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NEWS



WINTER 2019

Are you prepared to take your pet on holiday?



The Pet Travel Scheme has allowed thousands of pets to travel in and out of the country with their owners for holidays to Europe.

Under the current arrangement dogs and cats that travel to the EU need a microchip, a rabies vaccination and Pets passport plus require a Vet check prior to returning to England for a parasite treatment to be given by a Vet. If we leave the EU with a deal there should be no changes to the current travel arrangements within Europe.

As the Brexit date approaches, what does this mean for the Pet Travel Scheme if there is NO DEAL?

If we leave with a NO DEAL then it is likely the requirements to travel from the UK to the EU with your pet will change. Those changes will depend on the status of the EU when we leave. Currently there are three options for leaving under the Pet Passport Scheme. The UK could become an Unlisted, part 1 listed or part 2 listed country.

If we are unlisted (likely outcome of a NO DEAL) you must do the following in-order to travel to the EU and Ireland:

1. You must have your dog, cat or ferret microchipped and vaccinated against Rabies before it can travel. Your pet must have a blood sample taken at least 30 days after its last Rabies vaccination (whether that's a booster or initial vaccination).
2. Your Vet must send the blood sample to an EU-approved blood testing laboratory.
3. The results of the blood test must show a suitable Rabies antibody level. You must wait three months from the date the successful blood sample was taken before you travel.
4. Your pet will be required to see a Vet for a parasite treatment given by a Vet prior to returning to the UK.

If you have any questions regarding travelling with your pet after the Brexit date has been finalised, then we recommend calling us for advice on 0208 399 6437 or going to www.gov.uk/guidance/pet-travel-to-europe-after-brexit



Simba's Story

Simba was brought into us by his owner, who was concerned as he had been vomiting. On arrival at the clinic we noticed that Simba was not his usual energetic self and this was one of the first indicators that things really weren't right.

We admitted Simba for blood tests as he seemed very dehydrated. The results were unremarkable and showed his vital organs such as kidneys and liver were working well. However his electrolytes

were not right due to his vomiting episodes, so he was placed on intravenous fluids straight away.

As Simba had in the past eaten a sock, we X-rayed his abdomen to make sure there were no foreign bodies that could be causing his vomiting. The X-ray showed there was no obvious foreign body present.

As the day went on Simba really wasn't responding as we would hope to the medications given or the fluids. There was little improvement and he was still listless and not himself. Normally we would see some sort of improvement with fluids if it were a classic stomach upset, so we decided to perform an ultrasound scan. Although the X-ray had ruled out any major foreign bodies, the ultrasound would be able to focus more intensely on the area and look at it in slightly more detail.

Suzie carried out the ultrasound which showed there was an unusual look to one section of the intestines, which looked slightly larger and was surrounded by fluid which is not normal in a healthy animal. This was enough to cause us concern.

As Simba seemed to be deteriorating we made the decision to perform emergency surgery. When Peter went in he was shocked to find that a large section of Simba's small intestine had become wrapped around itself, cutting off the blood supply to that section of gut which, as a result, was effectively dead and needed to be removed. This kind of surgery requires removing that length of intestine and then connecting the healthy ends of the remaining gut back together. If we had not gone ahead with the operation, Simba would most definitely have died. The surgery itself is extremely risky, requiring excellent surgical skill and isn't guaranteed to be successful.

Once the surgery was complete, it was then a waiting game to see firstly if Simba would survive the anaesthetic (he was in a state of shock which can make the anaesthetic very risky) but also to see if the healthy gut would take and continue to function as it should. Even up to five days after surgery the gut could still breakdown.

Simba was the sweetest patient. Even at his most critical he still gave tiny tail wags and seemed to understand that we were trying to help him. The following day he was very flat but gradually, after intense nursing care he started to perk up and by day three he was taking food and able to venture into the garden for fresh air. By the time Simba went home he was already starting to get back to his normal lively self.

We are delighted to say that Simba has made a full recovery since his surgery and he certainly deserves this month's Braveheart award.





Winter survival guide!

Winter is fast approaching. The weather is getting wetter and colder and your pet may decide to spend more time inside by the fire than running around outside! Here are some things to look out for to keep them in the best of health:

Sore joints: Pets with joint problems often start to struggle in the colder weather. Look out for hanging back on walks, stiffness in the mornings or them being reluctant to go out. Many pets will benefit from anti-inflammatory medication and also joint supplements. Arthritic pets often struggle with long walks, so little and often is the key.

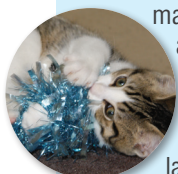
Can you pinch an inch? With many pets spending more time indoors during the winter months – they are getting less exercise and need correspondingly less food. Keep an eye out for any weight gain since excess weight can cause a range of health problems including heart disease, diabetes and can also significantly worsen arthritis.

On snowy days remember to check your pet's paws after walks and give them a good wipe down. Snow balls up painfully between toes, especially on fluffy feet and grit and salt can be very caustic.

Festive alert: During the festive season, make sure all your decorations and wires are out of reach of pets since they make very tempting toys! Hide any edible presents (especially chocolate) until the very last minute and resist the temptation to share your seasonal snacks, they will only cause upset tummies. Any cake or pies containing grapes, nuts or raisins must also be avoided! If your pet swallows anything unusual please contact us at once!

Outdoor pets: Also don't forget about smaller pets who live outdoors. Make sure rabbits and guinea pigs have well insulated hutches, plenty of bedding to snuggle down in and check their water twice daily to ensure it hasn't frozen.

For further information on any of the topics mentioned in this article, please speak to a member of our team.



Ear Ear! Watch out for ear disease!



Your pet's ears come in all shapes and sizes and anatomically consist of three major components: The **outer ear** with a large pinna – to gather sound waves, which then pass down the external ear canal to the ear drum where the sound is transmitted as vibrations to the small bones of the **middle ear**, and then onto the **inner ear** where it is turned into electrical signals which are passed onto the brain and perceived as sound.

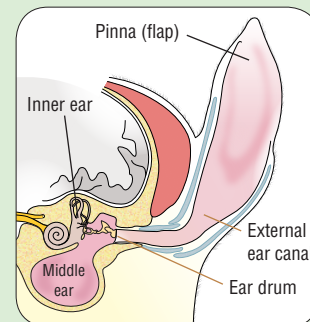
Most of the time your pet will have clean comfortable ears. You can gently open the ear flap (or pinna) and check the ear looks clean, the skin does not look sore, and check for unusual odours. It is useful to check your pet's ears weekly to pick up an ear problem early.

Unlike humans who commonly get *middle ear* infections, the vast majority of ear problems in pets occur in the *external ear canal* – termed *otitis externa*. Signs of otitis externa commonly include ear rubbing, head shaking, and reddened, irritated skin lining the external ear canal. Additionally there is often a discharge which may be foul smelling.

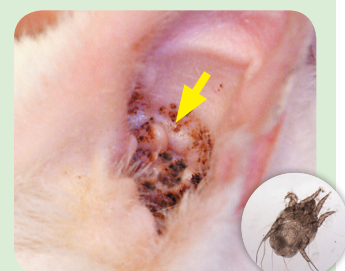
There are several underlying causes of otitis externa:

- **Ear mite** infestations with *Otodectes cynotis* is commonly seen in puppies and kittens and is usually associated with a crusty brown discharge. Rabbits can be infected with the rabbit ear mite – *Psoroptes cuniculi* which is associated with a flakey crusting otitis.
- **Localised allergies** affecting the skin lining the external ear canal are another common cause, leading to scratching, which allows opportunistic bacterial and fungal infections to infect the external ear canal.
- **Grass awns** are another common problem and often present with sudden-onset head shaking.

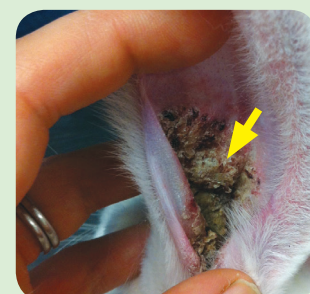
In order to effectively treat otitis externa it is very important to identify the underlying cause. Some, such as ear mites or foreign bodies are easily identified and treated. However, over time, the underlying cause is commonly obscured and made worse by *secondary* opportunistic bacterial and fungal infections, and the longer ear problems go on, the harder they are to effectively manage. If you would like any further information or are concerned your pet's ears are causing problems, please bring your pet in for a check-up.



A typical ear in cross section. Most ear problems occur in the external ear canal

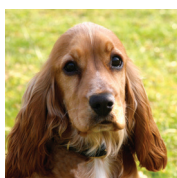


Opening to the vertical ear canal in a cat with a crusty brown discharge typical of *ear mites* *Otodectes cynotis* (inset)



In rabbits, ear mite infestations with the rabbit ear mite (*Psoroptes cuniculi*) present with thick, flakey crusting in the external ear canal.

Alabama Rot



Alabama Rot is a disease that has been hitting the headlines recently. It has gained attention because it is hard to diagnose but is often fatal. However, it is important to remember that it is also extremely rare.

At the moment, the cause of the condition is unknown. It is often seen in dogs who have recently been walked in muddy or wet weather and there are certain 'hot spots' in the UK and Ireland where it is more frequently found but there are no hard and fast rules.

Typical presenting signs include ulcerated and abnormal lesions on dogs' skin, especially the lower legs, paws and face. It can, in rare cases, cause acute kidney failure by producing multiple small blood clots within the tissue, leading to kidney cell death, which is of course very serious. Fortunately it is still very rare and additionally, most skin lesions will not be related to Alabama Rot; however, if you notice any unusual skin patterns on your dog's skin and need any advice please contact us straight away at the surgery.



Typical photo of a suspected case of Alabama Rot with skin lesions and associated evidence of kidney failure