

### Practice News

Welcome to our quarterly newsletter, we hope you and your pets are all fighting fit and looking forward to the warmer time of year!

At Bearsted Vets we have had yet another incredibly busy few months. We would like to take this opportunity to thank every client for their continued support and custom – we love seeing you all!

Over the last few years we have adapted to bring you as many services as possible - examples being Sunday opening hours, increased weekday availability for consultations, our fastest ever equipment for laboratory testing, physiotherapy appointments, a great value Pet Care Plan plus much more. However we want to keep evolving and bringing you the things that you and your pets need. We would be very interested to hear your thoughts and feedback when you have time, please email Head Nurse Liz on [liz@bearstedveterinarysurgery.co.uk](mailto:liz@bearstedveterinarysurgery.co.uk) We would love to hear from you.

Our Spring Special Offer is the return of our popular dentistry package (Pet Care Plan members only). For the set price of £100 for cats and £120 for dogs your VIP pet will receive a general anaesthetic, dental examination and full scale and polish. Banish that smelly breath and those dirty teeth!

If tooth extractions are required then additional costs apply, but any additional charges would be discussed in advance.

Call one of our receptionists on 01622 736677 to book one of the limited slots.

### Keeping your pet in shape



We are all too aware of the epidemic of obesity facing humans in developed countries, but what about our pets?

With obesity becoming increasingly common, it is a good idea to look objectively at your pets and see if they are overweight or not. Run your hands over their chest – you should be able to easily feel (but not see) their ribs without pressing too hard. They should also have a “waist”, when viewed from both above and the side. By contrast, if you can pinch an inch or more, and if your pet’s stomach sags down and bulges out, then a diet may be in order.

The big issue is that carrying extra weight can lead to a range of health risks including:-

**Arthritis:** if joints are under constant strain from extra weight, they are more likely to become arthritic and painful. **Diabetes:** for cats, being obese is a huge risk factor for them developing diabetes.

**Heart disease:** excess body fat puts the heart under increased strain and can hasten the onset of heart failure, especially in ‘at risk’ breeds.

**How can you ensure your pet stays at the right weight?** The most important thing is to ensure their diet is one suitable for them and their lifestyle. Neutered pets tend to have a slower metabolism and so can be more prone to weight gain and there are now several foods on the market that are formulated specifically for them. Some breeds are more vulnerable to being overweight, Labradors for example, and ‘type’ tailored diets are available. Indoor cats will be much more sedentary than outdoor ones and diets exist that take this into account. Also, don’t forget to limit the amount of treats they have!

**So - how can you help a pet lose weight?** Firstly, book an appointment with RVN Robyn for a nutritional assessment. Robyn will assess your pet’s weight and fitness and advise on current feeding regimes. With her help you can quickly formulate a plan to shift that weight! Secondly, all pets need regular exercise – and increased walks, more frequent play, or increased access to outdoors are all part of the answer. Additionally make them work for their dinner using puzzle toys and at the same time keep them entertained for hours. As your pet loses weight, the benefits of increased healthiness and vitality are usually seen quite quickly.



Cat photo: Warren Photographic.



### Some pets will eat anything!



Staying on the subject of things that pets like to eat, some pets unfortunately love snacking on a wide variety of everyday items that end up stuck in their stomach or small intestines.

Cats, and particularly kittens, are very keen on swallowing tinsel at Christmas, wool and other stringy objects (often with needles attached as well!). These almost invariably get stuck in their small intestines and require surgery to remove them.

Dogs seem to delight in eating socks, children’s toys - the list is huge! Unfortunately many of these objects, once swallowed, will require surgery to remove them.

So – as well as trying to ensure your pets don’t eat these objects, we strongly recommend **pet insurance** to cover you against these unexpected eventualities!



A very expensive sock that was removed from the intestines of a dog

## Caring for your older cat



In their twilight years our cats can suffer from a range of conditions, but they are also experts at hiding the signs of illness! So, looking out for subtle changes in their behaviour can really make a difference. Here are some tips:

**Sore joints:** Recent studies have shown that approximately 80% of cats over the age of twelve have arthritis. However, it can be difficult to identify because they simply rest more, and because they are naturally athletic animals, they will often still jump, climb and play, but not as much as they

used to. Ask us to check their joints next time you are paying us a visit, and if we are concerned, a trial of pain relief medication often lets us know if they are sore or not. Make a stiff, elderly cat's life easier by placing steps up to their favourite places, putting food bowls close to where they rest, using low sided litter trays and giving them deep, soft beds in warm, cosy places.

**Weight loss:** Senior cats can lose weight due to many different conditions, but often it is such a gradual process we don't notice. It's a good idea to get into the habit of weighing your pensionable pussycat on a regular basis and if you notice a downward trend, bring them in for a check-up.

**Drinking more:** Kidney Failure and Diabetes are fairly common in older cats and both will cause them to drink more than they should. Cats naturally drink very little, so often a cat who drinks 'well', is actually drinking to excess and should have a check-up.



**Eating less:** Sore teeth and Kidney Failure are two of the most likely causes of a reduced or changed appetite in a cat. If their mouth is painful they often keep eating, but they may start to prefer wet food or not actually chew properly. It can be difficult to fully check their mouths at home, so if you are worried, let us look!

**Eating more:** An over-active thyroid gland (Hyperthyroidism) and Diabetes will both make cats eat more, rather than a sign of good health it can be the opposite, especially if they are losing weight despite their appetite.

**Need to see a vet?** Book our Cat Only clinic every Thursday afternoon from 1pm to give your cat the feline friendly, low stress experience. NO DOGS ALLOWED!

Rabbit: Warren Photographic.

## Rabbit teeth – a growing issue!



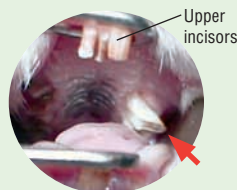
Did you know that rabbits have unusual teeth as they are continually growing? In fact their teeth are perfectly adapted to their natural diet of tough abrasive vegetation, which – without continued tooth growth, would soon result in their teeth being totally ground down to nothing!

To keep our pet bunny's teeth healthy, most of their diet should comprise of good quality hay (which is very abrasive), a small amount of fresh green leafy vegetables, and a small amount of a pelleted rabbit feed. This keeps their teeth at a healthy length plus also getting all the vital nutrition they need.

Insufficient hay means the teeth aren't ground down and so grow too long, developing sharp spikes which tear into the mouth (see photo). Muesli type mixes also encourage selective feeding, leaving vital nutrients uneaten and which can lead to bone weakness. For this reason, it is vital to replace the muesli mix with pelleted food like Burgess Excel.

Why not join our rabbit Pet Care Plan for only £8.50 a month. This includes vaccinations, six monthly healthchecks, fly strike prevention, microchipping and unlimited nail trims plus 10% off everything else!

### Oral exam reveals problems:



Overgrown cheek teeth (arrowed) are sharp, spikey and can lacerate the gums

## Pet Care Plan 2017



### WHAT DOES THE PET CARE PLAN INCLUDE THIS YEAR AND HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

*Our popular direct debit scheme helps spread the cost of your dog or cat's preventative health needs over 12 months – plus includes lots of extra benefits!*

#### INCLUDED:

- Annual Vaccination
- Kennel Cough Vaccination (Dogs only)
- Health Check every six months
- A year's supply of Flea Control
- A year's supply of Worming Control
- Microchip or Urine Test
- Unlimited Nail Trims with the Veterinary Nurse
- A Physiotherapy Assessment
- A Nutritional Assessment Package

#### PLUS

- **30% OFF** Tick Prevention Collars
- **AND 10% OFF EVERYTHING** else!

### VIP PRICELIST 2017 (PER MONTH)

Small dog	<b>£14.00</b>
Medium dog	<b>£15.00</b>
Large dog	<b>£17.50</b>
Giant dog	<b>£26.00</b>
Cat	<b>£13.00</b>

And if that wasn't enough – keep your eyes peeled for regular special offers and promotions exclusive to our PCP members! There are so many reasons to join our happy family of VIPs, why not pop in to the surgery and sign up?



Pet Plan Images: iStock Photo