



# Veterinary Centre

SPRING 2021



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™  
We invest in people Platinum

## NEWS

### Practice News

#### NEW QUALIFICATION FOR OUR RECEPTIONIST JO

Huge congratulations to our receptionist Jo who has just become a Registered Veterinary Receptionist (RVR) with the British Veterinary Receptionist Association (BVRA).

Jo had to pass all three levels of the BVRA's Accredited Veterinary Receptionist Award, completing over 30 hours of interactive online training, before being eligible to apply for RVR status. Joining the RVR register means that as well as successfully meeting BVRA's initial training requirements, Jo pledges to work in accordance with the BVRA's Guide to Conduct and Contribution for Veterinary Receptionists, and must complete a minimum amount of receptionist training on an on-going annual basis to remain a recognised RVR.

The BVRA's course topics ranged from gaining a deeper insight into the customer journey and managing challenging situations, to helping define practice policies and protocols across 100 online worksheets, carrying out creative IT communication tasks, completing a bereavement and condolences module and working through strategies for looking after mental health and wellbeing in the workplace. We're looking forward to Jo sharing salient learning points from her qualification and to continuing to improve client experience at 387 Vets.

#### WELCOME BACK SOPHIE!

We're delighted to welcome Sophie back from maternity leave this Spring. Sophie re-joins the qualified nursing team from 15th March, and whilst reducing her hours to a three-day week to be able to spend more time with her little boy Seth, Sophie will still carry out a full portfolio of nursing duties including nursing consultations to be able to meet with you and your pets!

#### ALL FOR CHARITY

A big thank you to everyone who took part in our donation and fundraising projects in December to share Christmas love with pets in need.

Our 'Give a Homeless Pet a Christmas Dinner' campaign generated over 440 tins and pouches of wet food, 40kg of dry food and more than 180 packets of treats and dental chews - not to mention all the bedding, toys, bowls, pet accessories and even some beautifully customised pet goodie boxes - for pets waiting for their forever home at Sunnyside Kennels (part of Birmingham Dogs Home), Voices4Cats and Broadmeadow Guinea Pig Rescue and Sanctuary. We also collected an amazing £150 for The Cinnamon Trust (the national charity for the elderly, the terminally ill and their pets) from our collection tin and teddy and chocolate box Christmas raffle. We have been overwhelmed by your kindness and generosity and know your contributions will have made a big difference to pets in need.

### Helping pets adjust after lockdown

With schools back from 8th March and the promise of an ongoing return to more of a pre lockdown normality, our pets may find themselves being plunged from being part of a busy household to time alone. Read on to find out how we can help your pets adjust back to their old routine:

#### TOP TIPS FOR DOGS

Lockdown may have meant changes in frequency of walks, playtime and amount of attention. Even feeding times may now be a little different. To help alleviate pet anxiety or frustration around change:

- Always make changes gradually, and always in a positive way. Best to start well in advance of your deadline. Your aim is to give your pet a routine as close to the one they will experience when restrictions are lifted
- Will your walk time and route need to alter? Slowly revert to what will become their normal walk pattern and stick to this
- Will your dog have more alone time? It's important to prepare, to stave off separation anxiety. Aim to slowly decrease attention and increase alone time to mirror your new routine:
  - Don't play with or stroke your dog every time they ask, but don't completely ignore them either. Give them an alternative – a comfy bed to rest in or a chew or a toy to play with
  - Encourage your dog to spend more alone time in their bed or a separate room
  - Give clear signs to your dog when it's time to interact or play and when they need to occupy themselves (perhaps with a toy)
  - Try to keep interaction to when you will be available in your new routine
  - Consider leaving the house for short periods if you will be out of the house more (though stay within government guidelines. This may mean sitting in the car with a book!). If your dog shows any distress, please contact us for advice
  - Will someone else be walking or caring for your dog while you are out? Consider being at home for the first couple of visits to ensure a smooth transition to change



#### TOP TIPS FOR CATS

Some cats love human interaction whilst others may prefer a quieter, more solitary existence. Whatever your cat's nature, any change can be stressful, so make sure change is introduced gradually and your cat's needs continue to be met.

- Slowly adjust your cat's routine around feeding and playtime to what it will be when restrictions are lifted
- Ensure your cat has access to any favourite hiding places around the house where they can feel safe
- Prevent boredom with access to scratch posts, toys and interactive feeders
- Avoid over-handling your cat in an attempt to comfort as this can create more stress
- Make sure that you continue to dedicate special time each day to doing things your cat enjoys after restrictions are lifted. This can really help with the transition to change.



If you are worried about your pet coping, or would like any further advice on managing pet behaviour, please give our team a call on 01922 411755.



### 387 Vets retains Gold Cat Friendly Clinic Status!

We're delighted to announce that 387 Veterinary Centre has retained Gold Cat Friendly Clinic status, current until 2023, following a re-accreditation process at the end of last year.

The ISFM, the veterinary division of the charity International Cat Care, set up their worldwide Cat Friendly Clinic programme to help veterinary practices make visits to the vets less stressful for cats – and by default, their owners too! Cat Friendly Clinics have to meet set criteria applied to cat handling, team training, client communication and premises and facilities to be awarded bronze, silver or gold accreditation. So what does being a gold cat friendly clinic mean? Here are just some of the ways we work to minimise stress when your feline friend comes to the vets:

- Our **designated cat waiting area, cat box covers, raised areas to place cat boxes and comforting pheromone diffusers** all help your feline friend feel more secure
- Appointments are 15 minutes long: time for your cat to explore the consulting room, feel more familiar with their surroundings, and for us to carry out a gentle but thorough examination
- **All our clinicians are trained in low stress handling.** We love cats!
- We offer **kitten socialisation clinics**, including play time with nurses, to foster positive associations with coming to the vets
- We have a **dedicated quiet cat ward** for in-patients. Large glass fronted cages with interconnecting spaces means the litter tray and the food and sleep area are separate and cats can really stretch! Cats can snuggle inside their own perch box or get a better view by sitting on top!
- We have a **digital dental x ray facility**: many feline dental issues are hard to accurately detect without this and can lead to prolonged unnecessary treatment and discomfort.
- We're really **proactive about positive change** and keeping up to date with feline clinical initiatives and developments to continue to make your cat's veterinary experience even better!



# Spotlight on cruciate surgery

Whilst many of you will know Carlos best from seeing him as a first opinion vet, did you know that he holds a postgraduate certificate in small animal surgery? And that his experience and training enables him to perform many surgeries that would normally need to be referred to a specialist centre?

Just before lockdown in March 2020, Carlos attended a training course in London on cruciate ligament repair in the knee using the cranial closing wedge osteotomy technique (CCWO), also known as a closing wedge tibial plateau levelling osteotomy (CW-TPLO). It's not a procedure usually carried out in general practice, so we thought we'd take you behind the scenes to find out more about this cutting-edge procedure now performed at 387 Vets!

## What is cruciate damage?

Cruciate ligaments are like pieces of strong elastic that hold the knee together. If a cruciate ligament is damaged, be it by landing awkwardly, twisting the knee or from long term wear and tear, it can make the knee wobbly and unstable and can be very painful. Injury can range from a small tear and a mild limp to a complete rupture of the ligament, where your dog may not be able to put the injured leg down.

## Treatment options

There are a range of treatments available, depending on the severity of the injury and the size of your dog. Whilst rest and rehabilitative exercises may help mild cases, more severe conditions can only be alleviated by surgery, where a surgeon will either artificially recreate the action of the cruciate ligament in the knee or operate to neutralise any destabilising forces.

## Our cruciate repair portfolio

At 387 Vets, we perform TTA rapid and MMP procedures (fitting a titanium cage or titanium orthofoam wedge into the tibia (shin bone) to advance the front point of the bone and neutralise the cruciate ligament forces in the knee) treating different degrees of cruciate damage with great success, especially in big dogs. The CCWO is a completely different approach, using different geometry to stabilise the forces and is particularly well-suited to smaller dogs, and is a great compliment to 387's impressive cruciate repair technique portfolio.

## So how does the CCWO procedure work?

CCWO involves the removal of a wedge of bone from the top of the tibia (shin bone) near the joint. When the gap is closed and then secured with a metal plate and screws the angle of the top of the tibia (the platform, or plateau, that the thigh bone sits on) is altered and this stabilises the knee by preventing damaging forward motion and destabilising forces upon the knee.

Follow the captioned photos of Carlos carrying out a cranial closing wedge osteotomy to find out!



1: Starting the procedure



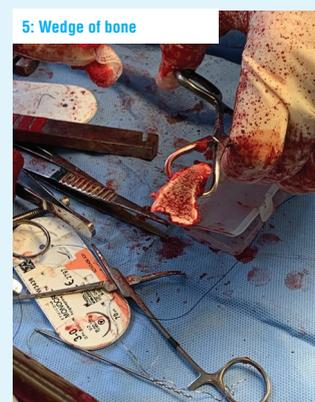
2: Starting to cut the bone to create a bone wedge to remove



3: Drilling holes for the tension band wire to close the gap



4: Removing the wedge of bone



5: Wedge of bone



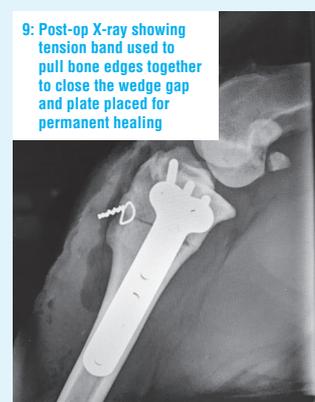
6: Using tension band wire to pull the bone together to close the gap where the wedge of bone has been removed



7: Tension band fully tightened and the gap is closed



8: Plate placed across the gap to hold the bone in position as it heals



9: Post-op X-ray showing tension band used to pull bone edges together to close the wedge gap and plate placed for permanent healing

## SPRING TICK ALERT!



As the weather warms up and we head towards the Spring and Summer months, ticks become more active, posing a risk to both pets and their owners.

Ticks can be found in long grasses and wooded areas, especially where there is wildlife such as deer and hedgehogs. Here, they wait for a human or animal to brush past them, so that they can jump on and feed. They attach using their mouthparts and will feed on blood from their host for several days before dropping off.



Although pets rarely seem troubled by them, ticks can spread diseases that pose serious health risks:

**Lyme disease** is the most well known disease spread by ticks. Affected pets (and also humans) can develop swollen joints and stiffness. They can also develop a fever, anorexia and lethargy.

**Babesiosis** is an emerging tick-borne disease, destroying red blood cells and causing acute signs of anaemia in affected dogs (but not humans). It is mainly found in mainland Europe, but there is a risk of spread into the UK and Ireland.

*What about prevention?* Current evidence suggests that tick-borne diseases take many hours after tick attachment to be transmitted.

Veterinary prescription medications for the prevention of ticks often kill these pesky parasites quicker than their non-prescription counterparts, which is very important in the prevention of tick borne diseases and they are available as spot-ons, tablets or collars.

We are here to help, so please get in touch for further information.

Ask us about our Vetpost service - monthly parasite treatment with free P&P delivered direct to your door!