are toxic.

Signs of poisoning can often be vague so owners should be vigilant when it comes to their cat's health. Please contact us at once if you notice any signs of unusual behaviour or illness. Some of the most common causes of poisoning: lilies and antifreeze, cause severe kidney damage in very small quantities, so vigilance is needed.

Blocked bladders: Cats can frequently suffer from cystitis, especially when stressed. In rare cases, male cats may produce crystals in the urine that block the bladder so they cannot urinate. This is a **true medical emergency** so it is always important to call us if you see your cat unusually straining whilst out in the garden, or in the litter tray.

We are here to help – if you are worried about your cat, always call us for advice!

