



# Oakwood Newsletter

AUTUMN 2008

## Daytime Surgery

(By appointment only)

Monday - Friday: 9 - 6pm  
Tuesday Evenings: late surgery until 7.30pm

Saturday: 9-1pm

24 hr Emergency Service

Tel: 01691 679699

Fax: 01691 657563

Email: [oakwoodvets@onetel.com](mailto:oakwoodvets@onetel.com)

## Personal note from Barbara

A lot of you have been with the practice a long time and have watched my family growing up. You may have been aware of the challenges my youngest daughter, Ally, is facing with her health at the moment. I just wanted to thank you for your understanding when this has meant I have had to take time out for her and am less available for consultations, sometimes at short notice. We are continuing to search for the best treatment for her, both complementary and conventional, but epilepsy is a complicated disease and the journey is not an easy one.

Best wishes

Barbara

## The Tilly Times (this time with Bounce's help)

Bounce is my brother, a huge pale ginger chap who is normally dozing on the sofa, at the moment he is insisting on sitting on the keyboard and rubbing his head on the screen. His version of being helpful.

The client information evening on First Aid was a success, thank you to all that attended, I hope you enjoyed Sam Davis excellent talk on Animal Aromatics, her work with wild life sounds fascinating and rewarding. The next talk will be on Fireworks and Phobias held on, Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> August at 7.30 pm at the Whittington Cricket Club priced at £5.00 per person, hope to see you there.

## Diets: Keeping your pet healthy



Our pets are members of the family and, just like ourselves, feeding them a balanced diet is one of the key things we can do to keep them fit and healthy.

Puppies and kittens need more energy and protein to aid controlled growth (avoiding obesity) whilst having the correct mineral balance to help bones and joints develop healthily. This is particularly important for large and giant breeds of dog.

Adult dogs and cats require a diet to keep them healthy and active during their middle years and in older animals this will need adjusting to suit a more sedentary lifestyle.

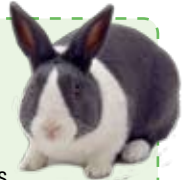
There are different ways of providing a healthy diet and to a certain extent the way you choose will depend on the time you have available to prepare meals and what you are prepared to spend.

Our increasingly busy lifestyles often mean that we look for convenience foods for our pets and this may take the form of dry biscuit, canned or frozen food.

The dry biscuits by their nature are quite highly processed and far from what the ancestors of our dogs and cats would have eaten in the wild and what their digestive systems have developed to deal with. The large pet food manufacturers have put a considerable amount of work into formulating these diets to be balanced and many animals look very well on them, but what is balanced for the average animal may not necessarily be quite right for your individual pet. Also, dry foods need preservatives to stop them from spoiling – look out for the artificial ones like BHA, BHT and ethoxyquin, which can adversely affect health. (Sometimes they are hidden under the guise of “permitted additives/antioxidants”).

Canned or frozen foods shouldn't need these additives but still check the small print!

### Feeding Rabbits



Good quality hay and grass should form the basis of your rabbit's diet; this is very high in fibre and promotes optimum dental health.

To supplement the hay, a selection of fresh food and small quantity of commercial rabbit food (preferably pelleted to avoid selective feeding) may be fed.

Pets with particular disease problems may benefit from specific “prescription” diets, specially formulated for a variety of conditions including obesity, diseases of the kidneys, liver, heart, joints, skin and teeth.

Please ask us for more information and we can help you choose the best diet for your pet.



## Start now if you are planning a trip for 2009!



DID YOU know many owners are now taking advantage of the Pet Travel Scheme and taking their dogs and cats on holiday and to live in other countries with no need for a stay in quarantine on the way back?

Now is the time to start planning as it takes 7-8 months to fulfil the requirements of the scheme. Your pet will need to be **microchipped, vaccinated against rabies** and subsequently **blood tested** to prove that sufficient immunity has developed. You additionally need to allow six calendar months to elapse (from the date of the successful blood sample) before your pet can re-enter the UK under the scheme, and then only after certain **tick** and **tapeworm** treatments have been carried out and certified before arrival in the UK.

Please contact us for further information or advice – but don't delay!

Pet photos: Jane Burton Cartoon: Jenny Hole

# Arthritis: is your pet affected?



NORMAL joint function is something that most of us take for granted in our pets. However arthritis (or degenerative joint disease) is a relatively common problem, particularly in older pets.

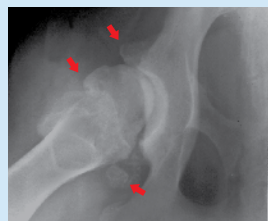
In the majority of cases arthritis occurs secondary to a lifetime of wear and tear on the joints. Arthritis may also occur following joint trauma or due to malformation of the joint, for example hip dysplasia – see above right for x-rays.

The joints that are most susceptible to arthritis are those associated with limb movement; these joints are called synovial joints. The ends of the bones which meet at these joints are covered by very smooth articular cartilage. The joints are also lubricated with synovial fluid – allowing friction free movement.

Arthritic joints typically show progressive breakdown and thinning of the cartilage lin-



Normal hip joint



Arthritic hip joint in a dog with hip dysplasia. Secondary new bone (arrowed) can be seen around the joint

ing the ends of the bones and formation of secondary new bone around the joint. Affected joints usually appear stiff, swollen and painful. Typical signs include: difficulty in getting to their feet after rest, and (for dogs) problems getting in and out of cars and often a reluctance to go on walks.



Feeding a balanced healthy diet with regular exercise and active weight management can make a huge difference to your pets mobility

## So what can be done?

Even those pets that are only mildly affected can benefit from treatment, and the most effective approach involves several factors. Weight loss alone can be effective for animals that are overweight; this along with a combination of regular gentle exercise and massage is also helpful. Special diets can help to slow the progression of the disease and food supplements containing glucosamine and chondroitin sulphate may help to reduce pain and inflammation.

At Oakwood we have had a lot of success using homeopathy, acupuncture and herbs to treat pets suffering from arthritis, either instead of or alongside conventional medication.

Finally, many pets benefit from pain relief given by medication, and with a number of medicines available, we can choose the right one for your pet.

So, if you suspect that your pet may be suffering from arthritis, come and discuss this further – we can help you to help him!



ONCE again, the shorter days and cooler weather signify the beginning of the Autumn months. However this time of year holds many potential hazards for our pets.

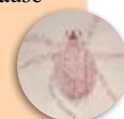
Despite the cooling weather, **fleas** unfortunately do not take holidays and are still a major problem at this time of year! So now is definitely NOT the time to lower your guard against these irritating tiny pests!

**Harvest mites** are another cause of irritation in later summer / early autumn. They are active in long grass and will swarm onto passing pets where they tend to congregate on the eyelids, ears, feet and abdomen. They are easily identified as bright orange “dots” adhering to the skin, and are often the cause of great irritation.

As the weather cools down, **bees and wasps** become dozy and are easily caught by dogs and cats. Unfortunately they can still give nasty stings to your pets.



Finally, turning to **rabbits**, if you haven't had your rabbit **vaccinated** against **Myxomatosis** and **VHD** yet, act now! These usually fatal illnesses can easily strike in the Autumn.



Harvest mite (x 50)

## Pet Insurance: are you covered?

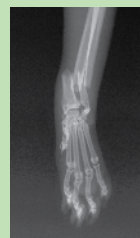


YOU look after your pets and make sure they have regular health checks, vaccinations, appropriate diets, worming and flea control. But what about pet insurance?

It's a worrying fact that in an average year, one pet in three will require veterinary treatment for some form of illness or accident and with the cost of diagnosis and treatment

for a variety of conditions running into three and even four figures, pet insurance has never been more relevant. With appropriate pet insurance we can hopefully ensure that decisions regarding the best course of treatment for your pet can be made on the basis of need rather than cost. **Don't take any chances – get your pet insured today!**

Although we tend to think of traumatic *surgical* events



(such as a fractured leg), as the main reason for pet insurance, many *medical*

conditions (such as skin infections, ear disease, kidney or heart disease – to name just a few!), can also be very costly to treat.

## Fireworks and Phobias

Remember also to keep pets indoors in the evenings to avoid **firework** injuries.

Dogs with noise phobias may benefit from herbal and homeopathic remedies or conventional medication to help relieve anxiety associated with fireworks. Habituation to loud noises over a long period can also be helpful.

### Client Information Evening on Firework and Noise Phobias

• 28<sup>th</sup> August at Whittington Cricket Club • Starts 7.30pm • 2 guest speakers • tickets on sale at reception at £5.00 each.

