

Newsletter



SUMMER 2022



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

Alternate Saturdays: 9 – 12

Consulting times

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

Saturday:
9.30 – 11.30 am

24 Hour Emergency Service

Out Of Hours Service

at Highcroft Veterinary
Hospital

01275 832410

www.animalhealthcentre.org

PRACTICE NEWS

It has been a while since we last produced a newsletter and there is plenty of practice news to report.

Firstly, after what seems like years of Covid restrictions, we are able to accept clients back into the waiting room and even now into the consulting rooms. It makes our job so much more efficient to be able to perform face to face consultations and for many clients, particularly the 'Lock down pup' generation, it is the first time they have seen beyond the waiting room. Their pets are of course familiar with the routine in the consult room and happy to lead their owners in and I have seen eager pups running ahead of their owners to sit on the scales for their weigh in. Thank you all again for your patience over a difficult period and may that now be well behind us.

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We have had quite a few staff changes recently. Rosie, the vet, who was with us for two years has now moved on and is off adventuring mostly by bicycle while deciding her next career move. Rosie was great to work with and will be much missed for her happy demeanour and chocolate cookies.

Rosie is replaced by Rebecca Copus as vet working both here and in our sister practice in Eastville. Rebecca qualified from Bristol and has been working in Gloucestershire before joining us. Welcome to Rebecca, or 'Beccs' and we look forward to sharing our lovely patients with her.

Reception has increased in numbers, Debbie is now joined by Holly and Dawn on reception so we hope to have two receptionists at all times to increase our efficiency. Both Holly and Dawn are have degrees in graphic illustration. We are encouraging them to maybe work on a waiting room makeover... watch this space...

Lucie has joined us as a PCA, patient care assistant, and helps both vets and nurses behind the scenes with daily care of our patients. Lucie is from the Czech Republic and has a degree in Environmental Management.

Sam Harris, our head nurse, is now practice manager and has taken over many of the administrative tasks of the practice to keep us running efficiently. Her position as head nurse has been taken by Samuel Michael who joins us from the RSPCA. He has a wealth of experience and interests particularly the pet owner bond and welfare and we look forward to working with him in the team. Samuel also has a degree in Film Studies from UWE.

We are lucky to have such a diverse multitalented team here now.



We congratulate Holly (vet) on the arrival of her second son, Toby, and Holly will be back at Animal Health Centre later this year.

You may have noticed a change in our Saturday service, we are now open on alternate Saturdays and share them with the Eastville practice in Muller Road.

When we are closed an answerphone message will direct you to Eastville who are able to see our patients with urgent needs. They have access to our records so that continuity can be maintained. We do apologise if this causes inconvenience to some but we hope that maintaining every other Saturday surgeries we are still there when you need us for those who cannot get in during the week.

We have now started our 'Healthy Pet Club', this is a monthly payment scheme which helps you to budget across the year. It is open to all of our cat, dog and rabbit patients to join. There is a simple tier of monthly cost depending on the size of your dog, or one payment option for cats. This will entitle you to your annual vaccination, flea and worm treatments as recommended, six month check up, discounted dental scale and polishes as well as 10% off all of our veterinary services and 20% off some long term repeat medications. Please do ask at reception for details and to see if can benefit you as a more economical option for your pet's veterinary care.

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So as you can see, we have been busy behind the scenes at Animal Health Centre to improve our staffing and level of care to our patients and clients. We welcome any suggestions or comments on how we can further benefit you.

Nicky Bromhall, Head Vet



Rosie Bartholomew on her leaving day



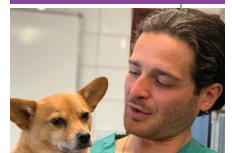
Holly Coombe



Dawn Hazell



Lucie Novakova



Samuel Michael and his dog, Huxley

Guinea pigs are great!



Guinea pigs can make excellent pets since they are easy to handle, are very inquisitive, rarely bite and can be very 'chatty', communicating with a range of sounds.

They are sociable animals and should be kept in groups or pairs; males reach sexual maturity at 9-10 weeks, females even earlier at 4-6 weeks so it is essential that the male, at least, is neutered to prevent unwanted pregnancy. Housing guinea pigs with rabbits is not recommended due to different nutritional requirements between the species, the risk of disease transmission and the risk of rabbits bullying guinea pigs.



Housing should ideally be indoors and away from draughts and kept out of direct sunlight. Guinea pigs can be housed outside during the summer months in the UK but must have

access to shade. Housing should be as large as possible, with the enclosure being at least 4ft x 2ft, preferably larger (for each pair of guinea pigs), with permanent access to a 6ft x 4ft run.

Regular opportunities to graze and exercise are essential, the run must be secure and prevent predators (domestic dogs/cats, birds of prey and foxes) from entering the enclosure, shelters must be provided to allow areas to hide, provide enrichment and feel secure (boxes or pipes), and provide branches from untreated apple or pear trees, or willow to gnaw on. Please note that branches from cherry, plum, cedar, walnut and oleander are poisonous and must be avoided.

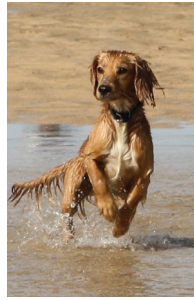


Guinea pigs require a high fibre diet, and grass or hay must be available at all times. Guinea pigs also need approximately a tablespoon per adult guinea pig of a commercial pelleted

diet, plus approximately 50g (half a cup) leafy green foods or safe edible weeds to provide vitamin C and other nutrients once a day.

Guinea pigs instinctively hide any signs of pain and illness; therefore, it is important to check them at least once a day and weigh them on a weekly basis. If their appetite decreases and/or droppings become smaller and less frequent, or are not produced, then this is deemed as an emergency. Guinea pigs can suffer from dental disease (overgrowth of incisors and/or cheek teeth) and gastrointestinal stasis as a result of an inappropriate diet or as a sequel to pain or an underlying illness. Guinea pigs are also prone to mites and fungal skin infections which can cause intense itching, crusting and scaling of the skin.

We are here to help, so if you have any questions regarding your guinea pigs, give us a call today!



Summertime survival guide!

Summer is here at last! But when the heat turns up, the dangers to pets increase too. To keep your dog, cat and other furry friends safe, make sure you are prepared. To help you with this, we've put together some top summer survival tips:

Keep it cool! It is vital to ensure your pet keeps cool in hot weather. Dogs should be walked early or late in the day to avoid heat stroke. Paddling pools may help keep dogs cool and they should have free access to water at all times. Heat stroke is a common, and serious, problem and over-weight or heavily coated dogs are most at risk.

Guinea pigs and rabbits also need to be able to keep cool and it is vitally important that they have access to shade at all times, plus cool water – preferably in a bowl. Also consider moving their accommodation to somewhere cooler in hot weather.

Slip slap slop! Cats generally enjoy sunbathing but they can be at risk of overheating. The other concern for cats with pale coloured ears or noses is the risk of sun burn. Repeated exposure to UV light has been shown to be a risk factor for them developing a type of tumour called a squamous cell carcinoma. High factor **special sunblock for pets** applied to the at risk (white) areas helps to minimise this risk.



Flystrike: Sadly with summer comes flies. Most healthy rabbits on an appropriate fibre rich diet will have a clean bottom. However some rabbits, for various reasons, can be prone to a dirty bottom. This then attracts flies which lay eggs

on the skin with the resulting maggots eating away at the delicate tissue – a so called fly strike. Fly strike is best avoided by keeping bottoms clean at all times, checking the area twice a day for eggs and if needed applying a product that inhibits the eggs from hatching.

Grass awns are another summer problem – the grass awns of the meadow grasses are easily trapped in the coats of pets. They then migrate and become lodged in a variety of places including the ears and between the toes. It is always a good idea to groom your pets regularly to keep a close eye out for grass awns.

So – enjoy the summer months, have fun and keep your pets safe. We are here to help, so if you would like any further information on summer hazards, please just ask!

Pet insurance for peace of mind!



Pet insurance is something that we advise all our owners consider for their animals. We know that vet bills are often unexpected and can mount up over time, so having a good policy will really combat the worry of being able to afford their care.

There are several different types of cover to choose from: The top cover is a **lifetime policy** where your pet is covered for a condition for life, usually up to a certain amount of money per year. A **time-restricted policy** means that you can claim per condition, usually for 12 months only. If your pet has an on-going condition such as diabetes or arthritis, the cover expires after the time period. A **condition-restricted policy** means that you can claim up to a certain amount per condition.

So – if you would like further information on the benefits of insuring your pet, please don't hesitate to contact a member of our team.



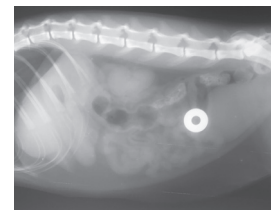
Paddling pools are a great way for dogs to stay cool in the summer!



Ear tip of a cat showing cancerous changes with skin reddening.



Grass awns of the summer grasses are a perennial hazard



Washer alert!

Pets commonly swallow items which require surgery to remove them, however it's not every day that a kitten swallows a washer! Happily, surgery resolved the issue.