



Oakwood Newsletter

AUTUMN 2009

Congratulations to Clare (groomer) who gave birth to a gorgeous baby boy on Sunday 26th April. Ewan James McBroom weighed a healthy 8lb 8oz. Mother, Father and son are all very well.'



Get ready for Bonfire Night!

FIREWORKS may be fun for us, but for animals they can be very stressful. Even the bravest dog can turn into a quivering wreck and their reaction to fireworks can get worse and worse, year on year.

As we approach the firework 'season' we have put together some tips to keep your pets safe at this time of year.

- Keep dogs and cats indoors at night. Ideally outdoor pets should also be moved indoors, but, if this is not possible, their hutches should be covered.
- Ensure nervous dogs have somewhere sheltered and comfortable to hide. Keep the windows and curtains closed and try having music or the TV on to help mask the sound of the fireworks.
- Most importantly, don't reward fearful behaviour with cuddles and reassurance. Stay relaxed and carry on as if nothing is happening, ignoring the fireworks and acting as a good role model.
- We also recommend installing a DAP diffuser in or near your pet's den. It should be noted that it needs to be plugged in 2-3 weeks before the event.

Kindly sponsored by Ceva – makers of DAP

Aloe Vera – The Medicinal Plant



Aloe Vera may look like a cactus but is in fact a member of the lily family and related to onions and garlic. It is a succulent plant with thick fleshy leaves containing an inner gel. This gel has been used for centuries to maintain health and treat ailments in humans and in animals.

In 1844 the veterinary schools were granted a royal charter to become the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. At this time Aloe Vera was a major player in the treatment of animals – so much so that the college chose to depict an Aloe Vera plant on its coat of arms. This shows Centaur, the mythical healer, carrying a shield bearing a picture of Aloe Vera.

Most people know that Aloe Vera is especially useful for treating burns, in fact it is often grown in a pot in kitchens for this reason. What is not so widely known is that Aloe Vera gel has many other uses.

The gel contains:-

LIGNIN – this assists Aloe preparations to penetrate the dermal layers of the skin.

SAPONINS – these are natural soapy cleansers with antiseptic properties that are excellent for cleaning the skin.

ANTHROQUINONES – which have natural anti-inflammatory properties.

SALICYLIC ACID – (related to Aspirin) also acts as an anti-inflammatory but its major function is as a "keratolytic", it breaks down and removes dead tissue in wounds and on the skin.

Aloe Vera gel also contains:-

MINERALS such as calcium, sodium, iron, potassium, chromium, magnesium, zinc, manganese and copper.

VITAMINS – A, C, B₁, B₂, B₆, B₁₂, Folic acid, Choline, and Niacin.

All the essential AMINO ACIDS

POLYSACCHARIDES and PLANT STEROIDS.

Aloe Vera is available as a drinking gel which is readily absorbed into normal feeds or may be put into drinking water. When taken by mouth the gel aids digestion, increases immunity to microorganisms such as viruses by strengthening cell membranes, and improves the lubrication of joints and can improve cases of osteoarthritis.

The Forever Freedom gel contains naturally occurring Glucosamine sulphate, Chondroitin sulphate and MSM. These compounds protect the joint cartilage and maintain the synovial fluid in the joint.

The Aloe Berry Nectar contains cranberry and apple and is particularly good for cases of cystitis.

Aloe skin products that we use in the surgery include the **Aloe Veterinary Formula** spray. It is useful for spraying directly onto tender areas that the pet may resent being touched such as wounds and patches of eczema. It can also be sprayed onto the coat after bathing for extra shine and condition.

Aloe Vera Gelly can be used topically to soothe skin irritations, including minor cuts, stings, and abrasions. It is anti-inflammatory and moisturizing.

Aloe moisturizing cream has the same *properties* as the gelly but in cream formulation.

Aloe Propolis cream contains bee propolis which is made by bees to keep their hives sterile and free from bacteria. It is particularly good for areas of infected skin.

Aloe Sun Lotion can be used on sensitive ear-tips and noses where these areas lack pigmentation to protect against the harmful effects of over exposure to the sun and wind. *By Lesley Vikes-Shore*

Is your pet insured?



YOU insure yourself, your house and your car – but what about your pet? Recent advances in veterinary medicine have meant that treatments that were unimaginable just a few years ago are now a reality. Diagnostic procedures such as MRI scans are increasingly routine, and surgical procedures such as cataract removals and hip replacements are commonplace.

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 the risk – get your pet insured today!

Dog photo (left): Jane Burton.



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Autumn Alarm!



WITH THE onset of cooler autumn weather, we look at some of the issues facing our pets at this time of year.

With the cold dark nights coming, it's important to make sure that you find time for walking your dog or his mobility and waistline may suffer; affected pets may show signs of **joint stiffness** – particularly after rest. Homoeopathy and acupuncture can be very helpful in relieving these symptoms.

Now is the time to keep pets indoors in the evenings to avoid **firework** injuries. Dogs with noise phobias may benefit from Rescue Remedy and/or Herbs as well as medication to help relieve the anxiety associated with fireworks.; habituation to loud noises over



a long period of time can also be helpful. Please ask us for an appointment to discuss this in further detail.

Turning to **bonfires** – piles of leaves are irresistible for hedgehogs looking for a nest or some dry shelter. Always check for these little creatures before lighting a bonfire.



This is also the time of year that many car owners prepare for winter. **Antifreeze** (used in car radiators) is a very palatable poison. If ingested, even small amounts can cause serious kidney failure and usually death.



As the weather cools, **bees and wasps** become dozy and are easily caught by pets. Unfortunately they can still give nasty stings to your pets. Apis Mel 30 can be given to relieve stings.

If you are planting **bulbs** at this time of year – bear in mind that many of them are toxic to pets. It is important to ensure that newly planted bulbs are not dug up and eaten by inquisitive pets.



Another hazard to avoid is dogs eating autumn fruits and developing digestive problems; do prevent access to **fallen apples, conkers** and the like.

Perhaps surprisingly for many pet owners, **fleas and ticks** are still a huge problem at this time of year – in fact the Autumn is a peak time for fleas and ticks!



Don't drop your guard against these pests! Please let us advise you on the best products for your pets!

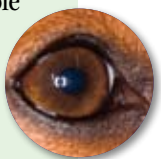
Keep your pets flea and tick free with Frontline Combo! Kindly sponsored by Merial



Keeping an eye on things!

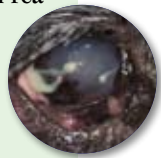
WHILST the eye is an incredibly complex organ, it is easy to take normal eye function for granted. Here we look at two conditions commonly seen in older dogs.

It is easy to overlook the role tears play in helping to keep the eyes healthy and their importance cannot be over emphasised! Tears lubricate the movements of the eyelids, wash out dust particles and provide oxygen and nutrients to the cornea (the clear outermost part of the eye). Tears also contain substances which help fight bacterial eye infections.



Normal eye

Dry eye is a condition seen reasonably commonly in dogs and is caused by a *reduced* or *total* lack of normal tear production. There are many different signs of dry eye which can develop over time. Affected eyes typically develop a thick, yellowish discharge and may also be itchy and reddened.



Dry eye

Eyelid tumours are another condition seen commonly in older dogs. They occur on the margin of the eyelid (see right) and have the potential to cause marked corneal irritation.



Eyelid tumour

Early diagnosis is the 'golden rule' with eyes, for example early diagnosis and treatment of dry eye can make a real difference to the vision of affected dogs. Don't delay! If your pet is showing *any* symptoms of eye problems, come and see us for a thorough health examination.



Lucky Cat Story

One day, a handsome ginger tom cat called Mogg was brought into the surgery. He was a stray, but had recently been adopted by one of our kind clients who had taken pity on him. Apart from a bit of a limp, (probably from a run in with a car on one of his adventures), he was a very healthy boy. We booked him in for neutering (to try to put an end to his wandering ways – there are far too many kittens out there needing homes!!!), and the following week he came in for his little op. While he was under the anaesthetic, we took an "x-ray" to check the injured leg. To our surprise, we discovered a dislocated hip and a broken pelvis! Without some heroic surgery Mogg would be left in chronic pain. His new owner, the RSPCA and one of our clients came to the rescue and raised enough money for Jeremy Dawes to perform the much needed operation. The dislocated head of Moggs femur was removed, and after 6 weeks convalescence with us, (including loads of TLC from our nurses), he has been returned to his adopted home. We are all missing him – he is a loveable rogue, a big softie who loves a cuddle and a belly tickle, though occasionally you would get a friendly nip too, just to remind you that he is a tough guy really!!! Good luck in your new home Mogg x *By Catherine Bennett-Williams*

Dog and hedgehog photos: Jane Burton

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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!
Dogs and cats: If your pet seems to be suffering with their joints as the weather cools down – come and see us for a check-up!