

Newsletter



SPRING 2023



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

Alternate 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 long while since our last practice newsletter so here is a summary of the latest news.

Congratulations to Holly (reception) on being the practice champion axe thrower at our Christmas party, it gets harder each year to find a new activity to surprise the team with but axe throwing certainly hit the mark (excuse the pun).

...
Holly Scrimshaw has now returned after her maternity leave and the arrival of Toby, she works two days a week and it is lovely to have her back again.



Amy and Rupert

...
Amy Castleton-White has now joined us permanently working three days a week as a vet, she has interests in all aspects of general practice both consulting and operating and adds to our experienced team.

...
Dawn on reception has started a course on Veterinary Care Support so she can extend her duties to patient care and expand her knowledge on the veterinary practice.

...
Lucie has passed her Patient care Assistant course and is now an invaluable member of the team.

...
As a practice we are focusing on the diagnosis of high blood pressure 'hypertension' in cats, a very much underdiagnosed condition in our older cat patients. If your cat is over seven years old and you have not yet been sent a message to book in, please do give us a call to book a blood pressure check.



UNSUNG HEROES

All of our clients and patients are familiar with our veterinary and nursing staff, however our reception and patient care staff in the background often get overlooked so I thought it would be nice to give them a shout out and the recognition that they deserve.

On reception we have a highly talented team of Debbie, Dawn and Holly who help to organise our days and are the first point of contact for owners, often under difficult circumstances with poorly or injured pets.

Debbie has been on reception at Animal Health Centre for over 12 years, as well as a wealth of knowledge of all things veterinary both practically and management, she also has a degree in Psychology.

Dawn and Holly are talented artists, they both have BA degrees in Illustration and if you have seen any of our social media posts you will be familiar with their work and the cartoon characters of the staff dogs, Lulu, Huxley and Rupert. When not at work at Animal Health Centre they both accept illustration commissions. If you haven't yet seen our social media do take a look on Instagram and Facebook and follow us if you like what you see.



Lulu



Huxley

Lucie is our Patient Care Assistant, she is from the Czech Republic and has a degree in Environmental Management from the University of Lancashire. Lucie is responsible for the smooth running behind the scenes in the kennels and theatre, taking care of in-patients as well as all equipment and she does a remarkable job.

Without the back up of our talented team it would be fair to say that the clinical staff of vets and nurses would be lost! So a huge thank you to our unsung heroes for all of your contributions.



Holly, Lucie and Dawn



Debbie



Lungworm alert!

As we get out and about, enjoying the lovely spring weather, it's worth being aware of lungworm since cases will rise as the snail population grows with the warmer weather.

Lungworm or *Angiostrongylus Vasorum*, is a parasite that can affect dogs and also local foxes. It can cause significant disease and in some cases, be fatal. Unfortunately, cases are becoming more common throughout the UK and Ireland and it is therefore very important



to understand how you can help protect your pet.

Dogs can be infected with lungworm larvae carried by **slugs and snails** (which are intermediate hosts). Slugs

and snails can be inadvertently eaten in grass, soil or whilst playing with toys in the garden. The disease is commonest in young dogs that eat or play with slugs and snails, and in dogs that eat or drink outside and may have had slugs or snails in their bowls.

Lungworm are swallowed as tiny larvae,



Electron micrograph of an adult lungworm

which migrate into the circulation of the liver and travel to the right side of the heart. Here they develop into adult worms (see photo left) which can build up in

the heart and where the adults mate and produce eggs. The eggs hatch into larvae and then migrate into the lung tissue. These larvae are coughed up and are passed out into your dog's faeces to re-infect molluscs. When in the body the larvae cause significant lung tissue damage, often causing a cough, breathing troubles and lethargy. This can result in bronchitis, heart failure and spontaneous bleeding. Affected dogs often become weak and lethargic, go off their food, and may cough, vomit, or pass blood. The disease can be so severe as to be fatal but, if diagnosed early, can be treated successfully. Blood or faecal testing can give rapid diagnostic results.

Lungworm is best prevented rather than cured, so do call us to discuss what protocol is most appropriate for your pet.

Can you pinch an inch?!

Spring is here at last! But the dark winter months may have taken their toll on your pet's waistlines since it's very tempting to stay warm and cosy rather than go on that wet wintry walk. This is a problem because while it is all too easy to gain weight, it isn't nearly as easy to lose it!

With obesity becoming increasingly common, it is wise to look objectively at your pets and see if they are overweight or not. In a healthy pet with an ideal condition score, the ribs should be able to be felt but not seen, and there should be an obvious 'waist'. By contrast, if you can pinch an inch or more, and if your pet's tum sags down and bulges out, then a diet may be in order!

Carrying extra weight places extra demands on virtually all the organs of the body. Long term, this can have health risks since carrying excess weight can cause or worsen a range of conditions including skin, heart, respiratory and joint disease. Your pet may also be more prone to develop problems such as raised blood pressure, diabetes and pancreatitis.

Given the health problems associated with excess weight – it is important to address it, and it is here that we can help. If you feel your pet is getting a little portly we are happy to weigh him or her and advise you on their ideal weight. We will also examine your pet to check for any *medical* conditions (such as an under-active thyroid gland in middle aged dogs) that may result in weight gain.

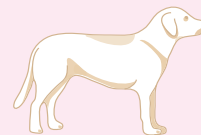
To achieve weight loss, pets need a combination of a

specially formulated calorie controlled diet (often down to around $\frac{2}{3}$ their previous calorie intake) and more exercise. All pets need regular exercise, and increased walks, more frequent play, or increased access to outdoors are all of help.

The good news is that as your pet loses weight, the benefits of increased healthiness and vitality are usually seen quite quickly. So, if your pet has gained weight, or seems to have slowed down, then why not give us a call – we are here to help!



IDEAL WEIGHT

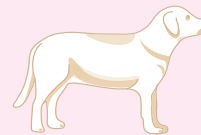


Outline of ribs can be easily felt through a slight fat cover

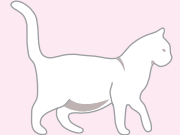


Outline of ribs can be easily felt through a slight fat cover

OVER WEIGHT

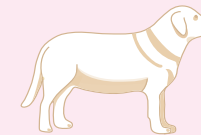


Ribs difficult to feel through a moderate fat cover

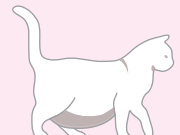


Ribs difficult to see or feel. Visible sagging abdominal fat pad.

OBESSE



Ribs very difficult to feel and cannot be seen through thick fat cover



Ribs very difficult to feel. Prominent abdominal fat pad.



Chips with everything!

Having your pets microchipped is absolutely vital! Even the most loyal of dogs and the most indoor of cats can go missing and could mean days or weeks of worry for all involved. However the good news is that microchip implants offer a far more reliable method of identifying your pet.

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!

The only animals that have to be legally chipped are dogs and horses and we believe that cat microchipping will soon be made mandatory as well. Microchips are easy to implant and only need a routine consultation. If you need your pet microchipped or have any questions please don't hesitate to ask a member of staff.