



# TAMAR VETS

# NEWS



AUTUMN 2019

## Bonfire Night (Mare!)

As soon as the nights draw in, fireworks go off which can be absolutely terrifying for our pets. However, there are many ways you can help them get through the 'Firework Season' and the key to helping pets cope with fireworks is good preparation:



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 can also prescribe medicines that calm or sedate pets and help to reduce anxiety.

A longer term approach for noise phobia involves ongoing treatment and training that aims to make pets less noise sensitive.

Please get in touch if you would like further information on keeping your pets safe at this time of year.

## TAMAR ACTIVE: A year old and going strong!

It has now been a year since we introduced Tamar Active, our Pet Health Scheme and it has proven to be very popular!

As more and more pets enjoy the health benefits and more of our clients see the cost savings in their pockets, Tamar Active is going from strength to strength.

Tamar Active was specifically designed to help provide essential routine preventative veterinary care throughout the year at an affordable and substantially discounted rate.

When you sign up to the scheme, you are provided with a comprehensive programme of vaccinations and anti-parasite products. With regular reminders for health checks and annual vaccinations, along with reminders for when to collect or administer flea and worm products, you should be more able to ensure that your pets receive the best possible care, at the appropriate intervals to better maintain their basic health.

The scheme also allows members to spread the cost of this comprehensive program over twelve monthly payments, making it easier for you to budget for their pet's healthcare whilst making it more affordable.

Members also benefit from further discounts on a range of other preventative healthcare products, including diets, routine blood screening and elective dental procedures.

If you are interested in joining the 'in-crowd' please speak to one of our members of staff who would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

## 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!

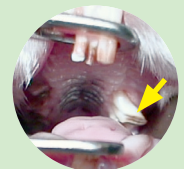
Problems are often encountered in domesticated pet rabbits fed a diet of mainly pelleted food, with little roughage to encourage tooth wear.

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** 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!

