



Animal Health Centre

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NEWS

AUTUMN 2015

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

Saturday: 9 - 12

Consulting times

Monday – Friday:

9 -10 am, 2 - 3 pm

5 - 6.30 pm

Saturday: 9.30 – 11.30

24 Hour

Emergency Service

☎ 0117 9059000

Topics in this issue:

- *Staff News*
- *Star Patient – Lunar and the Lilies*
- *Microchip Alert!*
- *Arthritis – is your pet affected?*
- *Autumn hazards!*

Staff News



Staff makeover! If you have been into the practice recently you may have spotted the difference?

Our staff are all wearing smart new uniforms, nurses in jade green and reception staff in teal blue.

Topped off with logo embroidered fleeces. It has been quite a transformation and we hope you approve too.

And we even each have our own tea and coffee mug to match!!

We are now all quite comfortable with the new computer system and seeing the advantages in terms of time saving as well as no longer having to struggle to read each other's handwriting. I now wonder how we managed so long before taking the plunge... I don't think that the computers have in any way taken from our personal approach that we are so proud of here, if anything they have provided us with a new talking point in the consulting room as I discover who of our clients are fellow Apple fans.



And as this newsletter goes to print we are preparing for our regular Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons inspection to allow our accreditation. We are inspected every 4 years to stringent standards and are very proud to be a part of the scheme so that our clients and patients can rest assured that we are up to date in all matters veterinary.

Star Patient – Lunar and the Lilies



Meet Lunar, such a cute kitten who spent a few days with us recently after a brush, literally, with lilies.

Lunar's owner had a bouquet of flowers including lilies in her home and thought nothing of it until some of the lily flowers dropped to the floor. As a very inquisitive 12 week old kitten, Lunar was found with the flowers. Fortunately her owner was quick to call us knowing that lilies and cats do not mix. We do not know if Lunar licked or ate any of the flowers or the pollen but we take no chances with lily exposure as they are potentially very toxic to cats.

Lunar was admitted immediately and we took blood to measure her kidney values. Lilies cause acute kidney failure in cats with even a very small amount of exposure. Treatment for Lunar was to keep her on intravenous fluids for 3 days while monitoring her kidneys.

Lunar was a star and despite being so tiny and lively she allowed us to look after her and was a delight to treat. I am very happy to report that Lunar's kidney values remained normal throughout and she was discharged home with no ill effects from her experience.

This can serve as a timely reminder to all cat owners that lilies are a danger to cats whether in a vase at home or in the garden.

Thankfully Lunar was insured as she was covered with her free 1 month kitten insurance from her Kitten Package and so another reminder to all pet owners to keep up your insurance as you never know when trouble may strike.



Microchip Alert!

Did you know that microchipping of **dogs** is already required by law in Northern Ireland and will become compulsory in England, Scotland and Wales from April 2016?

However it's not just dogs that will benefit from being microchipped! The good news is that microchipping is a *permanent* method of identifying your cat, dog, rabbit or pretty much any other pet (including birds and fish!)

So how are microchips implanted? A microchip is hardly bigger than a grain of rice and just takes a few seconds to implant. Like a normal injection, it is inserted under the skin at the back of the neck, and once there, lasts a lifetime.

Should your pet go missing and is found, veterinary practices, the police and welfare organisations all have special microchip scanners and will routinely scan stray pets. So – don't take any chances – get your pets microchipped today, and of course it is rapidly becoming a legal requirement for dogs in all parts of the UK.

Arthritis – is your pet affected?



The cooler Autumn weather often unmask arthritic disease and joint stiffness, so keep an eye on your pet's mobility and comfort.

Arthritis is a common disease in dogs and cats, and generally worsens with age. In most cases, it results from

wear and tear to the surface of the joints, but can also occur as a result of joint trauma or as a consequence of a joint malformation (for example hip dysplasia).

The joints most susceptible to arthritis are those permitting limb movements – called synovial joints. The ends of the bones which meet at these joints are covered by smooth articular cartilage and the joints are lubricated by synovial fluid.

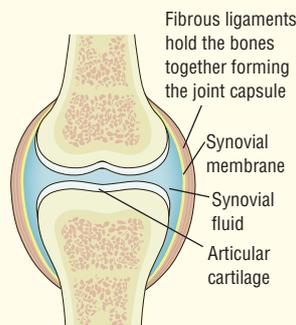
In pets with arthritis, the smooth cartilage covering of the bone ends becomes roughened, irregular and damaged, the joint fluid becomes less shock absorbing, and the joint capsule becomes swollen, (see diagram) resulting in stiffness and pain on movement.

Affected pets typically show signs of lameness, stiffness, difficulty rising, and problems negotiating steps. They may also become slower, less active, and more grumpy, and may show obvious signs of pain such as crying out, whimpering, or avoiding contact with painful areas. X-rays can be helpful, confirming the degree of bone changes and allow assessment of the joints affected.

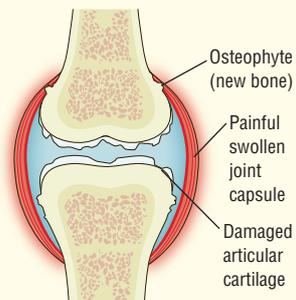
So what can be done? **Weight loss** can make a massive difference to many affected pets, as they are often overweight. Reducing food, and splitting meals into several smaller meals can aid weight loss. **Regular gentle exercise** is also important, and it helps if it is consistent (i.e. the same amount of exercise twice daily every day, and no unusually long walks on the weekend!) whilst physio exercises can aid mobility. **Joint supplements containing glucosamine** may be helpful, but the majority of pets also benefit from **anti-inflammatory pain relief medication**.

Ask us for more information if you think your dog or cat may be showing signs of arthritis, and let us help you get the spring back in their steps!

Joint Anatomy



Healthy synovial joint with smooth articular cartilage



Arthritic synovial joint with damaged articular cartilage

Autumn hazards!



As temperatures drop and the nights draw in it's great to get out and active in the Autumn, but there are some factors that still need to be considered to keep our pets fit and well. With this in mind, here are a few topical tips:



The bright orange mites often cluster together and are commonly found between the toes

Harvest mites are a problem in late-summer and Autumn. These very seasonal parasites are picked up in woodland and long grasses and swarm onto passing pets where they tend to congregate on the

ears, eyelids, feet and the underside of the abdomen. They are identified as tiny bright orange dots adhering tightly to the skin and are usually a cause of great irritation with itchy, crusting lesions developing.

Ticks are particularly active in the Autumn months, living in long grass and woodland areas. Ticks clamber onto passing pets, firmly attaching themselves and feeding on their blood. Worse still they can also spread a range of infectious diseases such as Lyme disease and Babesiosis.

Fleas are more of a year-round problem, and unlike the parasites mentioned above, fleas love central heating and will make themselves comfortable in your home and on your pet!

So – make sure you regularly check your pet's coat for any signs of parasites and let us advise you on the best treatments for your pet.

Around the house and garden, keep a wary eye out for toxins at this time of year. Pets are very attracted to **ethylene glycol (antifreeze)** which is easily spilt when topping up radiators. It is very sweet tasting and extremely toxic to pets, causing kidney failure and often death. In the garden, try to ensure pets don't eat **fermenting apples** and also **conkers** – both of which can lead to digestive upsets and a visit to the vet!

Enjoy the Autumn weather and take care!



Harvest mite down the microscope



Harvest mite photo: courtesy Cat Henstridge