

Practice News

This summer there are lots of reasons for everyone to visit us, so we look forward to seeing you. In June we have Rabbit Awareness Month, so to take advantage of free nail trims, bunny health checks or £10 off the usual price of rabbit vaccination, call reception to book. All our Pet Care Plan VIPs will be smiling over the summer – we have a special offer exclusively for them! Our dental assessment including scale and polish is only £100 for VIP cats and £120 for VIP dogs every week from June to the end of August. Look at the article in the main newsletter for more details.

As you are probably all aware by now, microchipping of dogs is now a legal requirement. We can see your pet 7 days a week to implant microchips, which can be done with either the vet or the nurse. We also offer a free microchip scan service, where we can check that your dog or cat's chip is still working and confirm with you the details the microchip database holds for you. Staff are all busy with continued professional development (CPD), this year RVN Kelly is completing courses in veterinary physiotherapy, RVN Robyn is been finishing her qualification in feline/canine nutrition and Head RVN Liz is studying for the feline friendly medicine certificate. Meanwhile our vets are furthering their skills and education in ultrasonography, dental radiography, rabbit medicine plus much more. Bearsted Vets is committed to staying up to date and offering our clients as many quality services as we can!



Imagine how your teeth would look and feel if you didn't brush them for years...



The same applies to your pet's teeth!

Without regular brushing, our pets' teeth get tartared, gums become infected and dental disease takes a hold. Dental disease causes pain and discomfort to our dogs and cats, can introduce infection into other parts of the body and creates the bad breath that many of our older patients display!

To help prevent dental disease, we encourage all owners to have their pets' teeth regularly scaled and polished – which in animals requires a general anaesthetic. As we have all learned from our own experiences at the dentist, cooperation is required to allow for proper dental examinations and treatments. The same can be said for veterinary dentistry, but with pets we can't communicate the importance of holding still – the patient can't understand the procedure being performed. General anaesthesia actually increases the safety of veterinary dental procedures by eliminating the potential for accidental injury from sharp instruments while performing oral examinations, dental cleanings and surgical procedures. It allows us to thoroughly examine the mouth and even take dental x-rays if needed. Additionally, proper cleaning and surgical techniques require the use of water-cooled instruments, which could pose a risk for aspiration if pets are placed under sedation without the use of endotracheal intubation and general anaesthesia.

For further information on bringing your pet in for a scale and polish, make an appointment for one of our free nurse dental checks. Or call reception on 01622 736677 to discuss over the phone!

The progression of gum disease in pets



(1) Healthy mouth



(2) Gingivitis – with early calculus



(3) Periodontitis

The Scale and Polish



Removing the calculus using an ultrasonic scaler, followed by polishing the teeth is a very effective form of treatment

Kitten photo: -Jaree Burton

JUNE, JULY & AUGUST ONLY – All Pet Care Plan members can book for canine and feline anaesthetic and scale and polish for the set price of £100 for cats and £120 for dogs.

(Any tooth extractions are not included within this price but the cost of any additional work would be discussed in advance of treatment).



The importance of early socialisation

The early experiences a puppy or kitten has of people and their surroundings has a huge impact on their behaviour and personality for the rest of their life. When considering a new pet, it's really important to make sure the breeder or rescue centre has fully socialised them – it could save you a lot of problems and heartache in the future.

It is vital puppies and kittens stay with the litter and mother until at least 8 weeks old, to learn good dog or cat manners and behaviour. After their first few weeks, puppies and kittens should have regular contact with all kinds of people; adults (both men and women), children and the elderly. They should ideally be reared in a home environment, so they get used to the sights, sounds and smells of family life. Once puppies are fully vaccinated it's a good idea to get them out and about – gradually introducing them to loud noises, cars, horses, fire engines – pretty much everything and anything!

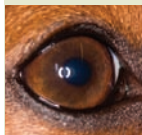
Dry itchy eyes?



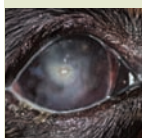
Did you know that keratoconjunctivitis sicca, commonly referred to as “Dry Eye”, is one of the most common eye problems in dogs. Dry Eye affects 1 in 22 of all dogs in recent surveys.

In most cases, Dry Eye is caused by destruction of the tear glands by your dog’s own immune system, leading to partial or total loss of tear production.

Tears play a key role in keeping eyes healthy. They lubricate and cleanse the eyes, carry vital nutrients and oxygen to the surface of the eye and help protect against infection. Healthy eyes are bright and clear (see photo left).



Healthy eye



Severely affected case of dry eye

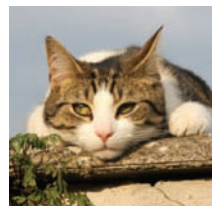
Without tears, the eyes will become progressively more dry and uncomfortable (see lower photo). However Dry Eye has a very variable appearance, with some pets’ eyes appearing relatively normal *despite* little or no measurable tear production.

Happily there is a quick and simple test to diagnose Dry Eye in your dog. Better still, medication for Dry Eye, usually in the form of an ointment, can improve tear production and reverse many of the signs of Dry Eye, maintaining vision and keeping pets comfortable. So, if your pet has any of these symptoms, let us know since the earlier the problem is diagnosed and treatment started, the better the long term outlook for affected pets.

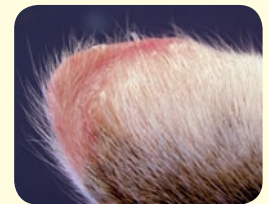
Watch out, the sun’s about!

Finally, the summer is here! Most of us, and our pets, love the warmer weather but it brings with it its own particular set of challenges and potential problems. Here are a few tips to keep your pet fit and well at this time of year:

Heat Stroke is an extremely serious problem and can even be fatal. Although all dogs are at risk, the shorter faced breeds, like Staffies, Pugs and Bulldogs are most vulnerable, and the danger is even greater if they are overweight. To prevent problems, avoid exercising your pets in the midday heat and make sure they don’t over-exert themselves at any time. If you become worried, move them to a cool, shaded place, give them lots to drink and call us immediately.



Slip, slap, slop! Most cats are real sun worshippers, which doesn’t tend to be a problem unless they have white ears or noses. These areas are vulnerable to sun burn because the hair is so thin, which is painful in itself but can also trigger skin cancers (see photo right). To protect your pet, apply high factor waterproof sun lotion to their ears and noses. This is sometimes easier said than done but there are pet specific products out there to help you.



Ear tip of a cat showing cancerous changes – note the reddening of the skin. If your pet is showing signs of skin changes on their nose or ears, please call us.

Grass seeds are another summer problem – the grass awns of the meadow grasses are easily trapped in the coats of pets, especially dogs. 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, and especially after walks, to keep a close eye out for grass seeds.



Grass awns of the summer grasses are a perennial hazard

BBQ Beware! Lovely weather and longer evenings mean lots of people break out the barbecue, and dogs often have a great time hoovering up the left-overs! This can cause tummy upsets, but more seriously, if anything like bones, kebab sticks and sweetcorn cobs are snaffled, they can lead to serious blockages requiring life saving surgery to remove. So keep your pets away from the barbecue!

Itch alert! For sensitive dogs with allergies, the flowers and grasses that thrive in the summer months can cause real problems. Dogs will often break out with nasty skin rashes, especially on the feet, tummy and ears. If your pet is affected, please come and see us for a check-up as there are usually treatments we can give them to improve the situation. Also – don’t forget to keep up to date with anti-parasite treatment, since fleas can be a big cause of itching!

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 a member of staff.

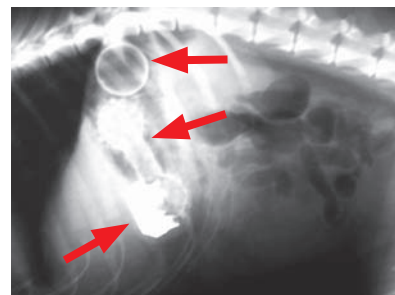
Better safe than sorry! Is your pet insured?

Did you know that you are more likely to claim on your pet insurance than either your house or car policies? The good news is that the majority of policies represent very good value for money and can take a great weight off your mind if you are faced with large vet bills.

There are several different kinds of policies; ‘12 month’ ones will only cover a condition for the first year after diagnosis, whereas ‘life long’ will continue to pay for treatment for as long as is necessary. Some will pay up to a certain amount per condition, whereas others are unlimited. So you really need to understand the policy before taking it out!

On a daily basis we see the heart wrenching decisions some of our clients face regarding the treatment of their pets, but with appropriate pet insurance, we can hopefully ensure that any treatment decisions are made on the basis of need rather than cost.

Don’t take any chances – make sure you get your pet insured today!



Case Study: Harry needed veterinary treatment because he had been vomiting, refusing food and was generally miserable. X-rays showed that Harry had been treating his toys as after-dinner snacks! Harry needed an operation to remove the toys – happily the bill was covered by Harry’s pet insurance!